OBAMA EXTENDS AN OLIVE BANCH TO IRAN

By Reese Thompson

Following a videotaped message from President Obama, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed the U.S. President’s offer of “a new beginning” for U.S.-Iran relations by questioning America’s unchanging policy towards the Middle East.

Addressing a crowd of tens of thousands in the holy city of Mashad, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “They chant the slogan of change but no change is seen in practice.” Khamenei, who holds the ultimate authority over policy decisions, went on to criticize U.S. policy towards Iran since its 1979 Islamic revolution, and questioned how Mr. Obama could congratulate Iranians on the New Year and accuse the country of supporting terrorism in the same breath.

“What is the change in your policy?” Khamenei asked. “Did you remove the sanctions? Did you stop supporting the Zionist regime? Tell us what you have changed. Change only in words is not enough.” Still, Khamenei did not shut the door completely, adding that Iran had “no experience with the new American government and the new American president (…) We will observe them, and we will judge. If you change your attitude, we will change our attitude.” A complete transcript of the Ayatollah’s speech can be found on Iranian government website, iran.ir.

President Obama’s videotaped message, which was released days earlier, coincided with Nowruz, the traditional Iranian holiday marking the Persian New Year. Mr. Obama made use of the occasion for its symbolism: “In this season of new beginnings, I would like to speak clearly to Iran’s leaders. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community.”

The videotaped speech, a complete version of which can be found at whitehouse.gov, was an unprecedented move on President Obama’s part, breaking 3 decades of hostile relations with Iran, as well as displaying a change in tone from the previous administration’s policy of isolation. Diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Iran had been severed during the 1979 hostage crisis, when the United States, Iran and the international community.

The legislation that was eventually approved by congress did not fully achieve these goals, but it was progress. The $2,500 tax credit almost covers the tuition for community college and helps with the costs for public colleges and universities. “This is a gigantic step towards the day when college attendance will not be restricted by family income,” said Congressman Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania in a press release on his website.

The American Opportunity Tax Credit was introduced to congress on January 6, 2009 when the country was calling for government intervention in the financial crisis. It was eventually included in the economic stimulus package that President Obama signed into law on February 13th. Policymakers believed it was important to make education affordable during an economic downturn. The potential effects of the tax break are three-fold. First, it would make college available to many people that would not have been able to afford it. Second, it is viewed as a government investment in education to improve the skills of the work force. Lastly, the tax break could stimulate the economy with students buying goods and services with the money saved on tuition.

According to a representative at the IRS call center the tax credit is 100% of qualified tuition, fees and course materials up to $2,000, plus 25% of the next $2,000. This amounts to a maximum of $2,500. Forty percent of the credit is refundable, which means the student or student’s family can...
Should Final Exams Be the Main Assessment Tool in Education?

By Moses Massazi

Should testing be the main basis for the way schools assess their students? Is it possible for teachers to accurately assess a student’s critical and strategic planning abilities when schools base grades on final exams? At the QCC Math department, students are required to pass final exams in order to pass the class and move forward to the next level.

Testing is a way to account for how well the subject material is learned by a student. Mandating required final exams most likely motivates students to study the material knowing that final exams sometimes determine semester grades. I recently interviewed Dr. Mona Fabricant, the Chair of the Math Department at QCC, and she stated that grades are based on a combination of tests, assignments and that it is partly left up to the instructor to weigh their grading procedures through a grading outline provided by the department. The syllabus for the math course I am taking this semester, for example, states that the final exam counts for 30% of the overall grade. Dr. Fabricant also said that the way schools assess their students varies from school to school, and that Federal and local government has nothing to do with how a department draws up its testing policy.

Alfie Kohn, the author of The Case Against Standardized Tests, writes that “the more teachers are pressured to raise test scores the more time they have nothing to do with how a department draws up its testing policy.” This sort of pressure that mandated tests impose in the classroom may alter the style of teaching a teacher would otherwise deliver because they must introduce a certain amount of material within a certain amount of time that makes up the content of required tests. Students are motivated to learn the test material knowing in advance which exams are required. Unfortunately, Kohn argues, standardized tests may affect students negatively.

The question becomes, is it fair to judge every student by the same testing criteria? Not everyone’s skills are as great as the next persons, perhaps due to the fact that some students, in math classes for example, do not plan on applying the majority of the course work to their career path or academic major. The current policy regarding testing is somewhat analogous to telling a physical education instructor with a very overweight student that the student cannot pass the course unless he runs around the school track three times within a set time frame as part of a required test. Such a test would be considered overly biased. Perhaps there should be more general introduction courses for subjects a student has not chosen as their major. A student’s grade should be primarily based on attendance and the dedication he or she brings to classroom assignments and participation. If a student is truly determined and motivated to succeed through education then there would be almost no need for mandated or required testing. There are exceptions, however, when the student has chosen a specific subject as their main discipline. Graduating from law school, for example, does not automatically mean that you can practice law, you must pass the bar exam which is mandated by the state in which you wish to practice. This test is a tough but equal system of competition and opportunity in the world of law.

Christina Couch a freelance education writer and author of Virginia colleges 101 wrote about Mellisa Hudson who was a student at Alverno College, a Milwaukee based liberal arts institution that provides written evaluation by teachers instead of letter grades. Hudson says she could not have proven her true abilities by showing her employer a list of letter grades. Hudson was able to provide her employer with an extensive evaluation from her school which provides a better and clearer picture of her strengths and weaknesses than a traditional resume with a GPA.

At QCC and at many other schools in our nation, students are expected to prepare for tests in order to move to the next level. Basing grades on one test can be very stressful on a student. If grading were determined by everything a student contributed in class it would be a more rewarding experience for everyone. What do you think? Shouldn’t grades be based on how much effort a student puts into their work?

Tax Break on Tuition

receive 40% of up to $2,500 whether they paid taxes or not. This amounts to a maximum of $1,000. The tax credit is targeted to lower and middle income families with people earning over $80,000 and married couples earning over $160,000 ineligible.

When the American Opportunity Tax Credit was presented to congress it required 100 hours of community service in exchange for the funds. The community service was to be performed at a governmental unit, hospital or organization. The website of Congressman Chaka Fattah states the version of the legislation approved by congress stipulates that the Treasury Department conduct a study on whether it is possible to efficiently implement community service. Representatives at the IRS call center did not know if community service would be required, but said the details of the act were still forthcoming. Additionally, information on whether the student must be enrolled fulltime is currently unavailable.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education’s report, “Measuring Up 2008 The National Report Card on Higher Education discusses how increases in the cost of college have become a problem. It states that “the cost of attending college has risen nearly three times the rate of the cost of living.” This tax benefit targets those that are otherwise unable to pay for college. A Whitehouse press release relates its impact on young Americans, “…nearly one-fifth of high school seniors who receive no tax credit under the current system will receive a tax cut to make college affordable for the first time.”

President Obama’s goal is for every American to continue their education after high school. Advanced education is believed to increase a worker’s earnings potential and the country’s ability to provide the goods and services needed to compete in today’s global marketplace.
Walking into the room vibrant with energy, smiling faces, proud friends, family, and teachers, I was welcomed to be a part of the Award Ceremony held for the Basic Skills Developing Writers Contest. Professor David Rothman and Professor Manette Berlinger work together as Co-Directors of this wonderful contest. Originated by Professor Jeff Rothschild and current Chairperson, the contest allows for students who have a great ability to be acknowledged and rewarded in more ways than one. Professor David Rothman explained, “I teach Writing and sometimes with our curriculum goals and time constraints we miss the diamond essay in the pile. This contest gives us a chance to celebrate these diamonds and to give praise to their miners.”

As the small classroom filled with 45 plus people, cider and sweets were enjoyed as well as the abundance of accomplishment everybody in the room was feeling. Each for their own purpose: The teachers who work so hard in helping students develop their skills, the parents who support their kids (for those who were able to be there and those who weren’t) and push them to do their best in learning and growing in the college setting, and for the students themselves, who like stars shone so fiercely for their enormous efforts. Professor Berlinger stood in the front of the class, and I just don’t know if I have ever witnessed so much excitement, or seen such a fire in someone’s eyes. “This is very special to us” were the words that came out of her mouth, but what her whole body language and energy told the room was that just being a part of the Ceremony and being able to present these awards and merits was a reward all in itself! And so it began.

The winners of the Developing Writers’ Contest for 2008-2009:

Division A (BE 111 and 112)

1st Prize: Amin Nakpituqs for “Special Moments in a Hammock”
2nd Prize: Roslyn Joshua for “A Survivor’s Story”
3rd Prize: Richard Ramos for “Sasquachanna State Park”
Honorable Mentions:
Beverly Brown for “From Childhood to Now”
Matthew Cabrera for “Are You More Intelligent Because You Attend College?”
Aminata Clarke for “A Mother’s Trials and My Own”
Giselle Ferreira for “The Best Method of Increasing Student Enrollment”
Victer Galeano for “Daumb American Kid”
Melanie Gross for “My Grandfather’s Alarm”
Serigne Gueye for “The Oakland Building”
Garth Harris for “Growing Up with My Family”
Nicole Jung for “Remembering David”
Theresa Lopez for “A Loss of Someone Important”
Roberto Tirado for “Letter to Sergeant Wilcox”

Division B (BE 201, 203, and 205)

1st Prize: Pen-Hua Sun for “Come and Join Us”
2nd Prize: Chen Wang for “Cookies and Kindness”
3rd Prize: Sweat Fong Looi for “Ethnographic Study: Compare/Contrast Your Old with your Current One”
Honorable Mentions:
Yasmin Arizona for “A River of Tears”
Qi Qiao Huang for “Standardized Tests”
Sin Ying Lam for “Gender Roles: Contrast the Traditional Views of Men and Women with those in 2008”
Rudy Navia for “My Proudest Moment”
Jeonghwa Noh for “Budget Cuts Hit CUNY”
Pen-Hua Sun for “The Impact of Budget Cuts on ESL”
Nelie Toussaint for “Why I am a Lucky Person”

Division C (Creative Writing)

1st Prize: Erick Fernandez for “The Girl From Buffalo”
2nd Prize: Jye-en Jonathan Jeng for “Journal Entry 214-The Unconscious and Me”
3rd Prize: Elizabeth Rubio for “Alchemist Journal”
Honorable Mentions:
Adelyne Deen for “Alchemist Journal”
Qasim Muhammad for “Two Poems”
Jonathan Vilca for “The Reason I Write”

The instructors of those awarded greatly contributed to their student’s success: Manette Berlinger, Julia Carroll, Caroline Copolla, Helene Dunkelblau, Ira Greenfest, Susan Hock, Ed Kenny, David Rothman, Alvin Schlosser, Jiliani Worsi, and Weirer Ye.

As all the grateful students joined together for their group, and individual photos, I had the pleasure of talking to a few parents, students, and some faculty. Professor Berlinger made a very inspiring comment saying, “The contest is a special event for our department because we always discover the gift for writing in our students, something they often don’t know they possess. We are thrilled to celebrate their work and cheer them on to future success. Our sincere thanks goes to Student Government for sponsoring the contest each year.”

Sandy Jung said of her daughter Nicole, awarded for her piece “Remembering David,” “I was very excited when I found out. She felt even happier than I did,” with an ear to ear smile on her face.

Aminata Clark who wrote “A Mothers Trials and My Own,” was standing with her mother. She told me, “I was shocked, happy and so excited when I found out I received an award.” Her mother, Elta Wright, was at a loss of words but managed to say that she was “Really, really excited and proud. That there are no words to describe it still to this day!”

I’m so proud of them! It’s really great for their self esteem. Some students don’t realize the talent that they possess, said Professor Susan Hock who had four of her own students receive awards.

QCC English Department Awards, April 2009

The Juan Otero Memorial Award.
This award is for English 101 students. It is determined by the written essay.
The Hedy Jacobowitz Memorial Award for Outstanding Journalism or Non-Fiction. This award is open to anyone and is determined by the piece of writing submitted.
The Reginald and Eileen Keizs Award in Literature and Writing. Nominees must be liberal arts majors.
The Robert D. Cruzier Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in Literature and Writing. Nominees must be from upper-division classes can be nominated.
The Dr. Arnold Asrelsky Award for Achievement in Writing and Literature by an Evening Student. Please include a brief note with the student’s name and describe the student’s multiple commitments. For students of upper-level Writing and Literature courses taught in the evening.
The Carolyn B. Raphael Award for an ESL Student. For a student who has taken a higher-level ESL class and excelled but who started by taking a Basic Skills ESL class.
The Smithhine/Trefman Award. For outstanding achievement in literature and writing.
The Stolerman Award. For outstanding achievement in literature and writing.
The Tony Pipolo Award. For film studies.

This year’s winners are:
The Juan Otero Memorial Award
Allison Rivera, “Final Paper”
Randy Farcier, “The Crossing”

Honorable Mention: Inae Jung, “Netizens: Korean Communication Language”
Honorable Mention: Arianae Barnes, “Subculture of Bisexual Girls”
The Hedy Jacobowitz Memorial Award, Journalism and Non-Fiction
Melissa Stout, “Self Mutilation”
Reese Thomson, “Stimulus Dollars Temporarily Halt Governor Paterson’s Proposed Cuts to CUNY & SUNY”
Yasmine Yahya, “Campus Conditions Impact Performance”
Jane Grosym, “Should Marriage Be an Option for Same-Sex Couples?”
Justine Farrell, “I Want My Mommy!”
Justine Bermisa, “Video Games: Correcting Misconceptions”
The Reginald and Eileen Keizs Award
Adie James, “The Bonding Ties of Motherhood”
Jillian Lastra
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In the coming months the “War on Terror” in Afghanistan is expected to intensify. Many expect a troop surge in Afghanistan to counter the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants who seem to be gaining the upper hand there. President Barack Obama has recently announced his new strategy for Afghanistan. According to a New York Times article on April 4, the U.S. plans to raise troop levels in Afghanistan from 38,000 to 68,000 by the end of the year. This expected U.S. led surge has sent shockwaves through the Pakistani establishment.

Many in the U.S. are quick to point out that “Pakistan needs to do more.” For their part, the Pakistanis say that they are doing the best they can and that Pakistan has sacrificed and suffered the most from the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. What people in the U.S. fail to understand, it is said, is that Pakistan cannot put its entire military to work against the Taliban because its neighbor to the East, India, still has about a million of its troops stationed along its border with Pakistan.

The rivalry between Pakistan and India dates back more than six decades. Pakistan and India have fought two out of their three wars over Kashmir. The two countries have made much headway in recent years over the issue. Border crossings between the two countries have been reopened, and trade between them has begun to flow and cultural links have been established. But the recent Mumbai bombings in India show how high tensions between the two countries can run in a matter of days. India was quick to blame Pakistan for being behind the attacks, a charge Pakistan denied. The Armed Forces of both countries were put on high alert, and preparations were being made on war footing.

As former Pakistani President and retired Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army Pervez Musharraf put it, “Kashmir remains the key dispute and the sore point.” Musharraf made these remarks to an Indian channel while on a visit to India. The former Army Chief also said the two sides need to “disengage and demilitarize.” What Musharraf and many in Pakistan would say is that unless the Kashmir issue is solved Pakistan cannot concentrate all its efforts into securing its border with Afghanistan. With tensions between Pakistan and India running high, Pakistan has moved approximately 20,000 troops from the Afghan border to the Indian border.

On one its Eastern front Pakistan is face to face with its arch rival India and on its Western front pitted against the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants. The BBC on March 30 reported that, “In recent days three top American generals have turned their guns on Pakistan, accusing elements of its main intelligence agency, the ISI, of supporting Taliban and al-Qaeda militants.” Allegations such as these have surfaced before and Pakistan has always dismissed such allegations as baseless.

However, over the years the Taliban have been used by Pakistan in its proxy war with India in the disputed Kashmir region. In an article written in a Pakistani newspaper on September 11, 2008 by Talat Masood, a retired Lieutenant General of the Pakistan Army, “Pakistan is unlikely to completely give up the jihadi tool against India unless the Kashmir dispute finds a satisfactory resolution. Washington pays scant attention to Pakistan’s security and strategic concerns either with respect to India or Afghanistan.” These “jihadi tools” as Mr. Masood calls them are the same people the U.S. is trying to destroy. But Pakistan, on the other hand, must hold on to them because they have been useful to Pakistan in India.

On the campaign trail even Barack Obama stated that solving the Kashmir issue was a prerequisite to solving the Afghan puzzle. Comments such as these were welcomed by many Pakistanis, because quite frankly they assumed that if elected, President Obama would play a more active role in solving the Kashmir issue. Shortly after taking the oath of office President Obama appointed a special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke.

Many in Pakistan expected that Kashmir or at least something related to Kashmir would be on Mr. Holbrooke’s agenda, but unfortunately for Pakistan it was not. “Holbrooke’s mission is to deal strictly with the Pakistan-Afghanistan situation. It is not in Holbrooke’s mandate to deal with the subject of Kashmir. His mandate is to go out and try to help bring stability to Afghanistan and work closely with Pakistan to try to deal with the situation in the FATA region,” a state department spokesperson said in March. Many say that originally Kashmir was on Mr. Holbrooke’s agenda but upon India’s request it was taken out of his mandate. For the Pakistanis this was seen as a major disappointment, and to them it is a sign that the U.S. is not sincere in addressing Pakistan’s problems.

If the U.S. is serious about Afghanistan and wants Pakistan to focus more on tackling the militants along the border it should at once address Pakistan’s problems. Pakistan’s number 1 issue is that it must keep a standing Army on both its Eastern and Western borders. If the U.S. tried to help out with the peace process between Pakistan and India, it would prove to the Pakistanis that the U.S. is serious about addressing their problems. When the Pakistanis see that the U.S. is sincere about solving the problem with India, they will take the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants more seriously. The U.S. and its NATO allies can put all the troops they want in Afghanistan, but if Pakistan will always have safe havens on the Pakistan side of the border, unless Pakistan decides to take actions against them. Once the Kashmir issue is solved, Pakistan can focus entirely on destroying the militant infrastructure on its side of the border, which has been established over the past several years. If the U.S. wants the Pakistanis to “do more,” the U.S. must “do more” in addressing Pakistan’s security problems with its neighbor, India.

Death: Written In Print

BY KEITH INGRAM

Cell phones, computers, television, and radio. With so many electronic technologies, new and old, available for retrieving information, there is a diminishing market for printed media. Today, almost any professional media analyst will say that we are not far from a time where downloadable media will completely replace the physical media (particularly in terms of movies and music) that we have enjoyed for so long. In the mid to late 90’s, as the internet grew to become the universal source of technological progress and new content, it was clear to most industry leaders that the paradigm for entertainment and information media had begun to change. Whereas it does not take an expert to realize that print media is nearing the end of the road, it might take several to realize it is in need of a makeover to keep up with the changing times.

The economic recession has, without a doubt, has a huge effect on the print media market. Publications are now choosing to reduce their production sets you on a pedestal, regardless of the actual talent (or content) on display. As produced in such abundance that there simply aren’t enough people to read them.

Another reason the internet is killing physically printed media is the fact that the internet has created a vicious circle, with many journalists losing their print jobs ultimately cannibalize a paper’s sales in an attempt to build synergy. Both points have been proven true affecting a good number of big name publications as CEO’s have realized websites are bringing in more hits than convincing readers to pick up the latest print issue. As noted by Entertainment Weekly, this trend has lead companies to invest more resources in the online portion of their businesses.

In these harsh economic times, the relative ease of producing content on the internet has created a vicious circle, with many journalists losing their print jobs only to start over by establishing a website or blog online. With the job market running thin, and room for journalists with the ability to write professionally without a college certificate diminishing, opportunities have become more stark and competitive than ever. With so many blogs and extensions of social networking sites now online, content that might have appeared for sale in a newspaper or magazine is now completely free. However, with ad revenue being a websites main source of income, new websites and blogs are being produced in such abundance that there simply aren’t enough people to read them.

Another reason the Internet is killing physically printed media is the fact that the Internet makes visuals appealing in ways that newspapers simply do not. With any form of entertainment, it is apparent that a glamorous presentation sets you on a pedestal, regardless of the actual talent (or content) on display. As a result, a commonplace blog writer can have a site with a nicer layout than a more professional website, and attract more viewers because of it. In addition, news oriented blogs have advantages over printed news, most notably in the ability of the website to perform up to the minute updates.

(continued on page 15)
Coffee is one of the most popular beverages worldwide with hundreds of companies including, for example, Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts which specifically target the consumer by offering all sorts of variations in addition to the traditional blend of coffee. Derived from roasted seeds, known as coffee beans from the coffee plant, the brewed beverage is known for its stimulating effects. It possesses the chemical caffeine, which is a psychoactive stimulant. Although caffeine enhances the user’s mind many questions remain whether or not coffee provides health benefits to its consumers. In the past, coffee has been accused of stunting user’s growth as well as being a cause for heart disease, acid reflux, cancer, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or even Iron Deficiency Anemia. Whereas on the positive side, coffee does have health benefits such as providing antioxidants, which are believed to help prevent chronic diseases such as asthma and Cardio Vascular Disease.

According to the June 18, 2008 article, “Drinking Coffee May Extend Life” by Angela Haupt of USA Today, a study was published in the Annals of Internal Medicine regarding the relationship of coffee and mortality. The study followed 41,736 men for eighteen years and 86,216 women for twenty-four years all of whom did not have cardiovascular disease (cvd) or cancer. Every two to four years, each of the participants was given a questionnaire that included questions regarding coffee consumption, smoking status and other dietary habits. The study concluded that consumers of decaffeinated or caffeinated coffee have lower death rates than those who don’t drink coffee. The findings show that caffeine may have nothing to do with the benefits of coffee in that both Decaf and regular coffee users had lower risks of cancer or Cardio Vascular Disease. The article “Is Coffee a Healthy Drink?” cites another study, which took data from 83,000 women as part of the Nurses’ Health Study for the March 2009 issue of the magazine Circulation. The study found that those women that drank four or more cups of coffee a day did not increase their risk of stroke. The article also cites a recent issue of American Journal of Epidemiology in which a recently published Japanese study suggested that the consumption of coffee decreased the risk of oral, pharyngeal, or oesophageal cancer which may be because of the antioxidants which are thought to help battle cancers.

Nicholas Bakhtiari’s “Coffee Linked to Lower Dementia Risk,” a January 23, 2009 New York Times article, reports on a team of Swedish and Danish researchers who tracked coffee consumption among 1,409 middle aged men and women. The study ran for twenty-one years and during that time 61 participants developed dementia, 48 with Alzheimer’s disease. After incorporating high blood pressure and high cholesterol and other factors, the scientists concluded that subjects who drank three to five cups of coffee a day were 65 percent less likely to develop dementia in comparison with those who drank two cups or less per day. The article notes other studies that suggest coffee may reduce the risk of developing Parkinson’s disease.

Coffee, however, has always had a reputation of not being healthy for the consumer. Although consumption of coffee does possess health risks, it is being acknowledged today that it also provides health benefits. Today, coffee consumers have a defense when people say one shouldn’t drink coffee. The next time someone says something negative regarding coffee, inform them of the recent studies that imply that coffee does indeed benefit one’s health. For further information on the health impact of coffee, visit www.Cosic.org.

For Those Who Have a Heart and Want to Help

“wons, I did it, I’m a Cover Girl model, I’m going to be on the cover of Seventeen Magazine, I’m so excited, my dream was always to be a model... and having psoriasis always prohibited me, I’m America’s Next Top Model baby, yeah!” said CariDee English, this season’s winner of America’s Next Top Model. Appearing on the cover of Seventeen Magazine is a feat for any adolescent girl, yet CariDee’s success is even more incredible because growing up she struggled with the affects of Psoriasis.

Psoriasis is a chronic disease that affects the immune system and causes thick, scaly, red patches that appear on the skin. CariDee developed psoriasis when she was five years old and by the time she was a teenager, nearly 70% of her body was covered with plaque. The patches are often painful and itchy and can appear anywhere on the body. Yet, in spite of her struggle, CariDee maintained a positive attitude and her dreams of becoming a model allowed her to be persistent in finding the right treatment for herself. She feels her “curse” has turned into a positive, allowing her to spread awareness and encourage others to seek treatment. In a conversation with Tyra Banks, CariDee discussed the adversity the disease caused her and expressed her wishes for her story to inspire others. “Psoriasis awareness is very important to me. I want others with the disease to know they are not alone. I want to inspire them to live their dreams.”

Now a spokesperson for the National Psoriasis Foundation, CariDee and the Foundation urge us to help in funding for research and education by attending their annual Walk for Awareness. The Walk for Awareness is on Sunday, May 3rd, at the beautiful Botanical Gardens in the Bronx. Participants choose between 1K and 4K routes. The Foundation is looking for teams of walkers, team captains, and walk volunteers. Donations are welcome, and participants who raise $100 or more receive a t-shirt. In addition, all who participate receive a goody bag. The event’s goal is to raise funds in order to combat Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, as well as educating the public on Psoriasis.

For those who are unaware, Psoriasis is a life long, non-contagious, chronic
The human papilloma virus also known as HPV infects the skin and mucous membrane of the body. It is the most common STD reported by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It is estimated that, “80 percent of women and 50 percent of men and women combined will get some type of genital HPV at some point in their lives,” and “approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV and 6.2 million people become newly infected every year.”

The most troubling thing about this STD is that people more often than not do not know they are infected until diagnosed, because most strands of the virus have no symptoms. Although most cases of HPV disappear on their own the fact remains that men and women become carriers and are not aware that they are passing it on to their sexual partners.

According to the CDC, there are more than 100 types of HPV, 40 of which can be spread through genital contact. These genital types can cause genital warts, abnormal cell growth (dysplasia) or cervical cancer, and in rare cases cancer of the vulva, vagina, the penis and rectum. HPV can be classified as a High Risk infection, which can cause cancer most commonly of the cervix, or a Low Risk infection which causes genital warts. According to the CDC, as of April 2008, 90 percent of cases show the body’s immune system clears the HPV infection including low and high risk types within two years.

The only method of treatment provided today is the vaccine Gardasil, for girls and young women ages 9 to 26. It was created to protect against the four major types of HPV. According to the website created for the vaccine, Gardasil.com, the vaccine prevents 2 types of HPV that cause 70 percent of cervical cancer, and 2 more types that cause 90 percent of all genital warts. The most important thing to remember about this vaccine is that it is only effective for girls and young women who have not been exposed to the virus through genital contact. In addition, women over 30 should not rely on their annual pap test but also request an HPV test. There is no preventative vaccine for men or test that can identify them as HPV carriers, but studies are being conducted to see if the Gardasil vaccine would be safe and preventative for males.

Safe sex methods such as condoms used at all times with every sexual encounter can lower the risk but is not a complete or secure method of prevention. HPV can be transmitted through skin to skin contact, for example, sharing a towel or other objects with a person who has genital warts. Staying in a relationship with partners who have had little or no previous sexual encounters can also reduce the risk, but even in a monogamous relationship HPV can develop. In preventing cervical cancer women of the appropriate age range should get the preventative shots of Gardasil as well as have an annual PAP test that can detect abnormal cells or pre-cancerous changes in the cervix.

Since HPV often has no symptoms it is important to get screened by your gynecologist so you can prevent passing it on to others. Knowing that it can develop from skin to skin contact and genital contact should alleviate some of the social stigma assigned to STD infections. When it comes to one’s health, it should never be the “It could never happen to me” attitude. Take care of yourself and remember that one moment of careless indulgence can lead to a lifetime of regret.

The Dangers of Secondhand Smoke on Campus

BY ANGELA PHADEL

One of the problems affecting the quality of life at Queensborough Community College is the large amount of cigarette smoke that lingers in the entrances of many of the buildings on campus. For non-smokers who have to pass through clouds of nicotine to get to their classes, secondhand smoke poses a serious problem. Researchers from the American Cancer Society have long since shown that exposure to secondhand smoke can cause cancer, pneumonia, as well as reduce lung function—conditions that often lead to premature death.

Based on a report by the Surgeon General and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, non-smokers who are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke can suffer from many of the health conditions that afflict smokers themselves. For example, a non-smoking woman who lives with someone who smokes is at a greater risk of having a heart attack than a non-smoking woman living with other non-smokers.

According to the American Lung Association, researchers have found that children living with smokers can develop bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and sinus infection. Moreover, pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke have been shown to give birth to babies afflicted with low-birth weight and decreased lung function. Some babies have even been born with certain types of deformity and paralysis. Secondhand smoke has also been associated with a lower intelligence quotient.

Secondhand smoke can be harmful not only to women who are already pregnant, but also to women who may get pregnant in the future. By damaging their reproductive system, secondhand smoke may decrease a woman’s likelihood of having a healthy child. There are two types of secondhand smoke to be cautious of: First, there is “mainstream smoke,” which is the smoke exhaled directly from the smoker’s lungs and through their nose and mouth. A second category of secondhand smoke is called “sidestream,” which is the smoke emitted from the burning tobacco. Non-smokers must remain vigilant to avoid smokers in order to protect their health.

Sadly, smokers are often unaware of the people around them. When they are smoking, they rarely think of their environment. Sparing others is the last thing on their mind. This is especially true when they crowd together in a small area where ashtrays are available. Here on campus, in front of the Humanities Building, at the foot of the steps of the Library Building and in the courtyard of the Science Building, students gather to smoke before and after classes. There is a difference between rude smokers and nice smokers, however. Rude smokers, even when they are your friends, will often take out their cigarettes in the middle of a conversation and begin puffing away. A nice person, however, will ask permission to smoke near you, or excuse himself or herself and step away before lighting up.

Staying away from secondhand smoke is the best solution for those who want to decrease their chances of giving birth to an unhealthy child, or who want to lower their chances of developing lung cancer and heart disease. Smokers listen up. For the non-smokers on campus, a little consideration can go a long way!
In a Medical Crisis Don’t Take “No” for an Answer

By ALESHA BUSH

Yes, we all visit the doctor, some more than others, and our doctors are people we confide in, especially when something is wrong. So what happens when you are diagnosed with a severe virus, or a cancerous tumor, for example, and you’re advised to undergo medical procedures to prevent the illness from destroying your life? But what if some of the procedures the doctor recommends may be unnecessary, or if you’re told that “There’s nothing we can do, so prepare for the worst.”

If a doctor tells a patient he must undergo a certain procedure it makes good sense for that patient to seek a second opinion. Patients should be upfront with their treating physician and let them know they are seeking a second opinion. This is helpful, reports Shirley Brossius in article “Body & Mind” on Pennlive.com, because the second physician may want to see the previous laboratory records. Peter Lund, President elect for the Pennsylvania Medical Society, states, “Second opinions for medical treatments and decisions are commonly sought after, and well accepted within the medical community.” Lund also states that sometimes doctors will ask for a second opinion on their own, especially when they want to verify their own diagnosis and treatment plan.

Lund also explains that patients seek second opinions when they disagree with a diagnosis or dislike a particular doctor’s opinion. A second opinion enables patients to receive an alternative philosophy on treatment. Understanding why most patients get a second opinion, and what they do before seeking it, the question becomes, when should I get a second medical opinion?

The American Heart Association website provides guidelines for when one should request a second medical opinion. The AHA recommends the following:

1) If your insurance company requires a second opinion before it will cover your treatment.

2) If there are several options for treating your condition, and if the treatment your doctor recommends has significant risk, or if the treatment would greatly affect your lifestyle, work or family.

3) If you don’t have full confidence in the recommended treatment or in the doctor, the guidelines state to ask friends or relatives who’ve been treated for the same condition. You can also call your local medical directory, the Directory of American specialists, or other professional directories at your local library.

At the same time, consulting with friends or relatives who have been treated for the same condition, for example, is not always appropriate for everyone in that some situations are very unique. An example of a unique medical situation is that of a seven year old girl named Heather McNamara from Long Island. She had a tennis ball sized tumor in her abdominal, which was not responding to chemotherapy. Because the tumor had wrapped itself around main blood vessels and was destroying vital organs, doctors told Heather’s parents “there was nothing they could do, and to prepare for the worst.”

The McNamara’s searched for someone who could help their daughter because they wouldn’t take “no” for an answer. Then they heard of a man named Dr. Tomoaki Kato, the only transplant surgeon known to have removed a 23 hour surgery and a very exhausting ordeal. Dr. Kato removed a tumor from his daughter because they wouldn’t take “no” for an answer. Then they heard of a man named Dr. Tomoaki Kato, the only transplant surgeon known to have removed a tumor from his daughter.

Find out about QCC’s Open Mic Poetry Celebration on the back cover

Obama Extends An Olive Branch To Iran

continued from cover story

Iranian airliner in 1988, as well as U.S. support of Saddam Hussein in Iraq’s war against Iran in 1980-81. However, the subtext may also refer to more immediate concerns, namely the renewal of U.S. sanctions against Iran, which, according to the BBC, President Obama signed just a week before delivering his videotaped message. The U.S. is also currently engaged in major covert operations against Iran’s nuclear ambitions. The U.S.’s covert operations received a major boost by congressional leaders in June under President Bush when it agreed to fund a major escalation aimed at destabilizing Iran’s leadership, according to an article written by Seymour Hersh for the July 7th and 14th issue of the New Yorker magazine.

Ayatollah Khamenei’s response to President Obama’s olive branch of renewed relations may have also been designed to reign in any debate between moderates and hardliners within the Iranian leadership that may have been set off by President Obama’s speech. The approach taken by President Obama runs in stark contrast with the hard-line taken by President Bush, whose approach united both moderates and conservatives within Iran against U.S. interests. Mr. Obama, who evoked Iran’s cultural contributions as well as the shared values between the two nations, seemed more than mindful of winning the hearts and minds of Iranian citizens. Despite the anti-American bluster of its clerical leaders, many, including New York Times Columnists Nicholas Kristof and Roger Cohen, as well as Washington Post reporter Azadeh Moaveni, have pointed to the fact that Iran boas one of the most pro-American populations in the Middle East. It is also, after Israel, the most democratic nation in the region.

In February, the New York Times reported that, during a rally celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remarked, “Our nation is ready to hold talks based on mutual respect and in a fair atmosphere.” Ahmadinejad is up for reelection this June.

Saeed Leylaz, an Iranian political analyst, explained Ayatollah Khamenei’s response by saying that hard-liners in the Iranian government would naturally want to bolster their own position with anti-American rhetoric. “Iran’s ruling Islamic establishment needs to lessen tensions with the U.S. and at the same time maintain a controlled animosity with Washington,” he said. Following the public dismissal of President Obama’s message, Iran has reestablished contact with NATO and accepted an invitation from Secretary of State Clinton to participate in the international summit on Afghanistan in the Hague, where some informal talks were said to have taken place.

In recent years, the U.S. has been at odds with Iran over its uranium enrichment program, which Washington is convinced is aimed at producing atomic weapons. According to reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran’s centrifuges appear to be running at high efficiency, and has produced nearly enough uranium to fuel a single nuclear bomb. Iran has consistently denied these charges, claiming that their nuclear program is being pursued for peaceful purposes.

Officials from Israel are convinced that Iran could have a nuclear weapon by the end of the year, and have hinted that Israel may take unilateral action against Iran if President Obama’s diplomacy proves unsuccessful. President Obama’s tone towards Iran is likely to be unpopular with the new right-wing Israeli government currently being formed under Benjamin Netanyahu. Last May, according to the Israeli papers, Jerusalem Post and Ha’aretz, Israel had received a pledge of military action against Iran’s main nuclear complex from the Bush administration. Israel, which has faced criticism from the IAEA for its own undeclared nuclear weapons, has been at odds with Iran over its support of the radical groups Hamas and Hezbollah. President Obama has acknowledged that a nuclear Iran would set off an arms race in the region that would be disastrous.

President Obama’s videotaped message to Iran, subtitled in Farsi, is part of a comprehensive new strategy his administration has embarked on in its approach to the Middle East, a strategy that Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan, has hinted about in interviews with Charlie Rose and elsewhere. The benefits of friendlier relations with Iran may go beyond Iranian disarmament. The United States is currently fighting two wars in regions that share a border with Iran.

A friendlier relationship with Washington would be beneficial to Iran as well. As the falling price of oil, their interest in having sanctions lifted and overseas assets unfrozen may become a more vital bargaining tool. The burgeoning drug trade in Afghanistan has also been a growing problem for the Iranians.

In 2001 and 2002, Iran cooperated with the United States in the early stages of the war in Afghanistan. Iran had extended its own overtures for renewed relations with the U.S., but the brief contact between the two nations ended abruptly after President Bush included Iran as one of the nations in the “axis of evil.”
New York City Hunger

BY JESSE MALIN

According to NYC Hunger Experience 2008, “the number of New York City residents experiencing difficulty affording food has increased 55 percent since 2003 — to 3.1 million in 2007.” The economic recession is a major factor in the rise of hunger. Not only is the recession causing unemployment which makes paying for food difficult, but even those with jobs are having trouble coming up with money for food and healthy survival.

Statistics provided by the Food Bank of New York City reveal that an inconceivable 3.5 million people are worried that they may need food assistance. This number is staggering considering 1.3 million New York City residents already rely on emergency food organizations, such as soup kitchens or food pantries.

Some of the affects of the economic problems that cause hunger in New York City are subtle, yet prevalent nevertheless. Many families that are able to put food on their tables are malnourished and cannot afford healthier options. Low grade meat, fast food, and other forms of junk food which contain high amounts of sugar are causing serious health problems. Conditions such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension have been on the rise in recent times.

Because of a lack of food, in New York City there are many agencies that try to help those who are impoverished. Leading the effort are two in particular, New York City Coalition Against Hunger, and Food Bank for New York City. These programs follow the well-known proverb, “Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime”. In addition to supporting soup kitchens, they set up the hungry with job interviews, educational programs, and religious support groups. The intention of these programs is to not only benefit the hungry by giving them food, but to put those in need of jobs or other types of support in a position to support themselves.

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger sponsors 10 programs around the city. “We are committed to assisting and empowering the emergency food programs that work on the front lines of fighting hunger through the Emergency Food Action Center, Interfaith Voices Against Hunger, our Farm Fresh Initiative, our Technology Project, our Volunteer Matching Center, our Americorps State and VISTA service programs, and our Benefits Outreach initiative. We also work to bring attention to hunger issues among policymakers and the public via our Policy Research and Development program and the Communications Initiative.”

Food Bank for New York City has been working to end food poverty for 25 years. The organization distributes food to roughly 1,000 food assistance programs throughout the city. They are also involved in other aspects of the “hunger problem”, such as managing school nutrition education programs, running after-school and emergency food programs, and conducting research to help end food poverty.

Although it is necessary to have these programs intact, they would be nothing without the individuals who work to support these groups. Anyone can volunteer at an agency, help at soup kitchens, and do research to figure out how to turn this situation around. There are many ways to help, even without assisting an organization. Here at Queensborough there are often efforts to raise funds, volunteer, or donate food to the hungry. Recently on campus there was a Peanut Butter Jelly jam, where sandwiches were made for the hungry. The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society ran a food drive. In addition, Professor Ford’s BU500 class ran a food drive and studied the hunger problem in New York. We can all help those in need by getting involved in one of the many different ways of supporting the hungry.
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Increase in Crimes Against Female Travelers

BY YASMINE YAHYA

Traveling on business can be an amazing perk. Seeing and enjoying new places at someone else’s expense, who wouldn’t want to? For many years the majority of those who enjoyed these perks were men. With in the past few years the number of women traveling for business has increased. According to a survey in 2003 from New York University, 40 percent of all business travelers are women. Although with this amazing opportunity comes risks. Unfortunately, there are many crimes committed against women while traveling on business.

An article in Cosmopolitan magazine’s March 2009 issue titled, “The Hidden Work Danger,” by Michelle Stacey, focused on two such horrible crimes. The crimes involved women who were traveling alone. In September 2008 twenty-one year old Jennifer Lee Hampton, a former homecoming queen from Alabama, was staying in a hotel in Knoxville, Tennessee training the staff of a restaurant that was to open there. She was sexually assaulted and murdered by a hotel employee. The man who murdered Jennifer allegedly used the hotel’s master key to enter her room. Although Jennifer’s colleagues were staying in nearby rooms no one knew until the next morning. Valentino Vazquez Miranda was arrested for Jennifer’s murder after his girlfriend found blood on his clothes and handed it over to the police.

Another horrific incident happened in 2002 to 30 year old Alexandra Zapp. She worked for a very prestigious sailboat racing organization in Rhode Island. She traveled by car to Boston for a charity event. On her way back home from the event she was sexually assaulted and murdered by a Burger King employee at a popular rest stop. After resting in her car she woke up to find a man outside her car. She ran outside to call 911 and saw that the man had run off. She got back in her car and continued driving home. A few of her colleagues were staying in a nearby hotel. She called them and they rushed over. They searched the area and saw a man with her car. They got in the car and took him to the police. The man said that he was just trying to help her and that he had been homeless for a long time. He was later convicted of murder.

Although only a very small number of women are targeted while traveling alone. Which is why women need to know ways to protect themselves and how to prevent being robbed, sexually assaulted, or even murdered. Not only while traveling on business, but with summer vacation around the corner safety is always important.

1. Always plan your trip ahead of time. Study maps, plan rest stops, and stay on an upper floors away from catwalks and terraces.
2. Never list your home address on the luggage tag. If on business, or return when they expect you to they can alert the authorities.
3. If you must stop at a rest stop at night avoid walking to your car alone. Ask a security guard for assistance.
4. Do not sleep in your car. If you are tired stay in a motel, spending the extra cash may not be ideal but it can save your life.
5. Always tell someone of your travel plans. If you do not call or return when they expect you to they can alert the authorities.
6. Never get into an assailants car. Kick and scream as loud as you can. It’s more likely than not he will run off for an easier target than to hurt you as you get away. Getting in the car highly increases the risk of murder.
7. Be aware of ‘staged’ car accidents meant to catch you off guard.
8. Always lock your car door.

Hotel Safety:

1. When you check in, ask the front desk to write your room number down on your room card envelope instead of saying it out loud so that others do not overhear which room you are staying in.
2. Most employees have master keys so make sure your room has a double bolt lock and a peep hole.
3. “Do Not Disturb” signs can prevent robbery, it gives thieves the impression that the room is occupied. The “Please Make Up This Room” sign tells everyone you’re not there. Call housekeeping instead.
4. You want to be far from emergency exits because someone might try open to avoid using the elevators and stay on an upper floors away from catwalks and terraces.
5. Never list your home address on the luggage tag. If on business, put the company’s address on the tag. Use covered luggage tags as well.

Possibly the most important tip is to always have your guard up and to always be aware. For more information, visit kevincoffey.com. There are many other helpful tips on www.travel.state.gov. Please be safe.
Many great works of literature reveal brilliance that is hidden under the surface or is ahead of its time. Professor McGill’s play, “Women in Congress,” adapted from Ecclesiazusae, by Aristophanes, is a comedy about the women of Athens deciding to do things their way. These women, with a post modern feminist agenda, propelled themselves forward to run the government.

Professor McGill put her own twist on Ecclesiazusae by including eclectic characters that are dynamic. The performers amuse you through their animated spirit and incredible passion their characters portray. When the curtain rose, Erica Consentino was center stage to shine in the opening scene. She played the character Praxagora, the leader of the rebellion against the male dominated government.

The opening act sets the stage for the rebellion. It is exposed that the government is not running well and the men in power can not get society back on track. Praxagora, feeling women could do a better job, speaks openly about how women have been stepped on for generations. The men were also taking part in meaningful dialogue. They discussed the idea of actually allowing women to take the lead in running government, because as some young men proposed, women are kind, generous and trustworthy, unlike many men. Yet throughout all the dialogue, the comedic tone is felt.

When Rastafarian comes on the stage he tells Crèmes not to follow the laws imposed by the women. He wants men to do things their way, speaks openly about how women have been stepped on for generations. The men were also taking part in meaningful dialogue. They discussed the idea of actually allowing women to take the lead in running government, because as some young men proposed, women are kind, generous and trustworthy, unlike many men. Yet throughout all the dialogue, the comedic tone is felt.

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The Dark Side of Superheroes

By Christopher Peplinski


The movie follows a group of former superheroes called the Watchmen who are in retirement because of the government’s ban on vigilantes. The film is set in an alternate 1985 timeline with President Richard Nixon still the president of the United States. The film deals with the rising tensions between the Soviet Union and are slowly escalating to a nuclear war. The watchmen group includes Dr Manhattan/ Jon Osterman, Walter Kovacs/ Rorschach, Laurie Jupiter/ Silk Spectre, Daniel Dreiberg/ Night Owl and Adrian Veidt/ Ozymandias. The former superheroes end up coming out of retirement when former member Edward Blake, also known as the Comedian is killed in his home. Rorschach aka Walter Kovacs believes that he may have discovered a conspiracy to kill off costumed heroes and searches for answers about Edward Blake’s past and what may have lead to his death. Along the way Walter discovers that one of their own may have been responsible for the former hero’s death and a plot to unleash a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

I thought the film would have been interesting considering it had the elements of a good superhero film with action, superheroes with unique abilities, and a decent storyline. The film turned out to be rather disappointing; with a length of 2 hours 43 minutes the film seems endless. The characters are boring, especially the character of Adrian played by Matthew Goode who gave a lifeless performance. The film was very dialogue driven, instead of action packed. The most disappointing feature of the film was that even though the film attempted to stay faithful to the original comic, it lacked appeal to audience members not already familiar with the story.

However, the film did have some good qualities, such as the amazing performance by Jeffery Dean Morgan who played Edward Blake. What I liked about his character was that he broke all the rules of a traditional superhero, including killing people without mercy, raping women, drinking, and smoking. Another somewhat redeeming quality of the film was the brilliant but yet sadistic performance by Jackie Earle Haley, whose sociopath character Walter Kovacs is portrayed with great depth and dark humor. The flashback scenes show how he became the character that he was. Walter Kovacs was one of the few characters that the film portrayed well, sharing the characteristics of an antihero and hero, which I think was appreciated by fans.

The film should have been separated into two trilogies, so all 12 comics would not have been crammed into one movie. The first trilogy could have included more of the original Watchmen who were actually hired by the United States, which would have allowed more back-story for their characters. The second trilogy could have focused more on the new Watchmen, after the government placed a banned on vigilantes, thereby explaining their sense of isolation and fear. Overall, bringing the Watchmen onto the big screen could have been handled in a much more creative way.

The Art of a Hero

By Brad Colombi


Comic books provide us with the escape needed in the world which we live today. With so many wrongs that refuse to be righted, comic books create an alternate universe in which fantasies can actually exist. Our minds are home to ideas, which we long to bring to fruition in the real world, and comic books provide the dreamers with a medium of expression. Watchmen, based on an obscure twelve-issue comic book series, takes those fantasies and combines them with our world of peril and uncertainty.

Watchmen is leagues apart from the Spider-Man and Superman universe of storytelling, as it presents an unsettlingly real-world setting of despair and hopelessness, much like our own. Where Spider-Man’s plot and style of filmmaking always presents a glimmer of hope, even when the conflicts become grim, Watchmen leaves us with none. The cinematography shines bright though the overall emotional tone is dark and grim. Colors, textures and other varieties of visual effects play a pivotal part in determining characters’ personalities and their fates.

A character like the masked Rorschach (Jackie Earle Haley), one of the heroes, wears a dingy trench coat and brutally attacks and kills those who are on the wrong side of the law, while Silk Specter, the sultry vixen hero, wears a bright costume and is the voice of reason. Their appearances are largely related to their personalities, showing the filmmakers designated the focal point to be the characters’ personalities not just the action scenes, and take advantage of the visual-focus of the comic books thereby bringing the box-filled pages to silver screen.

However, Watchmen could be a lot more enjoyable if the filmmakers took as much time preparing the presentation of the plot, as they did with the visual feast. The plot is as masked as Rorschach, prohibiting the viewer from appreciating the ever-unrolling chain of events. There is a plentiful plethora of happenings occurring one after another, and though explanations are provided for some events, sometimes they are not, leaving heads raw from so much scratching. My scalp was pretty raw from this foolishly written flick, but the remedy was the constantly changing scenery and well-choreographed action scenes, which occur quite frequently but remain on-screen long enough to garner ample appreciation, continuing Watchmen’s flawless eye candy factor.

Watchmen will confuse, impress and excite, but the plot’s numerous holes give it the presentation of Swiss cheese. It’s all the more curious why artists, such as the filmmakers, would choose to not craft their work to tell a complete, cohesive tale, despite all the other artistic victories scored in Watchmen helping them to stake their claim as visual virtuosos, but their storytelling skills leave those who aren’t satisfied with mere eye-candy, starving for an elegant entrée. Unfortunately, the Swiss cheese leaves the viewer with a mystery just as great as the enigmatic Rorschach character himself.

Rating: ***

Rating System:
**** The answer to our economic problems.
****1/2 May cure most illnesses.
*** May not prevent government taxation, but it’s a good movie!
**1/2 Sure beats a Celine Dion concert!
** Like stale potato chips; they’re OK, but they could be better.
*1/2 May be the results of government intervention.
* More annoying than the mass media.
½ It might not be eco-friendly, but we should burn the film reel.

No Stars. They can make a movie this bad because they have freedom of speech, you say? The first amendment says nothing about boring people to tears!
ART REVIEWS

Race to Witch Mountain – A Classic Space Adventure Gets an Update

BY CHRIS PEPLINSKI

The updated take on the 1975 film Escape from Witch Mountain follows the story of two aliens named Sara (played by Annasophia Robb) and her brother Seth, played (Alexander Ludwig) who land on Earth when their spaceship crashes in the beginning of the film. Their ally Jack Bruno, who happens to be an ex-con, turned cab driver, played by former WWE wrestler Dwayne Johnson, agrees to help them on their journey to recover their missing spaceship which is being held at an underground facility at Witch Mountain. Jack discovers that Sara has the power of telepathic and telekinetic abilities and Seth has the ability of going through walls and having super strength. Dr Alex Freidman played by Carla Gugino, who happens to be a scientist, helps the trio familiarize themselves with the concepts of outer space travel. She has also been trying to prove her theory that extraterrestrial life does indeed exist. Seth and Sara came on a mission to Earth in order to save their planet; their government plans to invade because their planet’s atmosphere is dying and has become unlivable. Unfortunately, Seth, Sara, Jack, and Alex, are pursued by Major Henry Burke who wants to capture the two aliens so they can be experimented on. What complicates matters is a hunter called Siphon, sent by the government from Seth and Sara’s planet whose mission is to destroy them.

This film is great, and it gives Dwayne Johnson a chance to show his comedic side in addition to being a “father figure” to Seth and Sara. Carla Gugino was also amazing, since she happens to have great chemistry with Dwayne Johnson and manages to play the role of the serious scientist with charisma and humor all at the same time. Ciaran Hinds gives a convincing performance, as bad guy Major Henry Burke who wants answers about where Seth and Sara came from, and what their purpose is on Earth. This film also features cameos from the original stars of the Witch Mountain films, Kim Richards who plays a waitress named Tina, who helps Jack escape with the aliens and Ike Eisenmann, who plays Sheriff Anthony.

The only actor who seemed a little weak was Alexander Ludwig, who plays Seth as a bit of a pessimist regarding the human race and who feels that they can’t be trusted but eventually realizes that there are some humans who are trustworthy and kind. I felt that his performance was a little stiff, despite his best effort to act like the protective brother. Anna Sophia Robb was decent as Sara, even though she seemed more like a typical pretty teenage girl rather than an alien. I would recommend this film to both kids and adults alike since it has a good storyline with plenty of action, special effects, and lots of humor. The film is a must see for fans who enjoy the original films.

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Credit; Nicole Rodriguez Robbins
QCC students and faculty attend Queens Hearing
# WOMEN’S “FAST PITCH” SOFTBALL
## 2009 Season Schedule

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<td>Nassau CC</td>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>Monroe College</td>
<td>Monroe College</td>
<td>4:00 pm</td>
<td>DH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>Elizabeth City University</td>
<td>Virginia Beach, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Pace University</td>
<td>Virginia Beach, VA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>3/21</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dutchess CC</td>
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<td>DH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Region XV Playoffs @ Higher Seed</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri.-Sun.</td>
<td>5/1-5/3</td>
<td>Region XV Playoffs @ Westchester CC</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>DH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.-Sun.</td>
<td>5/14-5/17</td>
<td>NJCAA National Tournament @ Rochester, Minnesota</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- * Indicates Scrimmage Games.
- S - Indicates Single Game (1 game).  DH - Indicates Double Header (2 games).
- QCC Home Games to be played @ Cardozo HS (located directly across street from QCC Main Entrance) & TBA.

**Head Coach:** Pete Marchitello  
**Assistant Coach:** Sabrina Moore  
**Assistant Coach:** Jodi Vitale  
**Volunteer Assistant Coach:** Samantha Pine  
**College President:** Dr. Eduardo Marti  
**Department Chairperson:** Dr. Aaron Krac  
**Athletic Director:** Pete Marchitello  
**Website:** [http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/Sports/](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/Sports/)  
**Department Phone Number:** 718-631-6322  
**Department Fax Number:** 718-631-6333

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3 pm - Theatre Arts

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Fantasy Baseball

BY ALAN SILVERMAN

Now that the trade deadline for all fantasy basketball leagues has passed and the winter is slowly transitioning into spring, it’s time to focus our attention on the upcoming 2009 fantasy baseball season.

When your draft comes around players like Hanley Ramirez, Albert Pujols, and Jose Reyes will most likely fill out the first three picks in your draft. And of course you have players like David Wright, Miguel Cabrera, and Grady Sizemore among others to fill out the next few picks. But as we are all aware, it’s not the players you draft in the first eight rounds that will take you to the promised land, but the under the radar players you select from rounds nine and on that bridge the gap lies the difference between fantasy champion and another average team.

Last year, if you closely watched the waiver wire, upcoming fantasy stars who weren’t drafted were later picked up between mid April and May. Players like 3B Evan Longoria of the Tampa Bay Rays, and SP Edinson Volquez of the Cincinnati Reds, for example, worked their way up to the majors and almost instantly began producing for their respective ball clubs. Although players like Longoria and Volquez won’t go unseen this season, there are a couple of players you should be aware of drafting in the later rounds who can be beneficial to your fantasy team.

ROOKIES

Chris Davis 1B. Tex. – With the departure of Mark Teixeira, rookie Chris Davis will get a chance to fill in for the future All-Star in his first full season as the Rangers’ first baseman. After only 295 at-bats in his first season, Davis hit 17 homers while batting .285 a clip and knocking in 55 rbis. If you miss out on Justin Morneau, Lance Berkman, or even Adrian Gonzalez, Davis could be a great source of home runs and rbis due to the departure of Teixeira. Don’t draft him too early but don’t fall asleep on him either.

Matt Wieters C. Bal. - Wieters is the next big thing. It’s as simple as that. The rookie catcher will in all likelihood begin the season in Triple-A Norfolk, and it won’t be long until he is called up to the show. In 130 games played last year between high-A and Double-A ball Wieters hit .355 while hitting 27 homers knocking in 91 rbis and scoring 89 runs. Without a doubt, Matt will be a top 5 fantasy catcher by the end of the season.

Jason Motte RP. Stl. - If you are in a pitching heavy league and are in need of a closer, Motte’s your man. Don’t even entertain the idea of drafting a Trevor Hoffman type if Motte is available. Ever since Jason Isringhausen had hip surgery twice in two years from 06’ – 08’, the Cardinals have been fumbling looking for a solidified closer. No need to panic. Rookie relief pitcher Jason Motte made a few appearances last season for the Cards and looks to be the favorite going into the season as the Cardinals starting closer. Relieving in 6 this spring training innings thus far, Motte has recorded a 1.50 ERA and 2 saves. Now that SP Chris Carpenter is healthy and no longer working out of the pen, Motte should have the closers role handed to him just a few days before the start of the 09’ season.
## MEN’S BASEBALL

### 2009 Season Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>S/DH</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>American Baseball Institute</td>
<td>Clearwater, Florida</td>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>Eckerd College</td>
<td>Clearwater, Florida</td>
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<td>American Baseball Institute</td>
<td>Clearwater, Florida</td>
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<td>Pasco Hernando CC</td>
<td>Clearwater, Florida</td>
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<tr>
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<td>University of Tampa</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Suffolk Grant CC</td>
<td>QCC (A. Legion Field)</td>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>Suffolk Grant CC</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>3/17</td>
<td>Nassau CC</td>
<td>QCC (A. Legion Field)</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>Nassau CC</td>
<td>QCC (A. Legion Field)</td>
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<td>KCC (Keyspan Park)</td>
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<td>Kingsborough CC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Borough of Manhattan CC</td>
<td>QCC (A. Legion Field)</td>
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<td>BMCC (R. Clemente)</td>
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<td>Globe Institute</td>
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**Revised 3/13/09**

**Head Coach:** Rich Kashdan  
**Assistant Coaches:** Roger Mischel  
**College President:** Dr. Eduardo Marti  
**Department Chairperson:** Dr. Aaron Krac  
**Athletic Director:** Pete Marchitello  
**Website:** [http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/Sports/](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/Sports/)  
**Department Phone Number:** 718-631-6322  
**Department Fax Number:** 718-631-6333
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Read your work or share another’s. To sign up in advance to read, contact Dr. Joan Dupre: jdupre@qcc.cuny.edu

A sign-up sheet will also be available at the event. There is a 5 minute time limit so everyone can participate.