Stimulus Dollars Temporarily Halt Governor Paterson’s Proposed Cuts to CUNY and SUNY

BY REESE THOMPSON

The latest chapter in the on-going battle over Governor Paterson’s proposed cuts to public higher education came in February when it was announced that New York was to receive $24.6 billion in aid over the next two years from the federal government. The amount, which exceeded projected estimates, is part of the $787 billion stimulus package signed into law by President Obama, which includes over $126 billion earmarked for education spending. Of the $24.6 billion expected over the next two years, Paterson said he hoped to use $1.9 billion to restore cuts to SUNY and CUNY.

CUNY, which has a long tradition of serving lower-income students, is only one of the public institutions that serve middle and lower-income citizens to have been targeted by Paterson’s budget proposals. The proposals, which would introduce 88 new taxes and fees, would affect everything from property taxes, vendor licensing fees, cab rides, internet music downloads and movie and sports tickets. Dan Cantor, executive director of the liberal Working Families Party, has said that Paterson is “nickel-and-diming us here. We want to have a robust, thriving economy, not one that’s cramped by all these nuisance taxes.” The Working Families Party is only one of the many voices urging Paterson to raise taxes on the rich.

A recent poll found growing support among New Yorkers for various ‘fair share’ tax reform proposals. The poll found that 77% of New Yorkers supported raising income tax rates on those making $1 million or more, while 59% supported a tax hike on New Yorkers making $250,000 or more. Of those polled, only 22% percent preferred additional budget cuts in education and health care.

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Unemployment Soars and More Americans Join the Peace Corps

BY CINDY GORENSTEIN

Amid massive layoffs and an economy offering few employment prospects, the number of Americans volunteering for Peace Corps and Projects Abroad is growing. According to the University Madison Wisconsin News, the Peace Corps had a 16% increase in applications over the past year. Projects Abroad, a commercial volunteer service, experienced a 15% increase.

The trend becomes clearer when looking at Project Abroad’s most recent enrollment statistics. Rose Palmer from Hillgrove PR, the public relations agency for Projects Abroad, released data showing enrollment increased 55% in December and 64% in January as unemployment claims surged from $77,000 to 598,000 respectively over that time. With few appealing jobs available, many see this as the perfect time to make a difference by helping those less fortunate. Although they are not paid for their work, volunteers have the opportunity to live in a foreign country, learn a new language and experience a different culture.

The increase in enrollment for the Peace Corps indicates that people have decided to postpone the job search in the expectation that they will return to a better job market after the 27 months of service. Volunteers that want to take a shorter break from the job hunt may choose Projects Abroad, which offers durations of two weeks to three months. Volunteers that want to complete a two-year commitment often take that time to travel to another location that span from Asia to Central America and from Europe to Africa. The list of services volunteers provide is vast. Some examples of Peace Corps projects include helping teachers develop better methods in the Eastern Caribbean, opening a language and computer training center in Armenia, forming a revolving business loan program in Ghana, performing community forestry in Thailand, and working to improve water quality.

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Bipartisanship

BY MOHAMMED SHAIKH

Even after the successful passage of the bill some Republican governors are calling the bill useless and have claimed that they are not willing to take the money allotted to their state. They claim that there are too many strings attached and by accepting the bailout funds they will be doing more harm than good to their constituents. These Republican governors want more tax cuts included in the bill. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal claims that “While some of the projects in the bill make sense, their legislation is larded with wasteful spending.” What exactly is this “wasteful spending?” Jindal claims that the $8 billion for high-speed rail projects, such as a “magnetic levitation line from Vegas to Disneyland, is one example of pork. Other examples of pork include $30 million for wetlands restoration n the San Francisco Bay Area to protect the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse. According to Jindal, while these things might be necessary they certainly don’t belong in a stimulus package.

It seems to me that Governor Jindal’s opposition is more political than founded upon a rational policy position. After losing the recent Presidential election, many in the Republican Party have called for reforms in the GOP. As a CNN analyst put it, “the Republican party is too old, too white and too male.” Realizing this reality the Republicans elected an African-American, Michael Steele, as their RNC Chairman, and many see Jindal as a possible contender to President Obama in the 2012 elections.

The Republicans or as a matter of fact any opposition party always claims that the ruling party has rigged the legislation with pork and thus the bill is of no use to Americans and should be declared null and void. What we end up with is opposition for the sake of opposition and majority parties which thinks it can bulldoze legislation and have it declared a law.

The Democrats being the majority party must take the initiative in sorting things out and getting all sides on the same side of the fence. In the end it is the majority party which must answer for its failures. Whatever has to be done must be done fast, because quite frankly midterm elections are two years away. If this stimulus package or other measures taken by President Obama fail to deliver tangible signs of hope, the Democrats will be in for a rude awakening. If President Obama fails to turn things around he may be an underdog going into the 2012 election against a Republican candidate who will miss no opportunity in criticizing him when it comes to the economy.

With each passing day more detail are revealed about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. What we need to know is that this bill is sustainable. For this to be done we need to have effective oversight of the bill. Our law makers must make it clear that this bill will revive the American economy.

The American people are willing to sacrifice for the sake of a better tomorrow, but we need to see results. Instead of politicizing the economy both political parties must work together in true bipartisanship for the better of the country.

Can Barack Obama’s Plan Work?

BY MOSES MASAAZI

The United States Congress passed President Barack Obama’s $787 billion stimulus package on February 13, 2009 in Washington D.C. President Obama signed it into legislation on February 17 in Denver, Colorado. But can this stimulus plan work against the national multi-trillion dollar debt that must be paid back with interest?

According to Recovery.gov, Obama plans on using $75 billion for the mortgage crisis, $288 billion for tax relief, $59 billion for health care and $53 billion for education and setting background checks and regulations for people to be able to take out loans. Where exactly is the money funding this stimulus plan coming from? Private bankers, some argue illegally acting against the Constitution, control, distribute, print and determine the value of our currency on a daily basis. Maybe the Obama administration has figured out how they will dig this country out of the hole it has dug for itself by making the hole deeper. Putting more credit and money into the hands of the same people who mishandled it time and time again is not going to move the economy in the long term. It might work for a limited amount of time but it takes some people a long time to learn their lesson. The fact that this money has to be paid back doesn’t change. Obama’s rise to power and the stimulus package itself is not a definite solution to our problems. Negative fiscal balance sheets are piling (continued on page 19)
Many students transfer to Queensborough Community College each semester for various reasons. But do these reasons keep them here? Whether you come to QCC for the convenient location or the affordable tuition some transfer students are claiming QCC cannot compare to their experiences at their previous colleges.

When interviewed, several transfer students complained about the quality of the physical facilities at QCC. One student stated, “I was shocked to see the condition of this campus. There’s paint peeling and chipping off of the walls, the desks are way too small and some are broken.” She went on to complain about the condition of the bathrooms as well, something many QCC students comment upon. Another student made the observation that there are not enough seats for all of the students in some classes. This QCC student claimed that, “In one of my classes we have to search for seats from other classrooms. There’s just not enough room. The class is packed. This never happened at Nassau Community College.” Other conditions that were brought up were the lack of lounges for students to use in between classes or during long breaks. Most of the seating is outdoors which doesn’t help much since it is usually cold in New York. And it’s been long observed by this reporter that throughout the school year it’s not unusual to see students sitting on hallway floors outside of their classrooms.

There are many studies that link the condition of school facilities to student achievement. One such study is by the University of Georgia, “Influence of the School Facility on Student Achievement,” a collaboration of researchers from various disciplines and which was written by Elizabeth Jago and Ken Tanner in April 1999. The study claims that “Improper maintenance of fixtures led to lower than average student performance…” It stresses the importance of every physical aspect of the school facility from lighting to color and the size of the classrooms. In addition, an article posted on the United States Department of Education website on April 3, 2000 titled “Impact of inadequate School Facilities on Student Learning.” states that “A number of studies have shown that many school systems, particularly those in urban and high-poverty areas, are plagued by decaying buildings that threaten the health, safety, and learning opportunities of students… A growing body of research has linked student achievement and behavior to the physical building conditions and overcrowding.

Not only do these articles and studies highlight the fact that a school’s physical condition can effect student performance, but that it also impacts the behavior of the professors/teachers. The study conducted by the University of Georgia claimed that teachers are directly affected by the physical condition of schools which can in turn affect their relationship with students and their style of teaching. Some QCC students find this connection to be true. One student spoke of his experience this way, “I feel as if some professors already classify us based on where QCC is located and how it looks. They treat us like we are high school students, or do not take our education seriously.” Another student thought she had good experiences with her professors at QCC, but claims the school’s condition still affects the quality of her education. “I love the professors here, but the condition of QCC can sometimes distract from learning or even disrupt it. For example, most of the maps in the classrooms are ripped and torn beyond repair.”

Some of us love the convenient location of QCC, others the affordable tuition. But whatever one’s reason for being here, is it enough to make you stay at Queensborough? Though we all have different experiences at QCC, I think we all can agree that some improvements should be made. The campus could use some fresh paint, new supplies, cleaner facilities, and indoor lounges. And with tuition on the rise, we can hope such improvements will be more easily achieved.

Black History Month: The History of America

February is Black History Month. This year QCC honored Black History Month by having a trivia challenge. The Black History Super Bowl Trivia Game Show was held on February 18, 2009, and was sponsored by the Student Government and the Office of Student Activities directed by Ms. Gisela Rivera. The game show was structured like Jeopardy, with questions ranging from Black History to Sports and Politics. The Game Show had three rounds. The prizes totaled three hundred dollars. The first prize was a laptop computer case and headphones, the second prize was an accessory case for your iPod (yeah, these prizes were pretty practical). But the best was saved for last: money! During the intermission everybody feasted on delicious chicken, macaroni and cheese, and then washed it all down with a tasty fruit punch.

During the intermission of the game I had the pleasure to talk to some of the students about how they felt about black history. When I asked, “If you had one phrase to describe Black History and the present time what would it be?” Ellie, a student at QCC, said “Black History 2009 Changing Minds.” Most of the faculty members I spoke with felt the same way about this question: “What event in Black History had the biggest impact on your life?” Many responded by citing the election of Barack Obama on January 20, 2009. Lt. Jack Black, the Assistant Director of Public Safety of the QCC campus, had this to say: “Change has come.”

Black History Month was not always Black History Month. It was started by Carter G. Woodson, a slave who later became a high school teacher. At that time black history was not taught in schools. It was not until Woodson started the Association for Study of Negro Life and History to study the accomplishments of African Americans that Black History began getting taught in schools.

Later, on February 19, 1926 Woodson established “Negro Week,” an event that would later evolve into Black History Month. And here is the answer to a question you may not have known the answer to: Black History Month is celebrated in February because the 13th amendment to abolish slavery was signed in January, but the slaves did not hear about it until February. It wasn’t until 1976 that Carter G. Woodson’s “Negro Week” was changed to a month long celebration of all the struggles and achievements of African Americans. It is because of the efforts of Mr. Carter G. Woodson that Black History has become a part of the school system and part of our lives.

I wanted to find out more about what was going on at QCC to help African Americans so I spoke to Mr. George Munchita, the transfer coordinator for QCC.

Christina: “What event in history had the most effect on you in the way you feel about Black History?”
Mr. Munchita: “Black History is an analogy of the accomplishments of black people, famous or not.”

Christina: “What does black history mean to you?”
Mr. Munchita: “Black History is an analogy of the accomplishments of black people, famous or not.”

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Arts and Science

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http://pfa.adelphi.edu
Everyday living in the U.S. has become harder due to the present state of the economy. The United States is currently in the midst of a recession that is being felt in every quarter. I am a student at Queensborough Community College. One of the burdens of attending college is expenses: including, especially, tuition, books, and the number one budget killer...food. Food, a necessity no one can do without, is the number one expense that every student on campus feels as a financial burden. The cafeteria food is so expensive at QCC that most students bring their own food from home and from other restaurants.

At the QCC cafeteria it always costs over five dollars for a meal. To save money for other necessities, I often bring food from home. At one point in time a bagel with cream cheese was merely a dollar but today a bagel with cream cheese is a whopping Three Dollars! That is triple the price in only one year. The food and snacks offered in the vending machines stationed in the hallways about the QCC campus are marked up even higher. Almost every item is double or more its unit price in a typical bodega or grocery. Ordinarily, for example, a snickers bar costs fifty to sixty cents. The vending machines at QCC carry the very same candy bar for a dollar. A small bag of chips is sixty cents and at the corner store it’s a quarter. Sometimes I stop at the truck that sells food in front of school but the food is really too greasy and the prices are too high. Why is the college not monitoring the inflated prices these concessions are charging students at a time when the economy is spiraling downward? Many QCC students work full time jobs and have a full course schedule, yet never have time to sit down and enjoy a meal. Some students have kids in addition to jobs and school. A cheaper alternative to the QCC cafeteria service, or food trucks are McDonalds, Burger King or Starbuck. For example, starting in March, Starbuck is going to release a new breakfast menu. Some of the meals will be under $3.95, and include a small latte and oatmeal or a slice of reduced-fat cinnamon swirl coffee cake. In addition, most everything that is sold in Starbuck is low fat, and the menu lists calories for all items sold. This is great news for weight watchers. Other restaurants which have begun posting calorie information included Quiznos, Subway, and McDonald’s. In addition, many fast food retailers are lowering their prices because of the country’s rising unemployment.

McDonald’s dollar menu is another way to save money. You can get a hot fudge sundae, a side salad, 2 apple pies, a fruit and yogurt parfait, and the McDouble each for only one dollar. And McDonald’s is adding healthy foods to its menu. So whether you like junk food or you are a healthy eater you can find something on the dollar menu.

The conflict that students at QCC face, however, is that though the prices on campus are financially untenable we are compelled to buy for the sake of convenience. When thristy in between classes, my dilemma is whether to purchase the Dasani water from the vending machine for a dollar and fifty cents or wait until I get to a corner store. I believe what hurts students the most is that although we are paying more we are not receiving the true value of what we pay. Hence the twenty-five cent bag of chips for sixty to seventy-five cents. Across the length of a week, a month, and the semester if all adds up. The downward turn in the economy is so bad that food vendors are raising prices in response. It is definitely survival of the fittest for competitors. However, why must students pick up the financial slack when the cost of tuition and course supplies is already breaking the bank – really, it’s a form of unfair taxation! CUNY cafeteria services should follow Starbuck’s lead.

School is stressful academically, emotionally, mentally, and financially. Some students (including myself) have children, two jobs, and understand that in today’s competitive environment school is a necessary expense. CUNY schools, including Queensborough, should do a better job of keeping the cost of a basic necessity, food, within reason. At present, the food services on our campus are simply too expensive for many students. The prices at my school should not hinder the financial welfare of students and their families.

Michael Zohrabian did an excellent job of managing this project, and with the assistance of Mr. Marshall in Purchasing, they identified a “turnkey” contractor who managed to complete the whole project in record time and at a very reasonable budget.

Board approves it this spring. The low bidder’s contract will cost about 60% of our original construction cost estimate, calculated a year ago, because of the cascading economy. That’s really reaching deep to find “the bright side.” Other meaningful, large projects in progress are:

- **Campus Electric Project**: To bring adequate, reliable electric power to all buildings on campus consulting electrical engineers are now working on the design of a new electrical distribution system for the whole campus, including enough power for a new academic building that is included in the long range, campus plan. Now in the early stages of design this very expensive multi-phased project does not yet have an implementation date. Phase One is the replacement of the two transformers on 56th Avenue that blew out. Right now four buildings are getting electric power from borrowed transformers. Con Edison wants their loaned transformers back very soon so Phase One should happen quickly. The changeover to new permanent transformers will be smooth and not even a coffee pot will be able to tell the difference in the quality of the supplied power.

- **Fire Alarm Project**: Phase Two of three. The second phase has been funded and consultant design work is about to begin. Again, it is too early for a project schedule. Since all the equipment is manufactured by Johnson Controls, who accomplished Phase One, they will be the prime contractor.

- **Central Dining Project**: A consulting architect was chosen months ago but the project was placed on-hold for review by the Governor’s Office. DASNY who along with QCC will manage the project once it is released for design is moving ahead with information gathering with Campus Planning so that the consultants are prepared to begin immediately once the go-ahead is given.

- **Campus Doors and Central Locking Project**: The engineering consultant for this project was also chosen many months ago but this too is awaiting the Governor’s approval since NY State money is involved. Campus Planning developed the details of this project several years ago so once the go-ahead is given the consultants will be off to a fast start.

Note: Don Ranney recently retired following four and a half years as RA, CFO Director, Campus Planning for Queensborough. We wish him the best!
Launch of the QCC Sustainability Project website!

By Dion Pincus
Chair, Sustainability/Communications

You can access the site at: http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SusProj/. When you go to the website, you will see a navigation panel to the left where you can link to each of the sections listed below:

Mission, Goals and Objectives: An overview of the CUNY Sustainability Project; the objectives of the QCC Sustainability Campus Council and the Activity Groups assigned; and a link to a document for creating a methodology to continuously measure and compare performance and achievement against previously established baselines and timetables.

What is a Carbon Footprint?: A discussion of the term “carbon footprint”, and links to sites for measuring and/or reducing carbon footprints.

Sustainability Campus Council: A listing of chairs, co-chairs, and interested college community members participating in the QCC Sustainability Campus Council.

Activity Groups: A dedicated section for the co-chairs and members of the 8 established Sustainability Activity Groups, complete with links to the QCC GreenBoard (community discussion board), and a fully editable wiki (QCC EcoWiki) within which Activity Group members can collaborate in the composition of their action plans.

Principles of Sustainable Design: A discussion of sustainable design’s intent to produce places, products and services in a way that reduces use of non-renewable resources, minimizes environmental impact, and relates people with the natural environment, with a link to an article discussing the implications for designing physical objects, the built environment and people with the natural environment, with a link to an article discussing the implications for designing physical objects, the built environment and services to comply with the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability.

Current QCC Sustainability Efforts: An evolving list, with links, to QCC programs and activities (both on-campus and in partnership with external agencies, and both current and under consideration) aligned with the work of the QCC Sustainability Activity Groups.

What Can I Do?: A section (currently empty) which will be the repository for posting best practices, ideas and suggestions, submitted by the campus community via the website’s Webform for Submission of Content.

Links to Sustainability Websites: An evolving list of links to websites for Sustainability resources, virtual tours and podcasts.

Current Research and Literature: A link to evolving lists of current research, literature reviews on campus sustainability, and abstracts of dissertations and theses on campus sustainability.

QCC Contests/Grants: A section devoted to informing the college community about sustainability-related contests and grant-funding opportunities.

GoGreen! Newsletter: A .pdf archive of past and current issues of the QCC GoGreen! Newsletter. 2nd issue under construction as we speak!

QCC GreenBoard: community discussion board: A discussion board open to QCC students, faculty, administrators and staff members, for dialogue and sharing of ideas about campus sustainability.

Webform to Submit Content: A simple webform, which can be used by QCC students, faculty, administrators and staff members, for submitting content for review and inclusion in the QCC Sustainability Website and/or upcoming issues of the GoGreen! Newsletter.

It is my hope that the college community, especially members of the Sustainability Campus Council Activity Groups, will both use and contribute to these resources. So please take a look at the site; click around; and if there is content which you would like to see added (links, grants, current research, best practices or ideas), kindly use the Webform to submit your contribution(s) for review.

Queensborough Students Speak Out Against Tuition Hikes

NYPIRG PRESS RELEASE

On Wednesday March 4th more than 200 students from both SUNY and CUNY campuses attended NYPIRG/ USS sponsored Higher Education Advocacy day in Albany. Four bus loads of city students, including 6 students from Queensborough, made the 3 hour journey up to Albany to give students the opportunity to speak to legislators face to face about higher education proposals that could drastically set-back their educations. The governor’s proposal to cut community college funding by 10%—a cut that would lead to a tuition hike of as much as $400 dollars, could greatly affect Queensborough Students.

About 100 meetings with legislators and staff were scheduled in the legislative offices throughout the day. Queensborough students met with the legislators that represent the QCC campus, Senate Higher Education Chair Toby Ann Stavisky and State Assemblyman Mark Weprin.

“I found the day inspiring to see how much effort students put in for their cause,” Jason Rowe, 19, Visual Arts Major.

Along with the proposals to cut funding and raise tuition, the state is also calling for cuts to TAP, the tuition aid program. The Governor’s proposal to reduce/eliminate TAP for students with more than one family member in college, students taking 12-14 credits, graduate students, dependent of retired state workers, students who are struggling with federal student loans, or students who are struggling with could cause some students to drop out of school.

“I would be dramatically affected by the tuition hike as TAP is what’s allowing me to pursue my future.” Rowe.

NYPIRG is hoping to continue to fight the cuts any way possible. On March 19th CUNY is holding a public hearing at the Queens College, Rosenthal Library, Room 203 from 4:00- 6:00 p.m. A number of elected officials, community members, and CUNY faculty are expected to attend. It is strongly encouraged by all that are opposing the cuts that Queensborough Community College students attend the event. Please drop by the NYPIRG office or call (718) 225-9121 to sign up for transportation to the event.
I was jolted awake as my head cracked against the window pane of the rocking coach bus. My head was in a fog of half remembered conversations and safety procedures. I set myself deeper in my seat, resolved to tempt sleep again until a blinding light burned the back of my retinas. Stars from the Maryland sky somehow found their way to our coach bus and I was left dazed and confused. Once my eyes settled, Grecibeth materialized beside me with a digital camera aimed in my direction, and a bubbly “Good Morning” smile across her face. I was less than humored.

That is my first memory of January 20th. The rest is pretty much a blur with certain parts highlighted and others barely remembered. That day I totaled two hours of sleep and about sixteen on my feet. Please understand memory isn’t the most accurate recorder of things, and is prone to emotions felt at the time … I found myself walking that morning. I didn’t quite know where, but then I was met with a familiar sight. The gargantuan “M” of the McDonalds logo peered quietly atop a hill, its glow illuminating the bodies of other anonymous travelers seeking refuge. I passed a shaky hand over my sleeve and saw my watch blink 4:52. We had about six hours until inauguration time. There was a silence that fell over us as we filed through the doors. That quickly ended, with the energy we met once inside. There were orders being yelled, twelve year olds flashing wads of cash, and this one lonesome man staring into the distance. The daylight-to-pass-a-health-care-plan-called-Illinois-Covered procedures. I set myself deeper in my seat, resolved to

I realized the sheer magnitude of what was taking place. Group 6 calmly exited the Blue Line train at 4:52 a.m. for L’Enfant Plaza. The train ride was long, a perfect opportunity to expand health care benefits in Illinois while he was still Governor. In March 2007, Blagojevich tried to pass a health care plan called “Illinois Covered” which would offer near universal health insurance coverage to uninsured and underinsured residents. The plan’s finances would come through tax placed gross receipts on businesses that make more than $2 million a year. House Speaker Michael Madigan and other leaders argued the plan was unrealistic. The legislature turned down Blagojevich’s attempt to expand universal coverage as well as his expansion of the income eligibility requirement for state subsidized care. The Governor illegitimately went ahead and started enrolling families claiming he had the authority to do so, although the plan had not been passed.

Blagojevich’s impeachment makes him the first U.S. Governor to be impeached in over twenty years. The media continues to mock Blagojevich because of his persistence in denying any wrongdoings. The December 9, 2008 article “Obama Seat Investigated” by Timothy McNulty, in The Community Post Gazette, discusses wire tap recordings, Blagojevich was attempting to negotiate the senate seat for ambassadorship or a cabinet post.

If these allegations weren’t enough to pin down the Governor’s guilt, former state attorney general Ronald Burriss, whom Blagojevich ended up appointing to Obama’s senate seat, has had controversy surrounding him. The former state general was accused of bargaining with Blagojevich’s brother to raise money for Rod Blagojevich. However, in an attempt to salvage his reputation Burriss addressed these charges during the impeachment hearings and claimed to have no association with the former Illinois Governor. Six weeks after the trial, however, Burriss amended his
The World’s Waterways are Prisoners of Plastics

By Woo Sung Park

According to a New York Times article published in January of 2008, New York City uses about 1 billion plastic bags every year, and the United States uses about 84 billion plastic bags per year. Almost every store from Best Buy to your local corner grocery store uses plastic bags to package the stuff you buy, which a lot of the time is also packaged by plastic. From the bag of Doritos you buy to the new release DVD, a lot of our goods are packaged by plastic. A report by the E.P.A. calculated that in the year 2007, the U.S. produced 254 million tons of municipal solid waste, 12% of which was plastics, which equals roughly 30 million tons of plastic. To get a scope of the sheer amount of plastics wasted a comparison is useful. Figure your average car weighs about 1-2 tons and an average plastic bag/container weighs at maximum a pound (most plastics weigh much, much less than even 1/4 of a pound), now figure how many plastic bags.containers it would take to make up a ton, then multiply it by 30 million.

What does all of this mean? All waterways around the world eventually end in the oceans, along with our sewage and runoff (chemicals, minerals, soils, etcetera). A lot of our plastics end up in our sewage and rivers which eventually flows into our oceans.

So what? There are five subtropical gyre systems, which are counterclockwise ocean currents that create a vortex, found all over the world’s oceans (The North Pacific Gyre, South Pacific Gyre, North Atlantic Gyre, South Atlantic Gyre, and the Indian Ocean Gyre). Think of it as a really slow toilet flush. Boats and marine animals can easily navigate through these gyres, but plastics are prisoners to these gyres and follow the currents all the way to the center of the gyre. According to Oceana.org and The New York Times, the most polluted of the gyres is the North Pacific Gyre (that lies between the shores of China, Russia, Canada’s west coast, Mexico’s west coast, and the west coast of the U.S.), which at the center has plastic spread out over an area almost the size of Texas. This is not only due to the U.S., but rather the entire world’s use of plastics.

The New York Times reported that scientists have calculated that about 1 million seabirds and about 100,000 marine mammals/sea turtles die per year because of getting caught in plastic and eating plastic. This is due to plastic’s ability of sucking up poisons such as dioxin, P.C.B.s, and DDT which tend to float on top of the oceans (not to mention that eating plastic isn’t the healthiest diet). And when fish mistake tiny pieces of plastics for plankton they in turn ingest the poisons sucked up by the plastics. This can pose a problem for us when the bigger fish we eat, eat the smaller fish containing the poisons.

There is no doubt plastics have revolutionized the way we live, and I can’t envision a world without the use of plastics. Plastics are practically shatter-proof and last for thousands of years. Plastics are easily molded into any shape or form for whatever purpose we want. Without plastics we would have to pay a fortune to repair or replace our car bumpers (car bumpers used to be metal). I like watching television and movies as much as the next person, and without plastics it wouldn’t be possible. This is the dilemma, how to continue to use plastics without destroying our oceans and our life.

Recycling is one option, but it is still a long and expensive process. The two other realistic options are to reduce and reuse. Getting the most use out of plastic. Not mandating by law to comply with them. Fertility guidelines are based on safety, but doctors are not mandated by law to reduce the amount of plastic we use. This can pose a problem for us when the bigger fish we eat, eat the smaller fish containing the poisons.

Another question has arisen as how an unemployed woman could afford to have an in vitro fertilization. Suleman states that she saved for the treatments by working double shifts, and used a reward exceeding $165,000 received after an on-the-job back injury. Suleman’s in vitro fertilization procedure is estimated to have cost $100,000. Another question has arisen as how an unemployed woman could afford to have an in vitro fertilization. Suleman states that she saved for the treatments by working double shifts, and used a reward exceeding $165,000 received after an on-the-job back injury. Suleman’s in vitro fertilization procedure is estimated to have cost $100,000.

Unethical Decisions

By Alesha Bush

Nadya Suleman, a thirty-three year old mother from California made history by giving birth to octuplets on January 26, 2009. Already the parent of six children from previous pregnancies, the birth of Suleman’s octuplets has renewed questions about medical ethics in regard to fertility treatments.

Dr. Michael Kamrava 57, who is an endocrinologist and gynecologist, runs the West Coast IVF in Beverly Hills. He is a recognized leader in the field of in vitro fertilization whose work has led to breakthrough technology, states Shaya Tavefe Mohajer in an article from Associated Press. Dr. Kamrava is the one responsible for transferring six embryos made from donor eggs into Ms. Suleman’s womb. The fertility guidelines state that no more than five embryos should be transferred. Fertility guidelines are based on safety, but doctors are not mandated by law to follow them.

In an ABC News report February 2, 2009, Dan Chil, Alice Gomstyn, Jim Vojtech, and Chris Fransescani reported that in addition to the cost of the fertilization process, the delivery of the octuplets was expensive. The delivery took a team of surgical assistants stationed in four delivery rooms. The cost of an average delivery at Cedars-Sinai ranged from $9000 to $25,000 depending on whether the baby is delivered by Caesarean Section or vaginally. Eight times $25,000 equals $200,000. At this time it remains unclear if taxpayers will foot the bill.

The controversy over medical ethics arose when it was reported that Suleman cannot financially support her first six kids, thereby raising the question as to how she will provide for fourteen. Interviewed for the Associated Press article, Author Caplan, Bioethics Chairman at the University of Pennsylvania, stated, “They went ahead when she had six kids, knowing that she was a single mother…and put embryos in her anyway.” Reporter Shaya Tavefe Mohajer found that Suleman has been supporting her six older kids with $490 worth of food stamps per month and public assistance. Suleman also receives disability payments for three of her youngest that totals $2,379 a month.

Another question has arisen as how an unemployed woman could afford to have an in vitro fertilization. Suleman states that she saved for the treatments by working double shifts, and used a reward exceeding $165,000 received after an on-the-job back injury. Suleman’s in vitro fertilization procedure is estimated to have cost $100,000.

The grandmother Angela Suleman and her husband are $23,225 behind in mortgage payments. The family currently lives in a three bedroom home in suburban Los Angeles. They have been caring for their daughter’s six older children while she was in the hospital recuperating from giving birth to eight babies. The eight babies are the world’s longest surviving octuplets.

Nadya Suleman reportedly holds a psychiatric technicians license and has a 2006 degree in Child and Adolescent Development from California. Were Nadya Suleman’s ethics in the right place? On February 2, 2009 a report written by John Smith from CNN.com states that Suleman said she had been hoping to have one more child preferably a girl, so she had six embryos implanted, two of which led to twins. Puzzling questions remain: If a woman wants one more child, why would a doctor implant six embryos? And, why didn’t Nadya Suleman question his decision?
HOW TO SURVIVE IN A DYING JOB ECONOMY:
Helpful tips on saving money and keeping your job.

By Christian Cisneros

If you are one of the lucky students at QCC who has not yet been affected by the recession, this isn’t the time to be overconfident. The unemployment rate is estimated to reach 9% (about 2.9 million people) by the end of 2009 if the current recession holds course. With most companies implementing a hiring freeze, now is not the time to take your job for granted. Instead, it’s time to make yourself indispensable by creating a great relationship with your manager to show what an asset you are to your company. Touching base to make sure that everyone is on the same page shows that you take your position seriously and are a team player.

Steven Viscusi, author of Bulletproof Your Job, and CEO of Viscusi Group, a New York-based headhunting company, explains that most Human Resource managers typically dismiss “the people who always complain about the temperature in the office, the fax machine, or who can’t stop bragging about their achievements and feel entitled, or who are just difficult to work with.” In other words, avoid making yourself seem like a “high-maintenance employee.” Even being a great performer at work might not save you. According to Viscusi, “Firing is 90% subjective.” He suggests that staying as busy as possible while on the clock can send an appreciative light in your direction. People tend to want to keep the employees that look like they are doing a lot of work. Try asking for work rather than waiting for it to come to you. For further tips on not losing your job check out Bulletproof Your Job. Saving money may not have seemed like such a priority in the past but if you still have cash flowing in, these are the times when tightening your wallet may come in handy. Making budgets and keeping track of the money you spend will be useful when trying to save, and technology makes it much simpler with programs such as Wesabe and Mint, which can be downloaded as applications on your iPhone, making it easy to remember how much it is you are spending. Pinching pennies might not seem like something you usually do but simple things such as packing your own lunch and cutting back on a few luxuries can save thousands in the long run. Websites like allthingsfrugal.com have thousands of tips on how you can cut back expenses and really stretch out your dollars.

If you have already lost your job then it is the time to prioritize, working swiftly and responsibly will help lead you through this rough patch. Calling your credit card company and asking for better rates seems like a rare break but most companies are willing to comply and work out deals. Also, organizing your bills by importance will help a lot, building up debt is not the way to go and keeping your heat going is much more important than paying off your Visa. Applying for government assistance should be one of the first things to do after losing your job. Making weekly spending budgets will make it simple to pay off your bills at the end of the month.

Once you have reached a certain place in your life you may come to see that your are overqualified to do certain jobs. But desperate times calls for desperate measures and sometimes taking a job that seems a bit “beneath you” may be the way to go. You need to decide what is more important to you. Making some income as time passes or putting all your effort into finding the job that you are after. Evaluating your particular financial situation will help you determine if you are too “overqualified” to receive a salary lower than what you are used to. As CUNY students we have many opportunities given to us by our school administration. On the CUNY website there is a page dedicated to providing the information to find employment, internships, and other work opportunities to enhance our experience. One opportunity that has been recently provided for students is CUNY’S partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau that is providing on-campus recruiting, testing and training of CUNY students for Census jobs leading into 2010.

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When we are young we all aspire for greatness. Maybe we want to be athletes or actors, doctors or veterinarians, lawyers or scholars. But as we grow older the realities of life, including economic hardship and other forms of adversity, lead us down paths different from those we had once imagined. Today, it seems, many have forgotten that community college students have the ability to dream and to achieve great things.

Without financial support, many successful community college students rule out the possibility of transferring to expensive colleges and universities. What most community college students do not realize is that the prospect of enrolling in top universities is still possible. There are many organizations with the purpose of creating a pathway from community college to four year institutions. One organization leading the effort is the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which provides undergraduate transfer scholarships worth up to $30,000 per year to community college students and recent alumni to help earn a four year degree.

Although there has traditionally been a stigma that community college students’ academic prowess would not carry over to four year schools, the achievements of those who have made the leap are changing this unfounded belief. On the Jack Kent Cooke website, www.jkcf.org, there is a link to an executive summary which reveals a study of the barriers which prevent community college students from transferring to selective universities. According to Joshua Wyner, Executive Vice President of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, “At the top of our community college classes is a tremendous talent pool, largely untapped by elite colleges. Many of these students attend community college not because they lack the academic talent for a four-year institution, but because they lack the financial resources. The reality is that community college transfer students are often the most determined, high-achieving students on four-year campuses.” Statistics even reveal that community college students who move on to highly selective four year institutions have a higher graduate rate, 80% or 90%, than the 75% who transfer to less renowned schools.

The Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Program is available for students with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or above, who exhibit exceptional promise and demonstrate financial need. They work closely with highly regarded four year universities, including Ivy League schools, to assist in the transfer process. “To accomplish these goals, the Foundation awarded grants totaling $6.78 million over four years to eight highly selective four-year institutions that are expected to enroll 1,100 new transfer students from more than 60 partnering community colleges.”

The Universities that the JKC foundation partners with are Amherst College, Bucknell University, Cornell University, Mount Holyoke College, University of California, Berkeley, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and University of Southern California. Although QCC does not have direct transfer programs with any of these schools, the community college students who have participated in transfer programs with these universities are examples of success stories that each of us can aspire to create for ourselves.

Here at Queensborough, joining The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, the international honor society of two year colleges, is the best way to become exposed to scholarship opportunities. Entrance to Phi Theta Kappa requires students to have a 3.5 GPA, at least 15 college credits, participation in a few community service events, and a one time $60 fee. For more information about Phi Theta Kappa, contact Dr. Emily Tai, Chapter Chairperson (ETai@qcc.cuny.edu), Dr. Paris Svoronos, Co-Chairperson (PSvoronos@qcc.cuny.edu), or Susan Curtis, Liaison, Department of Student Affairs (SCurtis@qcc.cuny.edu).
It always feels seemingly impossible to break old habits that we have acquired at a young age. My old habit was of course, procrastination. I would leave things for the last minute and then eat myself up about it, promising the next time would be different, but the outcome would be the same. I had never thought I was a bad student, but my grades were a reflection of my procrastination. I regretted the choices I had made throughout high school, and all the things I had chosen to do instead of schoolwork seemed so insignificant. I saw that my lack of effort was directly affecting my future.

Throughout my first two semesters in college, after promising myself change, I was falling into the very same trap I fell into during high school. My undecided major had become the bait. Since I was unable to decide what I specifically wanted to study, I had no drive to put effort into my schoolwork. All of a sudden, I realized this chain of events would never stop until I was ready to really change and accept that regardless of my indecisiveness, I would have to start pulling my own weight. I could not let my grades affect my acceptance to the next school. Although I may not use most of the information I attained during my lifetime at school, it made me smarter when I walked out then when I had walked in.

Whether you’re coming into college or about to graduate no time is better than the present to learn from the past and change your life for the gratification of a better future. You are the only one who can decide what type of life you choose to lead. Living to just to get by is not really living at all. Everyone holds the key to their own success. Never settle for anything less than what you’re worth. Work hard for yourself and no one else. Consider everything a growing experience and don’t wait till the last minute to realize you never lived up to your full potential. Whether you’re writing a paper or falling asleep reading something for class, just remind yourself of the better times to come and the idea of succeeding in something you worked hard for. Remember you’re not the only one going through life’s obstacles, so you should never be afraid to work hard.

A Happy Ending: I proved to myself that I could change my old ways and in fall 2008 I made the deans list.
Classic Horror Film Gets a Reboot

By Christopher Pepelinski

The plot of the original film was seven teenage counselors celebrating the re-opening of Camp Crystal Lake after the murder of two counselors 20 years earlier. After ignoring the warnings, each counselor is butchered one by one except for Alice. She encounters Jason’s mother, Pamela Voorhees, who tells her that Jason drowned when the counselors assigned to watch him were having sex. An interesting fact about the Friday the 13th series is Jason Voorhees did not become the killer until the second film, and inherited the famous hockey mask in the third.

The remake follows the story of Clay played by Jared Padalecki, who goes to Crystal Lake when his sister Whitney goes missing while camping with her friends. The town and police residents warn Clay not to go since it is known as Camp Blood, as in the original film. Clay’s desperation in finding his sister makes him easy to like as the main character. Danielle Panabaker, who plays Jenna, is sympathetic toward helping Clay in his journey to find Whitney. Amanda Righetti, as Whitney, plays the perfect heroine who fights for her survival against the homicidal Jason. Aaron Yoo (from the hit movie Disturbia) adds some comedic relief to the film as Chewie. Nana Visitor did a good job as Pamela Voorhees, reminding me of the chilling performance that Betsy Palmer gave in the original film. The remake, however, ultimately belongs to stunt man Derek Mears who portrays Jason as more than just a killing machine, but rather a sympathetic character with a hardened edge.

The Friday the 13th reboot will not disappoint, offering plenty of laughs, nudity, sex and gore which will please horror fans who have seen the original films, or newcomers looking for a good scare.

Super-hero Super-drama: When Push Comes To Shove

By Stephanie Eapalomatides

Push is a new sci-fi thriller, directed by Paul McGuigan and starring Dakota Fanning and Chris Evans. Set in Hong Kong, Push adds a new flavor to the overused major U.S. city scene-setting for all the other superheroes movies, such as Superman, Spiderman, The Fantastic Four, and etcetera. The not terribly strong script is transformed by the outstanding acting and special effects, which carry the movie and keep the audience on board for the adventure.

A government agency, called The Division, produces genetically engineered humans with super powers by injecting them with a mysterious drug, creating an army of superheroes – “movers,” who are telekinetic, “watchers,” who can see the future and “pushers” who can possess a mind and make people do things. Super-powered humans, who do not comply, are violently disposed of. There are some, however, who have managed to stay alive by hiding out. One such super-powered human is Nick (Chris Evans), who is hiding out in Hong Kong. Nick is a “mover.” Right before his father’s death, he was told some day a girl will give him a flower and he will need to help her in order to save the world. The girl turns out to be Cassie Holmes (Dakota Fanning), the “watcher,” who needs his help to find Kira, a “pusher.”

Kira knows how to bring down The Division. They are soon discovered and are hunted by The Division agent Henry Carver (who also killed Nick’s father in the beginning of the flick.) He is a “pusher” and will do anything to stop Cassie and Nick. Unlike many other superhero-ish type movies which are tied to existing comic books, this movie is not.

The movie is very similar to the popular television show Heroes which plays on NBC and which is also both alike and different from all the other superhero movie concepts. Heroes, as in the movie Push, has a division called “The Company” that keeps track of the humans with these capabilities. The supernatural powers used in Push and many other ideas seem to have been derived from NBC’s Heroes. Some of the powers featured on the television series include rapid cellular regeneration, electric emulsion, poison emission, precognition, telepathy, flight, and many, many more. This American science fiction television drama which was created by Tim Kring, tells different stories of ordinary people who developed abilities on the day of an eclipse. Their roles in preventing disasters which are predicted by precognitive painters tie them all together to form an alliance in saving the world. “Save the cheerleader, save the world!” The series mirrors the American aesthetic comic book style, using brief, multi-episode story arcs which all create a larger, more bounding arc.

The movie Push is full of surprises and is most certainly exciting to watch.

Tiny bodies, Yet Huge Talent

By Stephanie Eapalomatides

On February 22, 2008, I had the great pleasure of attending a performance by the Children’s Orchestra Society. The experience was truly phenomenal. I watched children and young adults play classical music with such grace and talent that the entire room seemed to be absorbed by the melody. The beauty of the music was amazing and having it be produced by such tiny hands was that much more astonishing. Overwhelmed by emotion, I listened nearly breathless.

The Children’s Orchestra Society was founded in 1962, by Dr. Ma, and is entirely devoted to exceptional musical education. Once an eighteen member non-profit organization, it has taken giant steps in tuning the foundation into a star-starring two hundred plus members. The Junior Orchestra offers classes at all levels in all classical instruments, composition, chorus, and orchestra. Children’s Orchestra Society is comprised of outstanding and accomplished faculty, who offer the highest quality of expertise, mentorship and commitment.

Children’s Orchestra Society features all of its students in recitals several times a year. Performances have been conducted at monumental concert halls including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall in New York City. The ensemble has traveled as far as the United Kingdom and the Far East and of course throughout numerous major North American cities. Students perform concert pieces alongside nationally and internationally acclaimed classical musicians, giving them an exceptionally opportunity to experience at first hand the success earned through hard work and determination.

Organizations such as Children’s Orchestra Society create incredible opportunities for children to have dreams and make them come true; opportunities to develop their education, to give them a place where they can exert their energy and turn it into brilliant melodies, future careers and if nothing else a feeling of accomplishment.

In response to the performance, the daughter of Yo-Yo Ma and current executive director of the organization, Yoa-Cheng Ma wrote: “It was very moving to hear the recently merged Junior Symphonic Ensemble with their younger counterparts, the Sinfonia Orchestra, perform Sigurd Jorsalfar, by Grieg, and the winner of Junior Discovery, young Aditya Nihalani, who played with exquisite sensitivity way beyond his years! Each of our members comes with their own story, and the amalgamation of all the stories could fill volumes of tales fit for a prince, or princess!”

The Children’s Orchestra is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to “teaching children the language of music,” and for the purpose of presenting young musicians in concerts with their peers and well-established artists. The advanced orchestra will be performing at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday June 3rd, 2009, at 7:30 pm, with Soo Kim, Violin, Orh Shaham, Pianos, and Eric Jacobson, Cello, as well as its 2009 Senior Discovery Winner, Sheena Tsai, who is from Queens. The orchestra returns to QCC on June 21st, 7 pm with its 40th Annual Spring Concert, featuring graduating seniors, and all of its orchestras, and chorus.

For further information please visit www.childrenorch.org.

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Advanced Orchestra will be performing at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday June 3rd, 2009, at 7:30 pm, with Soo Kim, Violin, Orh Shaham, Pianos, and Eric Jacobson, Cello, as well as its 2009 Senior Discovery Winner, Sheena Tsai, who is from Queens. The orchestra returns to QCC on June 21st, 7 pm with its 40th Annual Spring Concert, featuring graduating seniors, and all of its orchestras, and chorus.

For further information please visit www.childrenorch.org.
Island Breeze in January
BY DANIEL FABIANI

A couple of her paintings are on permanent display in the Holocaust Center of Temple Judea in Great Neck. Make sure you stop by at the next open studio, and for more information you can visit her website at www.patriciabrintle.com.

The following is excerpted from an interview with Ms. Brintle:

Daniel: “When would you say was the first time you realized your talent?”

Patricia: “My first memory of artwork was when I was six years old, back in Saint Michel. I came from a humble background, and I remember eating a mango which was very fibrous. The pit had so much hair that I began entwining it together, forming arms and legs. I then drew a face with cooking charcoal, and poof, I had my own Mr. Potato man. Even from a not so good background my artistic side flourished,” she laughed.

Daniel: “I understand that symbolism is very prevalent in your work, is that important when you paint?”

Patricia: “Symbolism happens alone, it’s never the same from beginning to end. A picture starts as a conversation between me and the canvas, and then the image transcends from there. I then say wow, I didn’t even realize I was moving in that direction and the work turns into something meaningful.”

Daniel: “Describe your style.”

Patricia: “I say very often that I do not have a style, but people tell me that when they see my work, they know that it is a Brintle. What I can say though, is that emotions control my style. I do not paint for the world, it is done for me. If people do not like my work, that is okay, I am confident in what I create.”

Daniel: “Are there any artists that you try to emulate?”

Patricia: “Michelangelo. I love the way he portrays the human figure. I wish sometimes that I could go back in time so I could study with him. Vermeer is also a great inspiration. All of his work is by a window and a wall, it’s just fascinating…”

Daniel: “What do you want people to see when they view your work?”

Patricia: “I would like people to learn from my pieces. I would love for them to see something that they can relate to, a color, a device, worldly events, anything; my range is great. I want them to feel that they are there, in my paintings, taking in the warm air and feeling the delicate sand on their toes.”

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*This free event is open only to Queensborough Community College students and alumni.
Stimulus Dollars Temporarily Halt Governor Paterson’s Proposed Cuts to CUNY and SUNY
continued from cover story

Paterson, who has never explicitly ruled out a tax increase on the wealthy, has lashed out at his critics by saying, “It’s easier to make shrill comments like ‘look at what the rich are being taxed — this isn’t progressive.’ ... And if you have a cursory understanding of it, it appears to make a lot of sense. But we will rue the day that we tax the rich, if the rich, who are the job creators in New York, stop doing it, and then people are leaving to find jobs in other states.”

Supporters of the tax proposals note that taxpayers making $40,000 per year face the same tax rates as someone making $4 million a year. The proposals currently being debated by New York’s Senate Democratic Majority would increase the tax for those making $250,000 to $750,000 to 8.25%, while those making $500,000 to $1 million would see a rise in their rates to 8.97%. For those making $1 million the increase would be 10.3%. Opponents of the “fair share” tax point out that the top wealthiest 1% of New Yorkers is already paying 41% of all state income taxes.

The main areas of contention around the Democratic Governor’s proposed cuts (healthcare, tax increases on the wealthy and education) seem to stand in direct contrast to the priorities of the new administration. President Obama has, in recent days, reiterated his goal to reform health care as well as increase taxes on those making over $250,000 a year. In his recent address to congress, Obama placed special emphasis on education. Describing America as having one of the highest school dropout rates of any industrial nation, President Obama called the situation a “prescription for economic decline.” The President also promised access to a “comprehensive and competitive” education for every American “from the day they are born to the day they begin a career.”

The President’s stimulus bill has allotted funds for all aspects of education, including a $15.6 billion increase in Pell Grants, $200 million for College Work Study programs, as well as a tax credit increase of up to $2,500 for all four years of college tuition (up from $1,800 for only the first two years). The bill also includes money going towards low-income schools, improvements to facilities and buildings, and for technological upgrades such as computers, science labs, and teacher technology training.

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Unemployment Soars and More Americans Join the Peace Corps
continued from cover story

in Paraguay.

The Peace Corps, an independent government agency, was established in 1961. This was a period when social consciousness and political activism were popular trends. The agency’s mission was based on the premise that world peace and friendship could be promoted through humanitarian efforts.

Today volunteers continue to find meaning and spiritual rewards in helping others. They are welcomed and often revered by the people of the local community who are grateful for the assistance. Former Peace Corp volunteers describe the experience as among the most rewarding of their lives.

To give outsiders insight into the everyday life of volunteers, the Peace Corps’ website posts their journals. Journal entries from Ian Jobe, a 23 year old from Colorado who served from 2006 to 2008 tell what it is like to teach English to 4th, 7th, and 10th grade children in Georgia. He also teaches them basketball and helps exchange students go to the U.S. He is known by name throughout town and people greet him by saying, “Hello America”. The journal also mentions his keeping up with activities from home like hiking, swimming, and jogging in addition to socializing with other volunteers.

Jeremiah Marquis, 24, originally from Ohio, served in Paraguay from 2006-2008. As a municipal services volunteer his work involved installing street lights and distributing medicine. His journal includes his account of going to the movies and seeing “Pirates of the Caribbean 3,” for a price of 20,000 guaranis. Even in Paraguay he is able to stay in the entertainment loop and can buy current DVDs.

The Peace Corps recognizes the needs of its volunteers by arranging for their care and safety. Volunteers usually live with a “host family,” and are provided with a living allowance similar to that of people of the community. They receive vacation time, medical insurance and are often able to defer student loan payments. There are also programs to reduce the amount owed on Perkins student loans. After 27 months of service, volunteers receive $6,000 for the transition to life back home.

Other benefits include assistance with graduate school. Their Fellows/USA program offers returned volunteers scholarships or reduced tuition at more than 40 U.S. colleges and universities. The Master’s International program gives Peace Corp volunteers academic credit towards a graduate degree.

Projects Abroad differs from the Peace Corps in that it markets volunteering as a break from school or career and charges a fee. Prices range from $3,500 to $7,500 for a three month project. This pays for food, housing, travel insurance and medical coverage.

Project Abroad volunteers can choose from a wide range of short-term jobs. These jobs are located in 24 countries throughout the globe. Examples of the industries offered include medicine, coaching sports, journalism, radio, TV, advertising, marketing, law, HIV/AIDS awareness, archeology, and veterinary medicine.

Although volunteering makes for a great respite from career or school, it is not without a downside. Volunteers have to adjust to life in a foreign country without many of the amenities they are accustomed to. They also forgo any income they would have earned had they been able to find a traditional job during that time. Project Abroad’s fee could strain the finances of the unemployed.

Despite drawbacks, the financial crisis has led to an increase in people enrolling in various volunteer services. Hopefully they will return to a better economy.

Inauguration Day: What History Really Looks Like
continued from page 7

present at a speech is not the same as viewing it through a television. The emotions of the crowd, the catcalls when Bush was presented, never made it to your living rooms. I felt I had to be there in person to witness what history really looked like. So that when the history books start printing, I myself can attest to that experience. To say I was moved by his speech fails to capture any essence of what truly happened. To be frank, I won’t try. You just had to be there.

“Learn about QCC’s QueensZine on the back page!”
Christina: “If you had one phrase to describe Black History and the Present, what would it be?”
Mr. Munchita: “Ever evolving.”
Christina: “What advice do you have for future students?”
Mr. Munchita: “Never accept what others tell you about your limitations.”
He also informed me that black history has been a part of QCC since the conception of the college. I also had the pleasure of interviewing Harry Paine who runs Affirmative Action. When I asked what Black History meant to him, he had this to say: “(Black History) is recognition of the achievements of black men and women, a time to celebrate accomplishments. It is a documentation or blueprint for today’s African American to follow.”
Christina: “What moment in Black History had an effect on you?”
Mr. Payne: “Brown vs. Board of Education created the foundation for equal education opportunities and as a result of this I was able to complete a Masters Degree. For today’s student it creates the opportunity for them to obtain an education, thus creating definite job opportunities.”
Christina: “What advice do you have for students?”
Mr. Payne: “Network as much as possible and contact those individuals that you feel you have nothing in common with, because those individuals will probably teach you the most.”
His phrase for Black History and the Present time is “Continuing Evolving.” Before the Black History Month Super Bowl, I also had the opportunity for a one-on-one interview with Ms. Rivera.
Christina: “What does Black History mean to you?”
Ms. Rivera: “An opportunity to recognize the achievements of African Americans and their contribution to society.”
Ms. Rivera went on to tell me that the event in history that had the most profound effect on her was the election of Barack Obama because she felt that we were breaking new barriers. She told me that she likes the President’s slogan, “Yes we can,” because it could inspire future generations to achieve their dreams and obtain ultimate success.
I also spoke to Lt. Jack Black, the assistant director of public safety on the campus. For him, the two defining moments in black history were the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. for the sense of brotherhood and unity, and the election of Barack Obama for the sense of unity for the whole nation.
I leave you now with a phase from a speech made by President Obama on February 5th, 2008: “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change we seek.”

Queensborough Communiqué, March 2009

Black History Month:
The History of America

continued from page 3
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The NBA’s starting 5: a Decade in Retrospective

By Keith Ingram

Behind the leadership of Greg Popovich on the sideline, and Tim Duncan on the court, the San Antonio Spurs have been, without a doubt, the dominant team of the decade. With four championship rings to show for their effort, producing three all stars, and having the defense the rest of the league dreams of, it is hard to argue the supremacy of the Spurs. Regardless of whether you love to hate the fundamentally slow pace of a Spurs game, one automatically recognizes and respects their level of professionalism.

Over the years the Los Angeles Lakers have seen its fair share of dramatics, earning the team the nickname of “The Lake Show,” however the core components of the team have driven the Los Angeles Lakers to the NBA playoffs the last 9 of 10 years, making the finals 5 of those years, and winning 3 championships. Those aforementioned core components have seen changes, but behind Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O’Neal, they made the finals 4 of 5 years, spanning 2000-2005 with 3 consecutive championships to show for it. With many changes over the years including a departure from Shaq, Phil Jackson leaving and returning as coach, and an odd season in which we saw a Lakers starting lineup composed of 4 hall of fame players, it’s amazing this team has lived up to its legacy and continues to have the longevity it does. Coming off a finals appearance with a bit of an underwhelming ending, and a six game distance from any team as first in the west statistics, the Lakers are as hungry as ever and poised for a potential 4th championship title for the decade.

The Detroit Pistons have seen a recent slip in productivity, and if you look at the current roster and the one used at the beginning of the decade it’s easy to tell, with not one player remaining on the team from the end of 1999 to 2009, that’s it’s hard to keep a sense of identity. However, this team has been one of the best defensive units in the league for 10 years, which has brought them to the playoffs the past 7 straight years, and it looks like the primary method for victory this season. In 6 of those 7 years the Pistons have at least made it to the conference finals and won the finals once in 2005, defeating an opponent in the Lakers that had future hall of fame players at 4 positions on the court. That championship team, and especially that starting roster, truly does represent the mentality and style we have seen these past 10 years, which is the most teamwork oriented team in the league, as testified to by Chauncey Billups, the finals MVP who averaged 16 points a game in the playoffs.

Finishing things off to the east is the Sixers. The other team besides the Spurs and Pistons to have made the playoffs the past 8 years consecutively are the Dallas Mavericks. Team owner Mark Cuban has continued to bring talent to Dallas, to play along their star big-man, Dirk Nowitzki. They have always been a very dangerous offensive threat, ranking as one of the top 2 teams in the league in offensive rating, as opposed to the run and gun Don Nelson teams of the past. Coming off a consistent championship run, the team has seen a lot of changes, but behind Dirk Nowitzki and Jason Terry, they have remained a consistent 3rd seed in the west statistics, with 5, soon to be 6 playoff appearances and a championship of their own, the Nets just barely edge them out as the Nets show longevity the Celtics simply have not had.

In 2004 when future hall of fame point guard Jason Kidd came to the New Jersey Nets, he managed to translate his fast tempo style of fast break offense onto the court, leading the team from a record of 26 - 56, to 52 - 40, which is an almost complete turn around. The same season of his arrival the Nets finished first in the conference and continued dominance of the east, appearing in two consecutive finals and finishing the top 3 seeds for the next four seasons. While Atlantic Division rivals the Celtics are close to claiming the 5th spot on this list, with 5, soon to be 6 playoff appearances and a championship of their own, the Celtics simply have not had.

Lehman College swept the Senior College Division of the 2009 CUNY Athletic Conference Indoor Track and Field Championships, while Queensborough Community College swept the Community College Division tonight at the New Balance Armory Track and Field Complex in Harlem, N.Y.

For the men’s senior college division, Lehman scored 118 team points, edging Hunter College, who scored 114. CCNY finished third with 99 points and Medgar Evers placed fourth with 37 team points. City Tech and York College both participated, but did not record team points.

On the women’s side in senior colleges, Lehman ran away with the championship with 125 points, Medgar Evers placed second with 82 points and CCNY finished third with 25. Hunter and York Colleges both participated but did not record team points.

The Men’s Community College Division saw Queensborough dominate with 188 points. Kingsborough scored 58 and Bronx trailed with 14. Queensborough also dominated the women’s side, recording 54 team points. Again, Kingsborough placed second with 20 points and Bronx third with ten.

Earning Most Valuable Performer for the men was Pete Charles of Lehman, who earned 24 points, while Alexandra Nkrumah of York led all individuals with 48 points to earn the Women’s Most Valuable Performer.

“Winning this the second time is wonderful.” Said Lehman head men’s and women’s Lesleigh Hogg. “Jillene Sennon, Dorothy Jean-Pierre, and Lauren Lourick picked up key victories for us.”

Hogg continued, “We were a young team this year and I’m proud of the way they were focused and competed. The men were great as well and it came down to shot put, the last event of the night, where Jase Franklyn picked up his second medal pushed us to victory. Pete Charles improved his distance in the triple jump. It was a team effort and I am really proud of them. Now with ECAC’s we are sending six and let’s see what happens.”

Full results can be found here: http://cunyathletics.com/Pdfs/wrunt2009/3/4/CUNY%20RESULTS.htm

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Blagojevich Blows It

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testimony in a sworn affidavit with the house’s impeachment chair, describing many conversations which he had with Blagojevich’s brother (chief fundraiser), which included requests for him to raise cash. According to “Will Burress Be the next to fall in the Blago scandal” by Eric Ferkenhoff from Chicago Sun Time online, the only reason why Burris is admitting the allegations is because federal investigators contacted him concerning the matter.

Although Blagojevich was impeached, he seems anything but ashamed, and has since appeared on the David Letterman show as well as Oprah. His appearances attempt to make light of the situation by trying to steer the media into believing he is the victim in this case. Regardless of whether he is truly innocent, what matters is what the verdict in civil court is for the infamous former governor.
With the playoffs around the corner, fantasy owners are scrambling for those final touches that will improve their teams. There are some players worth dropping, holding on to, picking up, and trading within the next few weeks that can help propel your fantasy team into the playoffs.

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<th>Who’s Hot</th>
<th>Who’s Not</th>
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<td>Deron Williams, PG, Uta.</td>
<td>Marcus Camby, C, LAC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramon Sessions, PG, Mil.</td>
<td>Mike Miller, SF, Min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peja Stojakovic, SF, NO.</td>
<td>Rodney Stuckey, PG, Det.</td>
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**NEWS AND NOTES**

- Anyone who dropped Zydrunas Ilgauskas weeks ago should be aware that he is back in the Cavalier starting lineup after missing 16 games due to a severely sprained ankle. If your short in the rebound department “Zeek” can definitely help by posting solid numbers close to 14 points, 7.5 rebounds, and 1 block a game.

- There is still no time table on Washington Wizard All Star guard Gilbert Arenas, who had sat out almost all of last season, and missed 57 games thus far to a knee injury. But this can potentially be beneficial to your team if you are willing to pull the trigger before your trade deadline. While Arenas sits on the sideline, star forward Caron Butler is raking in all the benefits. The team is depleted, they don’t have a solidified center, and with exception to forward Antoine Jamison the Wizards don’t have any other true scorers. My recommendation is to try dealing for Butler who will give you on average 20 points, 6 boards, and 4 assists a game. The only downside to his game is that he’s averaging 3.2 turnovers a game. So if you’re in a head to head league, I believe sacrificing one category in turnovers shouldn’t be too detrimental to your team. Butler is such a fantastic fantasy player; one category shouldn’t hold you from putting together a deal for him.

- Jermaine O’Neal has finally recovered from a knee injury and is picking up where he left off. Three weeks ago O’Neal blocked 9 shots in a loss to the Lakers and has totaled 25 blocks in his past 8 games. He is a productive center when healthy, but how often is he healthier than not. The fact is that he’s way too injury prone and the last thing you need is for him to injure himself going into the playoffs. It’s a risk not worth taking. If he strings together a couple of good games after the All Star break look to get rid of him ASAP. Teams will be intrigued by his shot blocking ability, and you will easily find a buyer.

- Also be aware that center Chris Kaman will return soon after All Star weekend for the Clippers. If you’re in the bottom portion of your league in rebounding Kaman is definitely worth a look at. Before he went down on November 26th with a strained arch on his left foot, he was averaging 13.9 points, 9.4 rebounds, and 1.9 assists a game. The Clippers aren’t one of the better teams in the league this season, but they do have an abundance of talent that can’t go unnoticed. Between Baron Davis, Eric Gordon, and Al Thornton to name a few, Kaman is going to get his looks and the players aforementioned will create openings for him. Kaman could be a sleeper pick, just make sure you get to him before someone else does.

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Can Barack Obama’s Plan Work?

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up on Obama’s desk on a daily basis and taxpaying American citizens are the ones being stuck with the bill.

So who’s to blame? America is to blame. National debt which in total runs in the trillions of dollars can partly be placed on the irresponsible citizens of this country. Many people who had good jobs took out home loans and never saved any money. They assumed their income was guaranteed, as a result the homes of those who never saved money and lost their jobs had their homes put into foreclosure and were forced to move out. Apparently, when some people attain a certain level of income they begin to believe that can never change. The truth, on the other hand, is that a person’s salary can go up or down, or just go away all together even if one’s income is “guaranteed” or you own or run a business yourself. There are people in this country who will never ever be able to pay off their debt because it is simply too large and the only thing guaranteed is higher interest rates. Poor fiscal planning is a scary way to live.

The growth of our society is based on credit, you can have all the material things you want in short amounts of time and pay back the money later with interest. Less than 5% of Americans have their homes and cars paid for. Bailing out irresponsible people who knew they couldn’t stay current is unfair to those who manage to make their loan payments on time. Our simple everyday decisions are mostly based on finances.

Ed Yardeni, a well-known investment analyst, said that doing nothing would have been better. He says Obama’s plan should be focused on immediate consumers of automobiles and homes. He feels that this stimulus plan is just getting people through the recession instead of getting us out. Other analysts believe that the plan is too focused on social issues and so-called pork barrel subsidies, which will provide no real long-term boost to the economy.

Possible solutions include simply letting our economy crash and starting from scratch. A more simple solution includes allowing our National Treasury the power of issuing currency that actually has value instead of letting the Federal Reserve Bank set the agenda. Completely eliminating the Federal Reserve Bank which is neither Federal nor a Reserve and prints worthless paper immediately solves 90% of our problems because we wouldn’t be paying back any interest on our own money. It is completely impossible to pull money out of thin air, hand it out and ask for more back than what you gave out in return. It’s a system designed to keep us in debt. Instead of driving up debt with a trillion dollar loan, President Obama should reinstate former president John F. Kennedy’s executive order number 11110 which gave the government full power to issue currency and people wouldn’t have to pay any interest. But perhaps Obama knows that the fatal result of Kennedy’s attempt to remove the Federal Reserve Bank was a warning to him and other presidents succeeding Kennedy.
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