First Year of College

By PHILIP ISIDORE

As students, we have been attending school throughout the majority of our lives, from adolescence to adulthood. Attending high school was one of many challenging points in students’ lives. Think about what it was like during those four long years, having to take seven to eight classes daily, and whatever teacher we had for a particular subject we were stuck with for the rest of the year. Well, it is important for future high school graduates to know the advantages college has to offer.

Some students have thought about being able to make their own school schedules. Everyone has at some point. How about being able to view professors’ ratings before registering for classes? Now, of course, there have been times in high school when we had trouble understanding the way our teacher teaches. Some students may even say that their teachers couldn’t explain the material well enough for them to understand it. In college, not only will we get to make our own schedule, but we can also view the professors' ratings on www.ratemyprofessors.com. This can be a helpful tool for students because they can learn a little bit about their professors’ teaching histories based on the feedback students give them.

Freshmen in their first semester of college should consider visiting this site so they can have some information about the professors and their teaching standards. Different students have different opinions about the way a professor teaches, but it is important to have some insight about a professor before registering for his or her class. Ratemyprofessors.com can be an important tool for students throughout their college lives.

Parking Wars

By NICOLE HAUFFE

Parking is always a hassle no matter where you are, but it’s even more difficult around QCC, especially when you’re trying to race to class before your professor marks you late. The streets around QCC are peacefully quiet and desolate until the arrival of students as early as 7 a.m. Residents of the neighborhood have to deal with students idling their cars in front or behind. Students idle their cars, waiting to find a spot in driveways, blocking people in. One can see why people get annoyed at students; after all, we, the students, are invading and disturbing their homes. There was one encounter between a homeowner and a student. A female student parked in front of a man’s house around 7:30 a.m., and the homeowner came out of his home, screaming at her and telling her to move. He didn’t want any QCC students parked in front of his house because they block his driveway and they leave trash by his curb. He now leaves garbage cans in front of his house because they block his driveway, and they leave trash by his curb. He now leaves garbage cans in front of his house to block the spot.

As the day passes, parking becomes more of a safety issue than just an easy task you must do when you drive your car to school. Double, even triple parked cars crowd the streets, blocking people’s view and making it difficult for people driving and also people just trying to cross the street. The maze of cars is an accident waiting to happen if you’re not giving your full attention to the present moment.

Students need to be more respectful of the residents’ driveways and cars. They can do simple things like turn the music down, stop speeding around the blocks, honking, and double parking. Everyday, students try to squeeze into a spot, partially blocking someone’s driveway or tapping someone else’s car in front or behind. Students idle their cars, waiting to find a spot in driveways, blocking people in. One can see why people get annoyed at students; after all, we, the students, are invading and disturbing the streets, blocking people’s view and making it difficult for people driving and also people just trying to cross the street. The maze of cars is an accident waiting to happen if you’re not giving your full attention to the present moment.

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“Every student success is my success.” Student Life Specialist, Ray Volel, regards this aphorism as the driving force in his quest to assist undergrads to be the best that they can be. By the time they leave QC, he wants them to have a sense of community: a preparatory tool he hopes that they can use to help their communities achieve great things.

As Student Life Specialist, Mr. Volel “wears many hats,” working in conjunction with Student Government in overseeing the day-to-day activities. Activities consist of social, educational, as well as cultural. He is responsible for the overall operation of the Student Union Building in which his office is located. The office of Student Activities team includes Gisela Rivera (Director of Student Activities), Ziomara Zamora (the Assistant Director of Student Activities), Hope Iannicelli (the Student Government Secretary), Vita DeRespinis (the Part-Time Student Secretary), Gloria Malvicini and Josephine Santafemia in the ID Room, two part-time Student Coordinators, Kean Hunter and Lindsay Bernard, Mr. Dunkley (the full-time security guard), and various work study students. The work study students maintain the front desk, loan games, pool and ping pong equipment, and perform various clerical jobs.

Although he is not directly involved in Student Government’s decisions on how best to spend the money allocated to them, he and Ms. Zamora do advise them, but at the end of the day, Student Government has the final say. He enjoys his job tremendously but prefers “to stay under the radar,” while he focuses on interaction with students. Wanting to continually motivate them and share in their success, he revels in undergrads’ personal growth: to see them come in one way but leave another way on the road to their academic goals.

Every fall, Mr. Volel and Ms. Zamora select students who are interested in leadership roles through a screening process to attend an all-expense paid Leadership Weekend trip to the Edith Macy Conference Center in Briarwood Manor, Westchester NY. The center and surroundings are truly spectacular. To view it, log in to www.edithmacy.com. The weekends’ events are exceptionally thrilling, stress-free experiences. Besides indoor and outdoor activities, students’ collaboration is crucial in enjoying a jam-packed fun weekend. It’s a great opportunity to meet people of different cultures and backgrounds, since a portion of the weekend’s affair is set aside for participants to showcase their ethnicities. A community is born as a result of the weekend: a network of friends stay in touch with each other after returning to QC.

With a welcoming smile, Mr. Volel invites students to his office, regardless of whether or not they have an appointment. Even if he is having a bad day, Mr. Volel’s hospitality remains the same because he focuses on his goal of improving the community through student participation and achievement.
Dear Friends,

Greetings from the whole of student government! It’s amazing how fast the semester is coming to an end. Before the blink of an eye, spring 2012 will arrive. I hope your mid-terms and final preparations are underway and going well.

In this issue, I’d like to share the process of starting a club on campus. First and foremost, you should know that any Queensborough student is eligible to start a club. If you have an interest and believe no existing club on campus fulfills or represents that interest, I strongly encourage you to look into starting a club. You should look for a QCC staff member that can act as the club’s advisor and is willing to attend your meetings and take responsibility for the club. Afterwards, each club is required to have at least ten signatories on the roster and elect a president, vice president, and senator. Each of the club officers must have completed more than 12 credits at QCC or equated credits and be at good academic standing. A club packet which contains all I have mentioned and more is available in the Office of Student Government, located in the lower level of the Student Union Building. Further consultation with the Student Government Secretary, Ms. Hope Iannicelli, or the Student Life Specialist, Mr. Raymond Volel, may also be of help to anyone interested. They may be reached at hiannicelli@qcc.cuny.edu or rvoel@qcc.cuny.edu respectively.

There are many benefits of starting a club. Each freshman club is allocated a budget that is increased each semester based on the activities the club sponsors or carries out throughout the semester. Club officers have access to numerous college resources and opportunities to meet with top management staff to voice students’ concerns. Additionally, clubs are a great way to socialize, learn and foster productive relationships (networks) with like-minded individuals. Plus, being an officer of a club wouldn’t hurt your college application or resume! It’s not enough to just say it. Do it. Start a club today!

Remember, you can email us your concerns at asksga@gmail.com and/or come over to the Student Union Building, located next to the RFK Gymnasium.

Have a jolly good read!

Best,

K.

Oluwadamisi Atanda

Your SGA President’s Corner

NYPIRG Urges Students to Make Their Voices Heard on Fracking

New York City, NY – The Queensborough Community College chapter of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is urging students to comment on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) draft hydraulic fracturing, also known as the “fracking” plan. The DEC’s revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (rdSGEIS) is the document that will guide the permitting of this controversial natural gas drilling extraction method.

Despite the lengthy document, DEC only provided a 90-day public comment period that ends on December 12, 2011. That is why NYPIRG is urging students to act now to voice their concerns over this intense industrial activity, which could have potentially devastating effects on our water supplies, environment and our communities. “Fracking is a dangerous activity that could have a long lasting negative impact on our communities. Students need to let DEC know how they feel about this controversial drilling technique and how they see the future of New York State,” stated NYPIRG Project Coordinator Vanessa Rodriguez. “As the generation that has to live with the consequences, it is critical that DEC consider the opinions of students before issuing any final permit conditions.”

The rdSGEIS has many flaws and should be sent back to the drawing board. DEC rushed an inadequate review out the door to meet a politically expedient deadline set by Governor Cuomo. Instead of conducting an in-depth review where science guides the process, DEC has decided that it is going full-steam ahead without taking into account all of the risks involved in fracking. Among the many faults of the document, the rdSGEIS does not analyze the cumulative impact of this activity. It does not properly address how to dispose of the toxic drilling wastewater now possibly radioactive and laden with dangerous chemicals. It also fails to adequately analyze and mitigate air pollution concerns and the impact of the massive increase in truck traffic. New York City residents may think their water will be safe, but, in fact, the City’s aging infrastructure is woefully unprotected with inadequate setbacks. It will be catastrophic if the City’s already fragile and leaking aqueduct collapses and half of the water supply is cut-off. DEC did create some restrictions, but many expire after two years or can be waived by property owners. Moreover, perhaps the most glaring deficiency of this document is the lack of a public health analysis despite the mounting evidence of health effects in states where fracking has occurred.

Students who want to review the rdSGEIS and submit comments can go to the DEC’s website at http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/75370.html. Or, stop by the NYPIRG office at the Student Union, Lower Level to learn more about fracking and how to submit a comment as well as how to get involved with NYPIRG’s efforts on the issue. NYPIRG will also be tabling on this pressing issue during the fall semester. Look for our table every Monday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the Science Building Lobby and every Thursday from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the Medical Arts Lobby.

The DEC’s revised draft fracking assessment was released on September 7, 2011. To frack a gas well, millions of gallons of water, sand, and toxic chemicals are pumped deep underground at high pressure. This fractures the rock that has trapped the gas for millennia and allows it to escape. From start to finish, gas development that relies on fracking is an industrial process that threatens our water, air quality and landscapes. State after state, from Wyoming to Pennsylvania, has documented contamination caused by this activity.

The New York Public Interest Research Group is a statewide, nonpartisan, not-for-profit research and advocacy organization. College students elected from NYPIRG’s 20 campus chapters direct NYPIRG. NYPIRG areas of concern include: government reform, environmental preservation, consumer protection, fiscal responsibility, health care, and higher education issues.

If you want to get involved with the various issues NYPIRG works on, please contact us at (718) 225-9121 or qcc@nyipirg.org.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events on campus!
As I sat agitated on the chair by the department secretary’s desk, a current of thoughts raced through my mind. I was minutes away from interviewing a man known around campus as audacious and outspoken. It was safe to say that I was expecting the unexpected.

Finally, at about 11:17 a.m., he walked in, conversing with a student. He acknowledged my presence and finished his conversation with the student. Shortly after, he ushered me into his chambers. A shade of red cloaked the room with matching guests chairs, abstract and vegetation art lined the walls and desk, a 13-15 inch TV sat in the corner, and something that looked similar to a train track laid across his desk. It was a modern and finely finished room. “What happened to the corridor of books and antiques with biographies that run for days? This is what you’d expect in a historian’s office,” I asked myself. Clearly, this historian isn’t the usual.

Dr. Visoni received his bachelor’s degree from CUNY’s Queens College and then continued his academic pursuits at the prestigious Fordham University, where he earned his Ph.D. Teaching has been his forte for most of his life; he worked as an adjunct professor at both of his alma maters and settled at Queensborough. He rose from adjunct professor to tenured and then to chair of the department.

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An Exposé: Dr. Gilmar Visoni

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Five Beauty Tips to Remember

BY REBECCA YONK

WebMD experts say, “Standing tall, feeling confident, [and] believing in yourself” is essential to feeling good. But in order to feel good it’s important to feel pretty as well. How can we feel pretty, you might ask. Well, the answer is simple—just follow these five beauty tips, and you will never question how beautiful you are again.

Beauty Tip #1: Confidently Moisturize

No matter what your skin type is, you should invest in a good moisturizer. Dr. Rhoda Narins, President of the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery says, “Sometimes, all you really need is a good moisturizer and a mild cleanser, and you can take years off your face. When skin is dry every wrinkle is accentuated, making you look older.” If you’re in your twenties or thirties, then you should know that moisturizing regularly can prevent your skin from aging prematurely. A good moisturizer will help you see your skin retain and produce more moisture. Dr. Crutchfield, Dermatologist and associate clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Minnesota Medical School says, “If skin is normal to dry, look for moisturizers containing alpha hydroxy acids. They can help skin produce more moisture on its own. If skin is very dry, use products with a technology called vesicular emulsion. If skin is oily, look for a light, gentle moisturizer—but don’t skip this step because oil is not moisture, and even if you have excess oil you still need moisture.” So, buy a good moisturizer, and lay it on thick!

Beauty Tip #2: Anti-age with Sunscreen

Sunscreen isn’t just for preventing skin cancer anymore; it is known to prevent the sun’s rays from aging your skin, too. The logistics go like this—according to plastic surgeon Dr. Derrick Antell, “The sun impacts collagen production in the skin, and without collagen, skin won’t naturally maintain that plump, moist, youthful, wrinkle-free look.” He adds, “Get enough sun exposure and skin will wrinkle before its time.” The American Academy of Dermatology agrees with Antell, claiming, “Without the protection of sunscreen, just a few minutes of daily sun exposure over the years can cause noticeable changes in how skin looks and feels.” The sun doesn’t only cause wrinkles but also freckles, age spots, and spider veins. Sunscreen is your best weapon to prevent these awful effects. Dr. Crutchfield recommends using a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and to reapply every hour or two. Another option, according to WebMD experts, is to put the sunscreen on before applying your makeup. So, the next time you go shopping, buy a sunscreen, and see the difference it can make over time!

Beauty Tip #3: The Wisdom of a Good Cleanser

Choosing the right facial cleanser is important not only for the health of your skin but also to prevent your skin from aging prematurely. Dermatologists recommend using a gentle cleanser and to only wash your face no more than twice a day. When you wash your face too much, this can “damage the natural lipid barrier, the protective mantle of lubrication that keeps skin looking and feeling healthy.” Dr. Crutchfield says, “While the temptation may be great to wash your face several times a day (or more if skin is oily), not only will over-cleansing not help you, if you’re using a harsh product—particularly soap—you could be harming your skin.” He also says that once the protection of the lipid layer is compromised, “skin becomes dry—which means it can crack, peel, itch, burn, sting, or any combination. It can also mean you can look older than your years.” So, remember to wash your face with a gentle cleanser and to only do so up to twice a day.

Beauty Tip #4: Tools to Apply Makeup

Even the best, most expensive makeup can’t make up (no pun intended) for the wrong tools. In other words, the quality of the brushes you use will make a big difference in how your makeup looks on your face. WebMD experts say, “Brushes should be soft and feel gentle on the skin, but also have substance so the product can be moved to the surface of your skin. If you dip a brush in shadow or blush and the color falls off before you make it to your face, that’s a bad brush.”

Beauty Tip #5: Rock a New Look Every Two Years

If you meet a friend you haven’t seen in years, and she says, “You haven’t changed a bit,” then it’s time to change your look. Nick Chavez, a hair expert from Beverly Hills and QVC personality, says, “Ideally, your image, including hair and makeup, should be updated at least every two years—and sooner if the styles change dramatically. By keeping your look current, you also look younger and more modern. Nothing dates a woman more than outdated hair and makeup.” If you have no clue as to what is “current” in hair and makeup, visit your local mall and ask the experts behind the makeup counters what would work for you.
Another Way to Study Abroad

BY BROOKE SMITH

If you have ever wanted to travel, live with an interesting family, learn about a foreign culture, and even get a nice chunk of change every week, consider the option of becoming an Au Pair.

Although it is not entirely secret, working abroad as a live-in care taker, or “Au Pair,” is definitely not taken advantage of enough. As college students, you are guaranteed certain opportunities that unfortunately many individuals are not. This chance of employment offers you the opportunity to experience an entirely new lifestyle, and yet the majority of students are unaware of this option. The perks are completely beneficial, and the experience will last a life time.

For a valid source of agencies, the International Au Pair Association, www.iapa.com, is one of the most reliable internet sources if you are interested in this memorable adventure. It provides a safe and secure background check for both the Au Pair candidate, as well as the host family. Safety is, of course, the number one concern when considering this journey. Not only is precaution a necessity for the family’s children but, also, for the care-taker’s safety. Respecting your own personal oath and understanding your responsibilities will make this experience as fruitful as it possibly can be.

Thanks, But No Thanks

BY YEMAN TAM

It was finally time for the 2012 semester registration. I wanted to make sure everything went smoothly because it was going to be my last semester here at Queensborough. In order to complete my required credits and graduate, I needed to take Chinese, pre-calculus, geology, and any other three-credit elective. I created a great schedule on CUNY First and added all of those classes into my shopping cart. However, when I verified the classes to make sure everything was okay, the system didn’t allow me to take pre-calculus; there was a red “X” next to it. It was because I was exempt from taking Math 120 (due to my scores on the placement test), and CUNY First didn’t recognize my exemption.

I immediately ran to the Math department the next day to find a solution. I couldn’t give that class up; I absolutely needed it. The lady behind the desk told me that I had to go to the Registrar and tell them about my situation, and they’d be able to fix it. I said thank you, and I ran over to the Registrar. When it was my turn, I went up to the window and told the man sitting there what had happened. He told me that I had to go back to the Math department and get a slip of paper that is signed by them. Being told that, I rushed back over to the Math department and told the same lady what I was told at the Registrar. She told me that the Math department was no longer giving out those slips of paper; that the Registrar was supposed to fix problems like these because it was a problem with CUNY First. She apologized for having me run back and forth and told me to have them directly call her if there were any more problems. I ran back to the Registrar and went to another window where the lady was sitting there on the phone. I told her my situation, and the only thing she said to me was “I don’t understand”; she then pointed to the next window. The man returned, and yet again I told him what the lady at the Math department said. He told me that I had to go back to the Math department because it “had nothing to do with them” and that “it was the Math department who was supposed to handle situations like these.” I started getting really angry, and I raised my voice, telling him how I just ran back and forth and how nobody was willing to help me. Another lady came to the window and told me that I needed to “relax.” I was thinking: “You’ve got tears in my eyes. I was sweating, and my heart was beating quickly. She didn’t recognize my exemption.”

She told me that the Registrar couldn’t do anything about it and that I needed to go back to the Math department. At this point, I was hypertentilating and telling her that she needed to call the Math department because the lady said that they should call her immediately if there were any other problems. In response to that, the lady at the Registrar said, “We don’t call anyone back.” I felt like slapping myself and asking myself if this was really happening. After a somewhat “heated” argument between her and I, she told me to take a seat while she went to the back and had a discussion with the rest of her co-workers. I walked away from the window and had tears in my eyes. I was sweating, and my heart was beating quickly. She then came towards me and told me to tell her the class that I wanted. I did so, and she told me that she would register me as soon as possible. Later that day, I got a call from Queensborough and was told, “You should be able to register for pre-calculus tomorrow.” I then went on to CUNY First and verified my classes, and I saw green checks next to all of them.

Everything turned out fine. However, I’m still upset over the trouble I had to go through to get a simple problem fixed. Who was I supposed to go to? I thought about how a simple phone call from the very start could have prevented all those trips back and forth from the Science Building to the Administration Building. I thought about how little the Registrar wanted to help me, how they told me that they couldn’t do anything about it, and how in the end, they did. It makes me think about the differences between how students are supposed to be treated and how we really are treated. I believe that the staff of QCC is a great one, but when situations like these arise, I question if the staff is really here to help us. Sometimes when we go to staff members to get our questions answered, they tell us what we need and expect to hear. Other times, they make students feel belittled. To be shoved off and thrown to a different department because they didn’t want to deal with me wasn’t a good feeling, and I was very disappointed that day. But we can’t all base our judgments on one incident. My advice to you fellow Queensborough students is to fight for what you want until the end, and don’t give up when people push you away.
If you’re anything like me, the thought of homework or studying just boggles your mind. If you have free time during the week or weekends, you’d much rather sleep, hangout with your friends, browse Facebook or watch television—do anything but homework or studying.

So, can you imagine what I feel like every time I have homework to do and wait until the very last minute to do it or when I’m notified about a test and wait until the day or two before to study? Stressed would probably be an understatement. But why do I do this to myself? Why do I choose to procrastinate and drive myself crazy to do tasks at the last minute when I can easily do them early, giving myself plenty of time? I always say, “I guess I’m better under pressure.”

According to Joseph Ferrari, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at De Paul University in Chicago, “Procrastinators tell lies to themselves. Such as, ‘I’ll feel more like doing this tomorrow’ or ‘I work best under pressure.’ But in fact they do not get the urge the next day or work best under pressure.” Dr. Ferrari claims that two of the very same excuses I tell myself on a daily basis are lies procrastinators use to avoid work. Ferrari also argues, “Another big lie procrastinators indulge in is that time pressure makes them more creative. Unfortunately, they do not turn out to be more creative; they only feel that way. They squander their resources. Procrastination is not a problem of time management or of planning. Procrastinators are not different in their ability to estimate time, although they are more optimistic than others. Telling someone who procrastinates to buy a weekly planner is like telling someone with chronic depression to just cheer up.”

Many people procrastinate, especially students. There are many who struggle with deadlines every day, feeling frustrated and over-whelmed. According to psychologytoday.com, procrastination is one of the largest problems in college counseling centers and is something nearly everyone has to deal with at some point in their lives. So, when you think you’re stuck in a hole and no one knows how you feel, there are hundreds of others in your same shoes each and every day.

According to an article by John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on PsychCentral.com, research has shown that people who procrastinate typically make cognitive distortions that promote procrastination. A person overestimates the amount of time left to perform a task and underestimates the amount of time required to complete it. A person overestimates the amount of motivation they’ll have in the future (often believing they will be more motivated to do the task in the future). Also, a person believes that they need to be in the right mood to be successful in completing the task, and if they’re not in the right mood, they won’t be very successful at the task.

I constantly make up excuses during my free time to get out of doing things I need to do. I tell myself things like “I’ll do this later” or “I’m too tired right now. I’ll feel better doing this after a nap,” and the more I delay things, the less I want to do anything.

So, what are some things that procrastinators, such as myself, can do to ease this horrible problem? First, all tasks can and should be broken down into parts. Each task should have a number of milestones, due dates for when certain parts of that task should be completed. For instance, writing a paper might have five or six milestones: (1) select topic (2) research topic (3) organize notes into a paper outline (4) write rough draft (5) have a friend review (6) write final draft and review. Each one of these milestones should be noted in the organizer with a due date. By breaking each of your tasks down into milestones, you’ll feel less overwhelmed. Instead of having to spend hours on completing a task in one day, you can work bit by bit until the assignment or task is due, and as you’re making progress with your task, you’ll still have plenty of time for other things without having to feel so overwhelmed.

Also, try to keep track of other activities and dates. Note times you need to set aside for other social activities, different holidays, appointments you may have, and dates that impact your school or work schedule. Sometimes people leave these blank, forgetting that a trip to visit some friends can easily impact their study time. You should also mark things down from the start. When you’re aware of a due date, immediately mark the date in your planner (even at the beginning of the semester), so nothing is forgotten. This way, you’ll be well aware of what you have to do ahead of time and can space out plenty of time for whatever it is.

Lastly, keep a daily “to-do list.” Some people hate these kinds of lists, while others can’t live without them. For most procrastinators, it’s a good idea to keep a to-do list of things that should be accomplished for both the day and the week. Even if you have to write a new one every day, keeping such a list will keep your procrastination under control. Personally always keep a to-do list, and although I still procrastinate, I will say that it does help me to keep track of things, and crossing off each assignment after I’ve completed it is one of the best feelings ever. Seeing everything you have to do everyday might not be too amusing, but being able to cross off each assignment as you complete it can motivate you to get your work done on time or, even, ahead of schedule.

Is Technology Our Friend or Enemy?

By Melanie Caceres

Technology is one of the fastest growing epidemics in the 21st century. People won’t leave their houses without their cell phones, iPads or MP3 players, tablets, or even their laptops. I’ve asked many QCC students if they could last a day without having any type of technology, and all of them replied, “No way!” Most people need technology at all times to keep track of events and activities online.

Although technology makes our lives easier, it’s also making people more solitary. People spend most of their time on the internet at home. The internet has social networking, such as Facebook. Most people spend more time socializing on Facebook than actually socializing with people in person. The friendships that some people make on Facebook are taken more seriously than actual friendships people can make face-to-face, with others outside of the virtual world. “I think there is the potential for greater richness in face-to-face interaction because you lose the body cues and facial expressions when you’re doing work on the internet,” said Dr. Pam Hayes, a psychologist. According to Dr. Hayes, over time, people start to lose their basic communication abilities when they spend a great deal of time communicating online.

When I asked students what they do when they are on the train or on buses, most said that they listen to music or surf the web. In other words, they are in their own worlds, not paying attention to the world outside of their gadgets. Technology is causing people to become less sociable in the real world. Because of excessive online communication, people are also becoming less sympathetic to others, which might lead to anti-social behavior. According to psychologist David T. Lykken, people who are anti-social are more likely to kill someone without having any regret or remorse, and they are not able to have empathy for others.

Another way that technology affects people is in families. Technology is causing families to grow apart due to the excessive use of technology that might prevent them from spending time with their loved ones. There are families that don’t really communicate because they are also on their phones, iPads, tablets, or portable video games, causing the family to not be as close as they should be. About a week ago, I was having dinner with my family in a restaurant, when I noticed a mother, father and son having dinner. Throughout the whole dinner, the mother talked on her cell phone, while the father and son just sat there, waiting for her to get off the phone. The son was complaining about having a nice family dinner, without his mother being on the phone, and the father seemed very disappointed. This could lead to the child having psychological problems because he is not getting the attention he should from his mother.

More and more people are isolating themselves from the real world. The consequences of this isolation might be drastic. Families might fall apart while children might grow up to be anti-social. Technology is an epidemic, infecting people’s everyday lives. But we need to be vigilant, fighting the excessive use of technology to reclaim our lives and reconnect with the world around us.
Deadly Battle of Germ Fighters

BY JONA BALKUM

If the eyes are the windows to the soul, then the hands are the windows to infection; therefore, frequent cleansing of the hands is vital, but even more important is choosing the correct cleaning aid.

The safety of millions of people is at risk because of infectious germs. Germs are impossible to elude. They are on everything we touch or carry with us from the moment we wake up. Microscopic organisms, often referred to as "germs," have the ability to be transferred onto or into anything it comes into contact with. Hands are a very common way to transfer germs. Rheynn Slaynt from the Department of Health stated, "Eighty percent of infections are transmitted through touch." If 80% of infections are transmitted through touch, then frequently cleansing one's hands is the only way to avoid infections.

There are two ways to clean germs off the hands: hand washing and hand sanitizer. Washing one's hands with soap and water removes the germs and bacteria by using water to activate and spread the soap. Hand sanitizer is a quick way to destroy bacteria without the aid of water. Both methods eliminate germs and bacteria residue but do so in different ways. The method of using hand sanitizer to cleanse hands has become quite popular, but many people are pondering if sanitizer kills germs or just conceals them. Countless consumers looking to fight bacteria want to know if hand sanitizer can be used as an alternative to hand washing or just a cleansing method that they can use until they can properly wash their hands.

The traditional manner in which people cleanse their hands is hand washing. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention stated, "Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs." Only two items are needed to wash hands: soap and water. The soap is activated by the water and is distributed by rubbing the hands together for twenty seconds. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention also recommends singing the "Happy Birthday" song while washing hands because the twenty seconds it takes to sing the song are the same twenty seconds it takes to destroy germs.

Soap is made of oils, fatty acids, sodium, and alkali. Vegetable and animal oils are combined with fatty acids and potassium hydroxide. The mixture is then combined with sodium and alkali to make what we call "soap." The concoction eliminates dirt and debris and can cut through oil and grease. Therefore, it is extremely popular with many consumers. Soap comes in a variety of shapes and fragrances and comes in three forms: liquid, bar and powder. Organic soap is also available for people who do not use chemicals. Although using soap and water to destroy germs is traditional, there are a few cons.

Soap has been criticized for its harsh chemicals of sulfate and alkali. Sodium lauryl sulfate strips the skin's natural moisture. Alkali dissolves very quickly and can dissolve more than just bacteria and dirt. It can also strip moisture. If too much moisture is stripped from a person's hands, the hands can become dry and chapped. Chapped hands can lead to cracks in the skin, therefore making the skin more susceptible to germs and bacteria. The National Center for Biotechnology Information reported a story about 32 nurses at a Rhode Island hospital. The nurses participated in a trial to determine if frequent use of soap dries out the hands. The study concluded that when soap is used frequently it has devastating effects. The National Center for Biotechnology Information stated, "Skin irritation and dryness increased significantly when nurses washed their hands with the unmedicated soap product available in the hospital." This troubling conclusion certainly can make one weary of using soap and water on a regular basis. Hand sanitizer is another option for destroying germs.

Hand sanitizer can be very convenient for someone who is not near a sink or bathroom. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported, "Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands." Hand sanitizer dispensers are everywhere. The dispensers are in stores, gas stations, even schools. The availability of sanitizer makes it popular. Hand sanitizer, like soap, destroys germs. Unlike soap, water is not needed. The active ingredient in many hand sanitizers is alcohol. The alcohol eliminates germs. In order for alcohol based hand sanitizers to be effective, they require a 60% concentration. Popular brands such as Purell and Germ-X have a high concentration of alcohol. Purell and Germ-X both contain 62% alcohol. The high concentration of alcohol is very similar to isopropyl rubbing alcohol, which can have anywhere from 70-90% alcohol. The alternative to an alcohol based sanitizer is a non-alcohol based sanitizer that contains chemicals such as benzalkonium chloride, triclosan or povidone-iodine. Benzalkonium chloride, triclosan and povidone-iodine are surface agents that are used at low levels. Hand sanitizers, both alcohol based and non-alcohol based, have also been criticized.

On April 20, 2011 the FDA warned companies to stop making false claims for over-the-counter (OTC) drug products, including hand sanitizers, that claim to prevent infection from meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus bacteria (MRSA). Labeling and marketing materials for the affected products also claim that they can prevent infection from other disease-causing agents. In addition, the labeling of some of the firms' hand sanitizing drug products make claims related to preventing infection from E.coli and/or H1N1 flu virus. The FDA does not have sufficient evidence demonstrating that these products are safe and effective for these purposes. The four companies are: Staphaseptic First Aid/ pain relieving Gel, Safe4Hours Hand sanitizing lotion and First Aid Skin Protectant, Dr. Tichenor's Antiseptic Gel and CleanWell All-Natural foaming hand sanitizer. These four companies face lawsuits and suspension of products if the false claims are not removed. The FDA also stated, "Consumers are being misled if they think these products you can buy in a drug store or from other places will protect them from a potentially deadly infection." The FDA insists that consumers should wash their hands for twenty seconds instead of purchasing hand sanitizers that make false claims.

Eliminating bacteria is the prime focus of anyone looking to use hand sanitizer or someone who frequently washes his or her hands. There is no way to avoid germs, so we must find the best way to clean the germs off of our hands. Hand washing is the traditional method for getting rid of germs, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention stated that hand washing is the best method to destroy germs. The downside is that one cannot always make it to a sink, and the ingredients in soap can strip moisture from the hands. Hand sanitizer dispensers are convenient, and water is not needed. But hand sanitizers have been criticized for misleading consumers and not being able to destroy germs. Consumers must weigh the pros and cons and determine which option is best for them.
With the high demand for diet pills increasing in the world, there have been many unsafe diet pills marketed to the public. Diet drugs have turned into a multibillion dollar industry in the United States. Commercials for diet pills lure the audience in, making people believe that the products will “boost energy” and “melt away the pounds”. Basically, the commercials imply that we don’t need diet and exercise when a little wonder pill can erase the weight easily and quickly.

Diet drugs are available in several different forms, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs and herbal supplements. According to clinical studies, the newer prescription variety of diet pills, such as Xenical, have been shown to help dieters shed a few pounds; but the majority of the pills advertised on TV and the internet are unregulated, untested and unproven.

The FDA approved Xenical as a prescription diet pill in 1999. This pill is effective because it blocks approximately 30% of dietary fat from being absorbed by the body; it is known to be effective for weight loss in combination with diet and exercise. Another diet drug called Meridia, on the other hand, has potential side effects including dry mouth, constipation, insomnia, headaches, and high blood pressure.

Because Meridia has been linked with more than 28 deaths and hundreds of adverse reactions, the FDA recently issued warnings about taking the drug. Even the most effective diet pills are only meant to be taken for a short period of time, usually six months or less. When the weight starts coming back after six or less months of taking the diet pill, the doctors can prescribe a weight loss regimen that can trim anywhere from 5 to 22 pounds (up to 10% of body weight), but after six months the body develops a drug tolerance if the dieter doesn’t follow a healthy eating and exercise plan, and the weight will return.

Diet drugs can cause various side effects. The drug Orlistat is a fat blocker that removes excess fats from the intestines, which can cause uncomfortable cramping, gas and diarrhea. The drug reduces the body’s absorption of essential vitamins and nutrients. People who take Orlistat are recommended to also take a multivitamin supplement.

In February 1998 and March 2003, the FDA center for drug evaluation and research reported 49 deaths related to Sibutramine. The drug Sibutramine, an appetite suppressant, stimulates the nervous system and can raise blood pressure and heart rate, which increases the risk of heart attack, especially for people who already suffer high blood pressure and heart disease.

So, if you are considering taking diet pills to help you lose weight, make sure that the pills you are considering are FDA approved and, also, consult a doctor before you take any drug.
Happily Never After

By Jessica Rascos

Every little girl’s favorite Disney princess gets hit by reality on Dina Goldstein’s photography project, Fallen Princesses. The well known photographer from Vancouver, Canada takes on the “happily ever after” of fairytale personas and develops a tragic “ever after” for each of the Disney princesses.

Goldstein creates several ironic scenarios, from an alcoholic Cinderella to an overweight Little Red Riding Hood eating McDonald’s in the middle of the woods. She combines her dark humor with modern issues related to women, such as excessive vanity, illness, alcohol abuse, and the female gender role in a male dominated world. Some of the very controversial photos include Belle from Beauty and the Beast being injected with Botox and a bald Rapunzel holding on to a wig in a hospital room, hinting that she is fighting cancer. The collection also includes a very touching photo of Ariel from The Little Mermaid. In this scenario, the princess of the sea is trapped in an aquarium while a little human boy points her out, depicting the exploitation of women for entertainment purposes.

However, the most memorable tragic “ever after” involves our beloved Snow White trapped in a domestic nightmare. This princess has simply fallen into the typical submissive housewife role. She is captured with four children who are out of control, a dog making a mess around the house and her not-so-prince-charming drinking beer while watching the horse race.

According to the project’s main website, www.fallenprincesses.com, as someone who was never exposed to these fairytales, Dina Goldstein describes herself as a realist. When asked, she explained that her inspiration comes from watching children’s fascination with these princesses’ stories, with the “sad beginning, and the prince charming saving and turning them into princesses, [happily ever after].” She then “began to imagine Disney’s perfect princesses juxtaposed with real life issues that were affecting women around [her].” Goldstein simply refused to let the stories end because in reality these endings are just the beginning of a new chapter in a woman’s life. Instead, she decided to portray what happens after the moment they get married. Through her art, she makes the statement that prince charming is not the solution to a woman’s problems. Furthermore, she exposes the idea that life continues, and new issues arise after marriage.

At first glance, the paradoxes of the princesses spark laughter; however, the underlying theme is tragic because of the meaning behind the joke. Goldstein’s recreations of Disney’s most famous “happily ever afters” have become a worldwide sensation and continue to expand, not only for being entertaining but, also, for their witty and valuable remarks. Her revival of these female role models has exposed reality through these fictional characters that all little girls wanted to be once upon a time in their lives.

Job Tips in a Recession

By Alshaneet Moodoo

Since we are now in a recession, many students are experiencing the difficult task of looking for work. Here are some suggestions to help you in your job search:

- Do some research on careers that you would like to pursue. Read up on what the job entails, companies that you might consider working for, salary, benefits, the skills needed, and education requirements.
  - Don’t underestimate the power of networking! Let everyone know that you are currently looking for work; tell your professor, friend, parent, neighbor...anyone!! He or she might offer you a job or connect you with someone who might be hiring.
  - Look for job postings in the classifieds, blogs, flyers, and other forms of media, including social websites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. You can also post messages on your wall, letting people know that you are looking for job opportunities. This will help companies contact you through email, phone, or regular mail.
  - Follow someone who already works in the field or job position that you might be interested in. This will help you understand what the person does for a living. While shadowing the person for a day, consider if you can actually see yourself doing this particular job or career by asking yourself these questions:
    1. Is this something I can see myself doing?
    2. Will I be happy for the rest of my life?
    3. Will I enjoy or love doing this type of work?
    4. Can I handle the tasks that will be given to me?
  - Start posting video resumes; fill out online or written applications.
  - Consider taking temporary jobs that will support you financially. Do a hobby on the side during your free time until you get your dream job. Also, take any paid or unpaid internships. This will help you gain more experience and possibly a job opportunity.
  - Volunteer at school, community centers, nursing homes, and any other place that will offer you the opportunity to gain experience and skills. Also, consider applying for work study programs at your college.
  - If you are undecided about your major or need help getting started on your career path, go to Career Services in room 439 in the Library Building. Career Services will help you with resumes, job placement, and internships, and it will match your personality and interests with career listings using aptitude tests.
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“De Kooning: A Retrospective” at MoMA

BY ANAIS WONG

Now and until January 2012, the Museum of Modern Art is holding an extensive collection of the works of Willem de Kooning, a controversial Dutch-born New York artist of the twentieth century.

This MoMA special exhibition is quite complete, including paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures of the artist from various periods and genres. It gathers pieces lent by several institutions and private collections.

As you walk through the gallery and from one room to the other, it is hard to believe that all the works exposed were the product of a single mind. De Kooning’s earlier works are representations, although his series of men and women already includes abstract elements, and then his creations evolve into abstract forms with far less obvious figurative elements and a black-and-white series. De Kooning then returns to figuration with another series of women, this time greatly altering the shapes, and then again to abstract paintings, including a series that a critic called “Abstract Urban Landscapes.” After another fluctuation and a short period of experimentation with sculpture and lithography, the artist produced paintings that are labeled as “reductive abstractions.”

Born in the Netherlands in 1904, Willem de Kooning studied commercial and fine arts in Rotterdam and then immigrated to the US in his early twenties. He soon settled in New York, where he realized most of his works. Here he met other artists who influenced him, such as Arshile Gorky and John Graham. De Kooning also took his inspiration from Picasso’s cubism and Matisse’s colorful works. His tendency to bring together concepts that were thought as incompatible is most notable in his paintings.

Willem de Kooning produced alternatively figurative and abstract art, finally combining both in the same works, and used unconventional materials and techniques. On the MoMA web page of the exhibition, you can get insightful information on the artist’s techniques in the form of an interactive presentation of a selection of paintings. Some interesting examples are his use of cooking oils to add humidity to the paint, his applying charcoal on wet paint, and mixing salt into the greasy solvent of the ink in a print. De Kooning was constantly modifying some works, changing the drawings, scratching paint away, and painting over previous forms. In this way, some of his works underwent great metamorphosis in between the different stages.

As explained on the website, the use of X-ray images allowed experts to discover complex under-drawings on certain works, revealing that de Kooning changed the outlines of his painting a great number of times. Excavation, which is considered his most important painting, appears as a large puzzle of abstract forms and various figures, including what seem to be human body parts and different objects, giving an impression of movement. Apparently, the original drawing figured a much simpler interior scene.

In short, the exhibit is an interesting and exhaustive collection of a modern New York artist. Students planning to go see the exhibition should remember to bring their student ID in order to enjoy a lower price of $14 ($12 if you purchase your ticket online) instead of $25. Also, if you don’t mind risking a long waiting line, visit the MoMA on Fridays from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., when admission is free.

Nettie and Squeaky

BY MICHELE BORG
Lifestyles

Horoscopes

BY JOHANE CELESTIN and OLUWADAMISI K. ATANDA

Aquarius: You are clever, funny, independent and, overall, awesome. Everyone wants to be around you and date you but try not to let the attention go to your head. Modesty is what you should aim for.

Leo: Luck is on your side; try the lottery! It’s time for your generosity to pay off, but don’t let it get to your big head. Your best asset is your spirit; guard it with your life. Many will try to break you, but you’ll come out victorious.

Pisces: Jersey Shore will not give you a job in the future; if they do, would you really want to work for them or be part of the cast?! I suggest that you stop being lazy and study for something. No more self-pity! It will be your fault if you become a statistic.

Virgo: It wouldn’t hurt if you smiled a bit more. In fact, it may just reduce all those wrinkles on your face. And shake up your social life; fun is good and healthy! You lock yourself in your mind too often; your ideas are cutting-edge and fantastic. If only you’d let people in and share your ideas, you might just get that Nobel Prize one day.

Aries: It’s okay to say NO sometimes; people will still like you...maybe. You should probably stop spending money that you don’t have because you will be completely broke in the near future. And get ready: the new Twilight movie is coming out! But you won’t be able to see it because you will be BROKE.

Libra: Your confidence is bordering on pride. Learn to shut up; sometimes we learn more by listening and talking less. Your future is bright, but be sure to remain cautious. And remember to take your chill pill; you’ll get into that school you’ve been waiting to hear from. Patience is key.

Taurus: You should work on your temper; try an anger management class. Your insurance company might cover it if you can prove that you’re in need of some happy pills. Luckily, in your case, you won’t need much proof! No one wants to be with Ike Turner.

Scorpio: True beauty is from the inside; all that make up isn’t working. If they don’t love you for what is inside, then you shouldn’t be with them. Remember the age-old beauty tip: always take off one piece of accessory just before leaving the house. Let your actions reflect your true feelings; your star will surely shine.

Gemini: It’s possible that you have no opinions on anything; that’s probably why you’re still single. Thoughts are good; everyone appreciate them! Disagree with someone, start a riot, do something!!! Visiting a museum could be a start, and if you think the exhibition or a certain piece was a waste of time, then SAY IT! But most likely, it wasn’t a waste; you’re just simple-minded.

Sagittarius: You are persistent and hard working. Many think you’re overly-enthusiastic, but little do they know you have a burning desire to just fit in. Remain committed to your school work. I see “A”s all around for you!

Cancer: You’re a tad bit clingy, bordering on stalker, and that’s not good for obvious reason. You should spend some time with yourself and figure some things out, or a restraining order will be coming your way.

Capricorn: You inconvenience yourself for the convenience of others. Very admirable of you, but it’s time you took better care of yourself! Don’t give in too easily, and your talent will take center stage. You’re quiet but not stupid; let them know!
Most people live their lives in a daze. They wake up without ever waking up. They eat without ever tasting the food. They work without ever really caring. They fuck without ever really feeling. They love without ever understanding.

“Most people miss out on life,” Rayne said as she was kicked in the face, slamming against the cement wall. She felt warm liquid slipping down her head. She licked her lips in anticipation for more. It was always more she was seeking. Her life had become a game. A game in which the object was freedom, the obstacle was life, and the salvation was death.

“You’re weak!” She shouted blurring her bangs out of her face. Everything was dark; she was positive she blacked out a few times, but she could not be sure. Where ever he took her, it was some place underground, where no one would hear her cries, the last cries of a dismal life.

“That’s all you’ve got?” She shouted or tried to, since standing up was a difficult feat. Finally, she was able to stand using the wall for support. She shut her eyes and shoved her body into him full force. She could not see his face, but she heard a low growl from him, very human, and very pathetic.

“You’re weak! You’re pathetic! You’re not a man!” Rayne kept pushing him, smacking him, punching him, scratching him, but he was like the cement wall. He would not budge. She just got angrier. Then, her anger turned into fear. She was afraid he’d bail out on their deal, and then she would have to find someone else to help her.

No, it had to be now. It had to be in this hour. It had to be in this moment. This was her time to shine, and she would shine so red.

“I thought you were going to help me!” she shouted and spat in his face - or what she assumed was his face. This seemed to stir some life within his stone body. He punched her hard in the face. Her jaw was in pain, and she spat out a tooth.

“Bastard, piece of shit!” she yelled. He began choking her. She clawed her nails in his skin. She kicked at his legs. This was not part of the deal. The deal had certain ritualistic guidelines to it. He was deviating. How could she complain, really? The end result was the same; her suffering, though, wouldn’t be as long as she had hoped. Still, this was not how she wanted to die. But then he let her go, and she gasped. Her throat hurt, and the oxygen made her feel high, higher than she already was.

“You’re crazy. Why are we doing this?” he said, his voice pained. Marvin knew this was wrong, and, if caught, he’d possibly go to prison again for a very long time. As Rayne sucked in air, she stared in the direction of her savior. She knew from the moment she walked into the bar and spotted him, that he would be the one to rescue her, to save her from her pitiable existence.

“Be my savior.” She heard her words in her head. “I thought you were going to help me!” she shouted again.

“Look, I’m sorry. I’m real fucked up right now, and you’re crazy. I don’t even know what I’m doing.” He slurred slightly. It was all true. He was very fucked up in the biggest sense of the word. High on coke and drunk. She began crying quietly. Her savior could not back down. Maybe in the moments before salvation you must beg, so she begged. She struggled to her knees to feel his hard body. She felt his strong legs and thighs and hesitated not back down. Maybe in the moments before salvation you must beg, so she begged. She knew why he agreed and didn’t really care. All she cared about was getting what she wanted, a painful death. Something she could be proud of. She wanted to be saved from her hard life of foster homes, prostitution, drugs, and most of all her own mind.

“He…he drove my sister to insanity. Basically murdered her…the judge never understood. The jury never cared.” Rayne stopped nibbling on his neck and grabbed his face with her hands. She kissed him, and it was a painful kiss filled with blood, tears, and sweat. Her jaw was in so much pain; it was beautiful.

“Oh Marvin.” She paused for dramatic effect. “Your sister was just a stupid whore.”

He pushed her.

“What did you say?” His voice thundered in this dark place.

“Shut up!”

“Bitch!” He punched her jaw, and she cried out in pain, beautiful, blissful pain.

“Shut up!”

She could hear the tears in his hard voice. She could feel the rage emanating from his body. She couldn’t stop smiling; his rage would help her. He was her savior, and he was filled with an all-consuming bloody rage.

“Oh yes! Oh yes!” she shouted as he punched her repeatedly. She laughed while he kicked her in the stomach.

“I hope she died a horrible death. Those are the best ones,” she said. He grabbed her by the hair and began banging her head onto the ground.

“Yes.” She sighed the word. Her life was slowly ebbing away. She remembered the last few moments of meeting Marvin. She thought back to how she walked into the empty bar and saw him. She knew without knowing how that tonight would be her night. Most girls look forward to their prom or their wedding day but not Rayne. Her salvation was death, and Marvin would save her.

He had bought her a drink, then another drink, then another drink. The way he stared at her, she knew he would agree to anything she said. Before she knew it, her head was swimming with alcohol and so was his. He took her to his car where he prepared two clean needles for the coke he would inject into himself and into her. What the hell? Who cares? Tonight was her night. By some divine hand, her savior was delivered to her: Marvin, a convicted killer and coke addict.

“Be my savior.”

She had spoken the words to seal her fate, and he, her savior, had agreed. She never knew why he agreed and didn’t really care. All she cared about was getting what she wanted, a painful death. Something she could be proud of. She wanted to be saved from her hard life of foster homes, prostitution, drugs, and most of all her own mind.

In turn, Marvin thought this girl was completely insane. Yet, the look in her eyes was so much like Yvonne. He had always wanted to help Yvonne. He had wished a million times for time to go backward so he could be there for his sister. Seeing the determination in this girl’s eyes, he made up his mind. He would help his sister through this troubled girl.

Rayne brought herself back to the present time. She could no longer taunt him or move a limb because she was so badly beaten, so bloody. She was half leaning on the wall and half lying on the hard floor. She heard him walking unsteadily, and then she heard heavy things being moved. She smiled and breathed in her last few painful breaths. She wished she could see the art he had made out of her. She wished she could understand. The jury never cared.” Rayne stopped nibbling on his neck and grabbed his face with her hands. She kissed him, and it was a painful kiss filled with blood, tears, and sweat. Her jaw was in so much pain; it was beautiful.

Who did you kill?” she slowly nibbled on his neck, swaying against his body to music only the dead can hear. This was her time to shine.

“My bastard stepfather.” He began to sob, sucking in air quickly through his nostrils. “He…he drove my sister to insanity. Basically murdered her…the judge never understood. The jury never cared.” Rayne stopped nibbling on his neck and grabbed his face with her hands. She kissed him, and it was a painful kiss filled with blood, tears, and sweat. Her jaw was in so much pain; it was beautiful.

“Tell me Marvin, have you killed before?” she asked.

“Marvin,” he said.

“Tell me Marvin, have you killed before?” she asked.

“That is what I did time for.”

“Any last words?” he said through clenched teeth.

She opened her eyes to see his dark silhouette holding something heavy on his shoulder. Once again, she smiled. This was her time to shine, and she would shine so red.

“Finally.”
It’s almost here! The National Football League’s long awaited return to the city of Angels is one step closer to becoming a reality!

On August 9th, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted in favor to build the new $1.2 billion, state-of-the-art Farmers Field. According to the website losangelesfootballstadium.com, the 75,000 seat stadium, which is to be built using private funds by multiple investors led by AEG, will be an extension on the famous Staples Center facility, home to the Los Angeles Lakers. With the funds set and the blueprints drawn up, the only things left are to submit development and environmental clearances to the City of Los Angeles, which has been without an NFL franchise since 1994. Los Angeles and AEG (owners of the Los Angeles Galaxy, Kings and part of the Lakers) have been vigorously attempting to get football back in L.A. since 2002. With many of the most difficult obstacles of bringing football to L.A. behind them, the next major challenge is to get a team, but which one?

Those who live off football or even those who just pay attention here and there have all heard the rumors of the same six teams: Buffalo Bills, Jacksonville Jaguars, San Diego Chargers, Minnesota Vikings, Oakland Raiders, and the St. Louis Rams. Since both franchises are members of the western division in their respective conferences, a move to L.A. would keep the NFL’s team format from throwing us another twist, such as Dallas being in the eastern division. Also, both teams were the original Los Angeles teams before they bolted from the 2nd largest television market for Oakland (6th) and St. Louis (21st), according to stationindex.com; the recent passing of Raiders’ owner Al Davis will pose many questions for the organization’s future in Oakland.

The San Diego Chargers have recently been in the rumor mill lately because of their desire for a brand new stadium. Also, in the western division, San Diego is only 112 miles away from Los Angeles, and many Angelenos are Charger fans, providing a large fan base for a possible move south. According to ESPN, Oakland, St. Louis and San Diego have been in the spotlight of the relocation rumors, but we can’t forget the others, such as Buffalo, Jacksonville and Minnesota. Minnesota, like the Chargers, desperately needs a new stadium; some might remember the roof of the Minnesota Metro Dome collapsed last December under the weight of too much snow. Minnesota is also plagued by low attendance and with a stadium that seats a little over 64,000 that they can’t fill because of poor performance which adds on to the financial issues that are keeping front office personnel up at night. Jacksonville has many of the same financial issues and lack of fan support that may result in relocation; almost half their games aren’t even shown on TV in Jacksonville. You know you’ve got problems if your home town isn’t even watching you play, but unlike Oakland, St. Louis and San Diego, moving Jacksonville would upset the team format balance that has worked well since it was first established in 2001.

Talks of relocating the Buffalo Bills open up a whole new can of worms that hints at what and where the NFL is thinking; because of its popularity outside the states, the NFL is looking internationally. The Bills have played at least one game a season for the past few years in Toronto’s Rogers Centre because Buffalo’s fan base reaches well into Canada. Every year for the past five years, the NFL has played at least one game a season in a sold out Wembley Stadium in London. Even with Europe’s strong fan base, unless we develop a faster way to travel or find a cure for jet lag, I don’t see Europe’s integration into the NFL happening anytime soon.

A more realistic setting that the NFL already has its eye set on is Mexico. The last game matched the Cardinals against the 49ers in a packed Azteca Stadium, Mexico City back in 2005. Not only does Mexico provide potential for enormous revenue growth but could be a geographical rival if a team does indeed go to Los Angeles. In March 2010, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell announced his goal for the NFL’s annual revenue by 2027 to reach $27 billion, according to profootballtalk.com. As of 2010, the NFL’s revenue was $9 billion, so we’ll just have to wait and see if the NFL expands.
Q&A with Author Greg Prato

BY DAVID RUSSELL

Greg Prato’s new book Sack Exchange: The Definitive Oral History of the 1980s New York Jets recently hit bookstores. This is a change from Prato’s usual work which is music related. He has written several books and has been published in Rolling Stone, All Music Guide and Classic Rock Magazine. Prato, a huge Jets fan for 30 years, has experienced some highs and many lows of being a fan of Gang Green. I recently spoke with him on his newest book and his memories of rooting for the Jets.

DR: You are primarily music-minded. Why a book on the Jets?
GP: Because I’ve been a Jets fan since 1981. Although I have written exclusively about rock music-related topics until now, I am a die-hard Jets fan (and for those who are wondering, I also root for the Mets and Islanders) and always find myself being especially intrigued by the ’80s Jets teams, who were the only of my “trio” of teams that didn’t win a championship during the decade.

DR: Of all the Jets teams, why focus on the 1980s?
GP: They’re one of the classic “what if” teams. What if they didn’t fall so far behind against the Bills in the ’81 playoffs? What if the field wasn’t so soggy in the ’82 AFC Championship game? What if Walt Michaels wasn’t fired? Also, there just isn’t that much info about the 80s Jets nowadays, and I have always wished there was a book out there that told the story of that era, so I decided to take matters into my own hands.

DR: What were your experiences as a Jets fan?
GP: Like rooting for any sports team, a lot of exhilaration and a lot of torture. I’ve experienced just about every crushing Jets playoff since the ’81 game vs. the Bills, and the disappointment of the Mud Bowl (’82), the second-half playoff letdowns vs. the Broncos (’99) and Indy (’09) remain stored in my mind and last year’s comeback that fell short against the Steelers. But again, that’s the same with any sports team, and the Jets have had their share of good games, too.

DR: Did writing this book change perceptions you had about the team?
GP: Yes. Some players and coaches felt the ’80s Jets teams weren’t “together” as much as they should have been, and that may have played a part in the team’s misfortune. Also, the majority of the players said that firing Walt Michaels after the ’82 Championship debacle cost the Jets reaching a Super Bowl in the ’80s, which is something I never really thought about until hearing what they had to say.

DR: How were you able to get in touch with 47 people for this book? Were these all phone interviews?
GP: Yes, these were all phone interviews. Like my previous books (Grunge is Dead, MTV Ruled the World, etc.), the more interviews I would do, the more people would suggest others that I should speak to, or if I had specific people that I would like to interview, many were quite helpful with putting me in touch with them.

DR: How much did they like talking about the 1980s?
GP: Not a single person complained! Everyone seemed to enjoy talking about the decade that gave us such fine items as Punky Brewster, Rubik’s Cube and Def Leppard.

DR: How long did this take to write?
GP: I’d say doing the interviews and putting everything together took about six months total. I’m a full-time writer, so writing is what I am able to solely focus on.

DR: What do you think is the reason the Jets kept coming up short?
GP: Several different reasons—the firing of Walt Michaels, bad breaks at the wrong time, alienating hardcore fans by leaving Shea Stadium under cloudy circumstances, etc.

DR: Would this book have had the same effect if the Jets had won a Super Bowl? Because now when teams win, it seems every player cashes in and writes a book, but these talented Jets teams seem to have been forgotten.
GP: That was something that a lot of publishers voiced concern about when I was shopping this book around. My response? “Hogwash.” I mean, does anyone really want to read a book about the 1970 Kansas City Chiefs just because they won the Super Bowl way back when? If a subject has a compelling story, then that’s the main thing for me. And I’ve been lucky thus far—every single book I’ve written has been about a subject that I appreciated and was a fan of and wanted to read a book about.

DR: What other projects do you have coming up?
GP: A few on the horizon but too early to confirm. Your best bet is to check my Twitter page (twitter.com/gregpratowriter) often, as I always post updates as to what I’m up to there.

For more info on Greg Prato and for info on ordering other Greg Prato books, visit http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/gregprato.

Photo courtesy of Greg Prato
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*By David Russell*

The New York Jets seem to be at the height of their popularity after back to back appearances in the AFC Title Game. By playing their best football since the late 1960s, the Jets are passing the Giants in back page headlines, something unheard of in this primarily Giant-minded town.

*However, Greg Prato’s Sack Exchange: The Definitive Oral History of the 1980s New York Jets* takes a look back at some Jets teams that have slipped through the cracks of time.

*Sack Exchange* begins with the futility of the mid-1970s Jets, after the team turned into laughingstocks after winning Super Bowl III. Things began to change in 1977, when the Jets brought in Walt Michaels to become head coach.

The book chronicles year by year as the Jets steadily gain respectability and turn into Super Bowl contenders. After losing a home playoff game in 1981, when a 24-point comeback came up just short, the Jets looked poised for a Super Bowl title in 1982.

The book’s best part details what went wrong in the AFC Title Game in Miami and what happened on the flight home. Walt Michaels was dismissed after taking Gang Green from the cellar and taking them one game away from the Super Bowl. Even nearly 30 years after the loss, the bitterness of the loss and confusion over Michaels’ firing can be seen through Prato’s excellent storytelling techniques.

The Jets then blew their chance to become New York’s team. The Giants left for New Jersey in 1976, leaving the Jets as the only metropolitan area team. Prato conveys the dismay many Jets had when owner Leon Hess decided to move from Shea Stadium in Queens to Giants Stadium in New Jersey, making the Jets become second-class citizens.

Another heartbreaking year for the Jets was 1986. With the city craving a Subway Super Bowl, the Jets started 10-1, only to lose their last five games and stagger into the playoffs. After a win, the Jets blew a 10-point 4th quarter lead to end their season and then had to watch as the Giants won the Super Bowl and become New York’s team.

*Sack Exchange* not only focuses on the on-field activities of these Jets. Prato also takes readers inside some of the late-night carousing of some of the Jets.

Some players felt that there were racial niches that guys stuck to which hurt the team. The Jets interviewed almost unanimously agree that they would have won it all had Walt Michaels not been let go. *Sack Exchange* also shows how some players handled the spotlight, such as defensive star Mark Gastineau, who did a little dance every time he sacked the quarterback. The Jets got their “Sack Exchange” moniker from a legendary photo-shoot in which the defensive line of the Jets, Joe Klecko, Marty Lyons, Abdul Salaam, and Gastineau, are seen in uniform at the New York Stock Exchange.

It is amazing that events from so long ago are precisely remembered from many of the players. Several players, including Bobby Jackson and Greg Buttle, shared negative stories about Joe Walton’s lack of loyalty and the way he would launch into unprofessional tirades. Another controversial moment was when the leader of the team, Gastineau, retired in the middle of the 1988 season. Many players, such as quarterbacks Ken O’Brien and Pat Ryan, were in shock, or as Ryan says, “How he retired? Hell, he just left!”

Somehow with a top notch defense consisting of the “Sack Exchange” and a devastating aerial attack that featured Ken O’Brien throwing to the likes of Wesley Walker and Al Toon, the Jets were never able to put it all together and win the Lombardi trophy. Prato, who primarily writes about the music industry, does a great job in setting this book up, in which 47 players, coaches, and fans are interviewed. Prato conveys the heartbreak of the Jets and their stories which Prato is able to bring out. Hopefully, this is not the last of Prato’s sports books about forgotten teams that came so close every year only to break the hearts of their fans.

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