Mumbai

By Colin Brothers

I have the honor of attending Queensborough Community College, which is the first college in the CUNY system to bring together people of various faiths and beliefs for the common cause of solidarity with Mumbai. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, another international capital was added to the list of targets hit by heinous terrorist activity. Mumbai, India was attacked by a group of terrorists that reigned destruction and violence over the Taj Mahal Palace, Towers Hotel, a local train terminal, and the Chabad Jewish Center for three days, holding hostages in at least three of these locations. The attacks killed 163 people, plus nine gunmen, and wounded 239 men, women, and children. According to news reports, the gunmen set out by boat from a Pakistani port in the city of Karachi. Somewhere between leaving Pakistan and reaching the shore of Mumbai the group hijacked an Indian fishing trawler for a less conspicuous approach in their plot of destruction. For the three days of terrorism in Mumbai, people in India and around the world fearfully awaited the worst— that someone they knew and loved had been killed.

The capital city of India, Mumbai is the metropolitan mecca of the country. It is the epicenter of tourism, worship, finance, Bollywood, and Indian government. The terrorists strategically sought out the places where they knew there would not just be Indian citizens but foreigners as well. From killing a Jewish couple, who hailed from Brooklyn, New York, in a religious center known as the Chabad-House, to collecting guest’s passports for the purpose of identifying Americans, British and other westerners in the Towers Hotel and the Taj Mahal, this was an attack on all of us. Everybody in the world is today threatened by terrorism. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” King reminds us that hate spreads due to ignorance, not because of principals derived from specific religions.

On Thursday evening, December 4, 2008, QCC’s Performing Arts Center hosted a community memorial service for the families and victims of Mumbai. The pain experienced by the diverse communities of Queens ran deep and was witnessed through the stories community and religious group leaders shared. Queensborough President, Dr. Eduardo J. Marti opened the event with a speech regarding the “devastating consequences to indiscriminate acts of hatred.” Throughout history there have been horrible war crimes based on people’s religious beliefs. Dr. Marti made it clear that ideological and religious fundamentalism too often manipulates the uneducated into believing that religions condone or in some way support the acts performed by terrorists. Mohammed Razvi, Director of Council of Peoples Organization, put it best, “Terrorists are not people, they are inhumane. We cannot designate terrorists to their nationality.” Following the aftermath of 9/11 the world as a whole should learn not to point a finger at any country or creed. Terrorists operate out of radical interest, and unfortunately that interest is often intertwined with a religion which gives a bad name to all followers. (continued on page 5)

Can Anyone Save the Business Owners of Willets Point?

By Cathy Murawska

Before attending the November 10th, Willets Point Press Conference, I had two telephone interviews with two business owners in Willets Point. One of my classmates, Colin Brothers, and Professor Kuzsai, a QCC Creative Writing professor, gave me the leads. Danny Sambushi, III, Colin’s friend, comes from generations of Sambushis selling auto salvage, used parts, late model wrecks and used cars bought and sold in Willets Point. Willets Point is located immediately east of the new Citifield Stadium and is bordered on the south by Roosevelt Avenue and on the north by Northern Blvd. Danny’s family has had their business at the same location for 57 years. Danny says that as per the City’s request, his family’s business must be relocated. Two or three suggested locations are two miles away from Willets Point, and negotiations with the City are currently underway. For the Sambushi family business the relocation just might work out. However, if they refuse to relocate to another suggested area out of Willets Point, it will lead to more problems for the business owners. According to Danny, the City has been able to relocate only 50 out of 250 businesses which in total employ 1700 people. The City would have to make substantial effort to relocate the other 200 businesses. All 250 businesses are subject to mandating eminent domain, “the right of the government to appropriate private property for public use with compensation to the owner.”

Arturo Olaya, President of the Willets Point Defense Committee, Advancing Human Rights to All Workers, has been the owner of Arturo Upholstery and Trim Shop for 15 years, and lives only four blocks away from his shop. Like most business owners in Willets Point, Arturo has not been offered a place to relocate to. According to Arturo, “Willets Point is a big mistake! government doesn’t care about the families here. Where is my baby going to live? Where are the plans for relocation?”

When Councilman Anthony Avella arrived, Arturo Olaya distributed a letter written by the Committee to Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The first paragraph of the letter begins, “We are an important part of Willets Point who have been serving New York City for decades, but now we are living the worst nightmares since in any moment we can lose our jobs and our right to livelihood in the middle of the worst economic crisis of the last hundred years. Losing our jobs without economic compensation or relocation of our small businesses is a tragedy that we hope you never have to live through.” The Committee asked in this letter that Mayor Bloomberg please meet with them before he and the City Council take their final vote on the Willets Point issue. Mayor Bloomberg did not meet with them.

At the November 10th press conference, the only representative from the City Council
**EDITORIALS**

These editorials represent the opinion of the Editorial Board of Communique, which is solely responsible for its contents. These are not necessarily the views of the Queensborough Community College administration and staff. Communique welcomes any letters or editorials for the population of QCC. Submit work to Communique, H-428. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit letters for spatial needs and grammatical accuracy.

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**Comply, or Die?**  
By Alysson Arikian

On Monday, December 2nd, a 20 year old man named Horace Moore fatally stabbed bus driver, Edwin Thomas, on the B-46 line in Brooklyn. It was reported on NYTimes.com that Moore boarded the bus and after swiping a metrocard with insufficient fare asked the bus driver for a transfer. He got angry when the driver refused. Moore then began to argue with the driver, punched him twice in the head, and got off of the bus. Thomas followed Moore off the bus and continued to argue with him for a few minutes before getting back onto the bus and attempting to close the doors. Moore then pushed the bus doors open, got back onto the bus and repeatedly stabbed him in the chest in front of all of the frightened passengers. Moore jumped off the bus and ran away from a passenger that was trying to chase after him. Thomas died at the hospital, leaving behind his two teenage children. Moore was caught later that night and identified by witnesses out of a police lineup. It is not at all a surprise that Moore is no novice to delinquent behavior. His rap sheet includes prior charges of assault, disorderly conduct, endangering the welfare of a child, and weapon possession. Moore lives with his mother, uncle and two year old daughter (who his mother cares for) and he is unemployed.

What is being done to prevent teenage and young adult violence? If someone is thinking about it’s okay to be violent or even kill as long as they get what they want out of it, then who is to blame? I blame the parents. Teenagers do not commit violent acts without reason. According to At-risk, com, there are warning signs that often signal potentially violent behavior such as depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and becoming friends with the wrong crowd. Parents need to do their job as parents and pay attention to their children’s behavior and especially to who their friends are. Teenagers always think they are “adults” and know who they are as people. But more often than not, they end up adopting the fashion, behavior and moral values of whoever they are with friends. If violence is what their friend’s value and think is “cool,” the chances are that they will too.

My sister told me a story of two of her friends that were walking home one night from a bar in Park Slope, Brooklyn about a year ago. They said that they were approached by two young men in their teens with knives and told to hand over their wallets and watches. One of them thought about it for a second and realized “it’s not even worth the trouble,” and handed her things over. The other friend was angry because he worked hard for his money and he didn’t want to simply hand it over because some piece of scum decided that he was going to take it away. He (continued on page 4)

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**Post Election: “KKK is here to stay.” Extremist Groups on the Rise**  
By Daniel Fabiani

Living in this country, no matter where you hailed from, everybody knows something about the infamous Ku Klux Klan. Birthed in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866, the Klan rose to power because of a spawling up rise against the Reconstruction of southern states in the U.S; the KKK recruited substantial numbers in its first year of business. By the 1920’s the “Klan” had seen its strongest numbers, a number staggering 4.5 million people were joined together in hate from coast to coast on the continental United States. During the 20’s they began to broaden their message of hate, evening their rage for blacks and began to attack other groups which included, but was not limited to: Roman Catholics (Southern European immigrants such as Italians, Greeks and Spaniards) Jews, socialists, Mexicans, communists and anything that was considered “foreign.”

But after the great depression and World War II, the nation had become more unified and the KKK dissolved into practically nothing, officially disbanding by 1944. After civil rights unrest in the 1950’s, the KKK found another reason to revive their gang so to speak, but recruitment was feeble and rose to numbers so minute that they are not officially reported.

Fast forward to 2008: After the election of America’s first mixed race President, hate crimes have slowly (so far non-violent), but steadily seen an increase. According to Reuters, “Hundreds of incidents of abuse or intimidation apparently motivated by racial hatred have been reported since the November 4 election, though most have not involved violence.” Post election information states that the KKK is seeing a rising number of volunteer members. Disparaged whites who do not feel that the current President-elect is right for the job feel it necessary to bring their own race back to the top. According to a CNN and AOL news video (http://video.aol.com/video-detail/the-kkk-reborn/2686920608) the Ku Klux Klan (known also as the knights party in the video) are reaching as far as England for recruits and already have a 10,000 member strong alliance here in the United States; 14 other countries as well. The source for their quick revival is the internet, utilizing its power to broadcast meetings to anyone who can not attend in person; they also raise money (“awareness”) and cast hope upon the disheartened people from the recent elections. The grand wizard (head of the KKK, imperial klan of America) Ron Edwards, clearly states in the video that the new KKK does not condone violence. He is part of the new Ku Klux Klan; the KKK of the past, white hooded faces and cloaked bodies are not the KKK of 2008. The “whites and Christian only,” rhetoric has been dismissed. The newly revamped Ku Klux Klan meet at hard rock shows along side atheists, skin heads and myriads of white power groups to watch rock band songs of disdain about gays, Jews, blacks, Catholics and anything alien to them.

The Ku Klux Klan isn’t the only extremist group on the rise, there are other groups growing, but most are too little to report. The “White Nationalist” movement – the next largest to the KKK - deplores that the United States is content with a racially diverse society as a result of the 2008 elections. They surreptitiously hope that the outcome will heighten recruitment because of despondent people who do not appreciate the 2008 campaign. Two white nationalist websites have seen an immense increase after the President-elect had won. Officially reported, the websites Stormfront and The Council of Conservative Citizens have had their server’s crash more times than expected after November 4th. Before that time, the website hosted a crew of 50,000 people a month and than notably jumped to a colossal 500,000 hits a month post elections; their phone lines have rung off the hook ever since; those sites are not only the places where hate groups are rising. It is known that white supremacist and nationalist groups have been sparse throughout the country pre-elections, holding no real power, but they are now regaining status. There were a documented 602 hate groups in the U.S. in 2000; the number rose to 888 in 2007 thanks in part to frustrated people over immigration. In 2008 there are no reports on how many more hate groups of this manner have risen, but there would be no surprise if the numbers amplify into the thousands because of the election. (continued on page 5)
Uncharted, Unsung, and Unbelievable – The QCC Art Gallery

By Christopher Rai

The QCC Art Gallery is an enigma on our campus, the QCC Art Gallery. From now through January 29, the Kuba Textiles exhibit will be displayed in full glory detailing great African art. Intrigued by the pursuit of art and culture of the world I decided to stop by for a visit a few weeks ago.

The interior of the QCC Art Gallery is incredibly gorgeous with freshly painted walls and polished wood floors. In addition, the rooms are spacious and very well lit accenting the exhibit’s finer details perfectly, and rivaling some of the nicest buildings in SoHo. Furthermore, the selection of African art is amazing, presenting not only textiles, but ceremonial masks, weapons, pottery, and many other priceless relics of the past and present. And finally...there was barely anyone in sight save for a lone security staff at the gift shop and a secretary in an office on the 2nd floor. What’s wrong with this picture?

What is the QCC Art Gallery you may ask? The Art Gallery began its life in the late 1960s when the first Chairman of Art & Photography, Priva B. Gross, established the QCC Art Gallery in the 4th floor of the library. On October 25, 1981 after a rigorous student competition to renovate the gallery it found a new home in the Oakland Country Club building which was finally accessible to the public. Over two decades later in 2004, the QCC Art Gallery underwent another renovation overseen by the architectural firm Beatty, Harvey, and Associates and is now in its current incarnation, a handsome brick-lined building surrounded by a gorgeous with freshly painted walls and polished wood floors. In addition, the rooms are spacious and very well lit accenting the exhibit’s finer details perfectly, and rivaling some of the nicest buildings in SoHo. Furthermore, the selection of African art is amazing, presenting not only textiles, but ceremonial masks, weapons, pottery, and many other priceless relics of the past and present. And finally...there was barely anyone in sight save for a lone security staff at the gift shop and a secretary in an office on the 2nd floor. What’s wrong with this picture?

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The Art Gallery receives thousands of visitors every year. The exhibits are carefully chosen every few months showing, as the Gallery Director Faustino Quintanilla puts it, “all working medias.” The exhibits range from painting, sculpture, and printmaking and have showcased all of the great cultures and many of the most important artists of the 20th century, including recent shows on Andy Warhol and the American Odyssey. Ever since its renovation in 2004, the number of visitors have tripled and the QCC gallery has gained recognition through a publication called the Gallery Guide distributed in all major art institutions and the Institute of Museum and Library services, a grant-making federal agency supporting museums and libraries. Interns and visitors from Argentina to Japan have come to visit the QCC Art Gallery.

The current exhibit, the Kuba Textiles, showcases the art and culture of the Kuba people who live in the southeastern Congo between the Kasai and Sankuru Rivers. The textiles are woven from the Raffia palm tree through a collaboration of all the villagers. After splitting the trees and removing their fibers, the cloth is woven by the men on a loom while the women create dazzling geometric patterns through magnificent dyes and textures. The textiles are worn as garments for a variety of purposes from daily wear to funeral rites for the deceased.

This exhibit also showcases other significant works by the Kuba people. One is a wood carving of an alligator used by oracles. By oiling and rubbing its smooth back the oracles can read out the future revealed on the carving. Another is a mukyem, an elephant mask worn on the head. These masks are reserved for nobility funerals and are a symbol of death. One more work is a mboongojny, or a cup made for everyday use to formally occasions. The cups are generally carved into anthropomorphic patterns. However artisans would sometimes call their friends to use as a focus for their works.

If the Art Gallery is such an incredible place then why hasn’t it gained more attention on campus? According to Director Quintanilla, there are two major reasons. One of them is funding, or lack thereof. Because Queensborough is a CUNY school, it receives money directly from the state for its needs including overall maintenance, funding for the academic departments, and et cetera. Unfortunately, the Art Gallery falls outside of the spectrum since it is a separate program with no direct bearing on the college’s academic program. As a result it must rely on donations, grants, memberships, and original publications to sustain itself leaving very little for its own advertising. The Art Gallery does advertise itself in the Gallery Guide and in the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Despite these efforts, there still is little support from the QCC students.

The second reason for the lack of attention is that there is not enough interest by the students themselves. Most do not even know where the Gallery is or that it exists. Due to Queensborough’s design as a community college there is very little attention given to extracurricular activities generally and for a gallery that has trouble with advertising it makes for a predicament. As for students who do come in as a result of class, their visits are made out of necessity rather than interest. Furthermore, there has been little in-college advertising, and the Communiqué itself has only advertised it twice in the last four years. All of these reasons contribute to a general apathy by the student body, which is a shame since Queensborough is “a cultural hub” filled with a richness of multicultural arts and theatre.

The QCC Art Gallery is a fantastic campus gem with incredible style and varied artwork, and the Oakland Country Club building itself is QCC history, in existence since before the campus began. However without more attention the QCC Gallery may end up collecting dust, ignored by the hordes of students who may only give it a passing glance. Yet those who take the time to look will be rewarded by something that transcends time and culture. It’s free to come in and take a look. The Art Gallery is just behind the Administration building and between the Library and Technology buildings. You are guaranteed to leave with a smile on your face.
Comply, or Die?

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tried to fight back and was badly beaten, but luckily walked away with his life.

What is our world coming to when lives are taken over such nonsensical things as a bus transfer? It is seeing violent stories everyday in the news that make people scared of everyone else around them, and especially of the teenage and early 20’s generation. Violent crimes are being committed by kids, which too often reinforces the decision of some people to not even bother standing up for themselves, or for what is good, right and true. It’s appalling that people should have to bite their tongues to protect their lives.

Arguing with an uneducated, unemployed juvenile delinquent with a weapon is always risky. It is disheartening that this is becoming a social “norm” of our city. Our society is slowly being desensitized to teenagers and early 20-somethings committing extremely violent acts on innocent people.

Parents whose children commit violent crimes often look the other way, and place the blame on the “environment.” I’m sorry, but that’s the biggest cop-out I’ve ever heard and I’m sick of hearing it. The excuse that people become products of their environment is basically arguing that people are too stupid to think for themselves about how to better their lives. There are plenty of people out there that have grown up in underprivileged, high-crime neighborhoods, and had an unsatisfying childhood who worked hard to get out of that situation and make life better for themselves. Blaming one’s social environment is absolutely no excuse, and if that is the excuse one chooses, he or she is admitting being too dense to make educated and responsible decisions.

In my opinion, our society needs to seriously re-evaluate its priorities. It sometimes seems that “going green,” and slowly trying to force every smoker in the city to quit, for example, is more important to people than addressing and combating the violence occurs everyday on our the streets. What can we do as a society to cut down on teenage violence? Unfortunately, no one person can change a whole society. However, setting a curfew for your children, enforcing acceptable discipline, not allowing violent movies or video games, and being involved with children’s academic and social lives can make a difference.

The next time you watch the news and learn of someone assaulted or killed by a teenage/20-something delinquent with a weapon, ask yourself what you could have done for yourself. Variations of this statement can be used for any kind of violent crime. This was Councilman Anthony Avella, the Chairman of the Zoning Committee. Also in attendance were reporters from New York 1, NTDITV, Locelo Media Design, The Queens Chronicle, and Queensborough Community College’s Communiqué. One cannot help wondering if the final vote on Willet’s Point would have been different if the major networks and The New York Times were available to cover the Press Conference.

Can Anyone Save the Business Owners of Willets Point?

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was Councilman Anthony Avella, the Chairman of the Zoning Committee. On Monday, November 10, 2008, the Willets Point Press Conference took place in front of Cliftfield. Arturo Olaya took his bullhorn and his fellow Willets Point Committee members got on a truck and yelled repeatedly a song with the words, “Willets Point is not for sale!” The sign that was written in Spanish read, “Bloomberg, stop doing damage to the most poor.” “Shouts on the bullhorn alternated between English and Spanish, “Justice Now! We have no justice, no peace. When do we want it? NOW!” They sang again, “Willets Point is not for sale!” and Arturo Olaya shouted in Spanish, “Injustice for the businessman who will sell our Willets Point for more money!”

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The Willets Point Defense Committee displayed all 250 of their business cards on posters to represent their unity. Besides the reporters, Councilman Anthony Avella and his assistant, there were no more than 30 people at this rally. Were the other business owners afraid to come out against Mayor Bloomberg? The Committee was not afraid to display two life size cardboard dummies of Mayor Bloomberg wearing a Nazi uniform with an eminient domain pin and a $100 bill pinned to his jacket and one giant $100 bill under his feet.

Councilman Avella expressed his many reasons why the Willets Point Redevelopment Plan is not a good idea. According to Avella, if the city sells Willets Point to a rich developer, we will not know what the financial impact will be and most of the small business owners who presently live there will not be able to afford the “affordable housing” which is planned. Avella questions Mayor Bloomberg’s “financial wizardry.” According to Councilman Councilman Avella, every housing project that Mayor Bloomberg has planned has “failed miserably.” He wants the city to “pull the project, it’s a disgrace from day one, for the following reasons, we are presently in a financial crisis; in the past month, there has been major layoffs, the NYPD postponed its last class and this City cannot afford to spend $400 million on a new construction project.”

Reporting for the Communiqué, I asked Councilman Avella if we really need additional housing in this area which will cause more traffic, pollution and congestion of an overtaxed infrastructure. Councilman Avella responded, “That is a very good question. It would make too much common sense to just fix the infrastructure in this area which has been a lawsuit for Willets Point residents against the city for more than 30 years. They pay their taxes just like we do. Why don’t they get the infrastructure they deserve? Besides by the time the city can afford to make this plan, it will take years! Bloomberg does not have common sense.”

On November 13, 2008, Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council for the Willets Point Redevelopment Plan released a press release. The plan “will transform a blighted industrial site into a vibrant new community that will include a state of the art convention center, new public open spaces and other community amenities. As for the businesses that are displaced by the plan, the city will offer relocation and offer workforce training and assistance programs. LaGuardia Community College will offer English as a Second Language classes and GED test preparation (See www.council.nyc.gov/releases/11/13.shtml). The Council’s plan may sound wonderful when you are sitting in a Councilman’s seat, however, if you are a business owner from the Willets Point area in the auto industry, the city wants you to pick up your business and find customers elsewhere.

Arturo Olaya will be appealing to Helen Marshall, Borough President, and City Councilman Anthony Avella for their help. Councilman Hiram Monserrate has insisted that he will not agree to the city’s plan unless there were affordable housing units built. However, a $235,000 house in today’s NYC market is either made out of cardboard and only has one bedroom. With space limited and our economy crumbling, the relocation of Willets Point business owners could not have come at a worse time. Are a stadium and the unnecessary building of apartments worth destroying these small businesses? Who will be the voice of reason to stop the political machine driving Willets Point out of business?
Cell Phones in Classrooms - Problem or Epidemic?

BY HARAN SIVAGNANAM

When cell phones were first introduced to the public customers likely had a hard time imagining that they could and would get any smaller in size. Fast forward to a little over a decade later, however, and you have communication devices that fit in the palm of your hand. Not only has the cell phone gotten smaller in size but it is also lighter, faster, more portable, and most of all more efficient in every way possible. So much so that it is no longer uncommon to see a cell phone in the possession of almost every single student that goes to school these days, especially those that attend college.

I am one of the thousands of cell phone owners that carry a phone with them to Queensborough Community College. Many public schools have a written rule that students should not bring cell phones into buildings or school grounds, let alone into the classroom. College campuses are a different story, at least for the most part. All colleges have different policies concerning cell phone usage. Take QCC for example - the library and gym (weight room) are two facilities where it is policy that cell phones are not allowed. However, people seldom follow this policy, and the exact same thing happens with cell phones being used in the classroom.

There have been many arguments made, including disrupting class, cheating on tests, taking inappropriate photos of students, videos, and etcetera that cell phones should not be brought to school. While most of these points are valid, I am against the notion that schools should ban cell phones or any other communication. Emergencies do not happen frequently, but it is important for every student to have a quick and direct means of communication. This goes doubly for students who have to commute long distances in order to get to school. Whereas the possibility of a ban on cell phones in colleges (including QCC) is highly unlikely, it is something to be concerned about.

It is no secret that cell phones and many other types of popular communication devices such as iPhones, BlackBerries, and Sidekicks have been seen and used inside a classroom.

However, the issue is not whether the device is being carried, but that the obvious and constant usage of such devices during class hours draws negative feedback – mostly from the professors/instructors, and sometimes from fellow classmates. In my two years at QCC, I have seen cell phones and/or other electronic communication devices being used during class hours in just about every single class I have attended. In the majority of cases, if not all, they were being used for purposes other than academic and while the professor/instructor was lecturing in their classroom. Some professors/instructors are more mindful of this activity than others and will respectfully request for students to stop, and most students will comply.

However, for whatever reason, even after a student is told to stop using their phones and devices they will often continue to do so, maybe not right away but shortly soon after. What some people don’t understand is that this behavior is not always necessarily intentional or even mean spirited. Instead, one could make a case that it is addictive and/or obsessive behavior. In fact, one of the instructors here at QCC, who shall remain anonymous, shared a story with me concerning a student and her total lack of self awareness due to her obsessive involvement with her cell phone or electronic device. The student was constantly pushing buttons on her device (most likely texting messaging) while in class and was approached by the instructor to talk about how she was disrupting class. I was shocked to learn that even while the instructor was talking to her face to face, she was paying no attention. Instead, she was looking down at her device and continued on with her business, while her instructor was trying to communicate with her.

This is one example of how cell phones and other electronic devices when used in classrooms during class hours can be disruptive and a distraction. I am not saying or inferring that all students are addicted or obsessed in the same way. However, it is a trend that continues to grow and might be partially attributed to a student’s lack of interest in class, or simply a bad habit imported into the classroom from living in a currently tech savvy world. We are in the 21st century, an age where communication and technology are extremely advanced compared to that of little over a decade ago. Gone are the days when talking in class was enough to occupy a student’s attention. Now, as it is evident, students are capable of communicating with someone outside of class while still in it. Whether or not this is a good thing, it is ultimately up to you to decide.

Mumbai

continued from cover story

It is in the hands of the well informed to make a conscientious decision toweed out the bad apples of any religion or country. We are all grieving, we all harvest anger, and we all pray that justice is bought to terrorists. What India and the rest of the world cannot do is harbor hatred towards Pakistan. The attack hit India, but people were affected throughout the world. Mumbai, the tourism capital of India, is a melting pot of cultures. Queens, New York is perhaps the most diverse place in the United States. It is therefore only appropriate that the residents of this multicultural borough come together and stand strong in the face of the terrorist actions. During the Mumbai Memorial, Borough President of Queens, Helen Marshall said, “When tragedy strikes anywhere, someone in Queens is grieving.”

The Mumbai Memorial at QCC set the global stage for unification of all cultures to denounce terrorism. We must move on with our lives and educate the youth of today that ignorance breeds hate, hate breeds violence, and violence perpetuates the cycle of terrorism. We must unify to defy the inhumane minds that committed the horrible acts in Mumbai. We remember the horrible feeling in the pit of our stomach on the day of September 11, 2001. We should understand that the attack in Mumbai in many ways happened on our own soil, remembering the comfort and support that nations all over the world provided the United States when it was attacked.

Post Election: “KKK is here to stay.” Extremist Groups on the Rise

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The rise in hate related incidents can only mean two things. One is that there are populations of people who hold on to an archaic form of thought; a way of thinking that was deemed fit for the people of this country 142 years ago, not in 2008. These people try and ripple this notion today but do not fathom that most people do not agree with their views. The second is that there are a desperate group of people who feel themselves as outcasts to a society that they claim belongs only to them. They find it necessary to breed an understanding of hate and fear in order to retrieve some from of the revered social status that they probably never had in the first place.

My…how far we’ve come in 2008. But truth be told, these groups are too far in between to really acknowledge; the reported incidents have been nominally non violent and like the grand wizard Ron Edwards said, “We do not condone violence.” Maybe that leaves room for ascension, but the truth may never get out there about what the new Ku Klux Klan really condone or don’t condone. It is a step behind to reform a group that is historically known for domestic terrorism, yet is a step ahead to not carry out violent acts. If you do the math for what was just stated, one back plus one ahead equals stuck at square one.

We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.
POLITICS & MEDIA

Collapse of the U.S. Auto Industry

By Vanessa Gonzalez

The major American manufacturers of the automotive industry, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler have stated they might resort to bankruptcy. The collapse of the auto industry is due to the financial global crisis along with credit crunches.

In an interview with 60 minutes, President Elect Obama stated, “For the auto industry to completely collapse would be a disaster in this kind of environment, not just for the individual but the repercussions across the economy would be dire.”

According to CNBC, General Motors market value currently stands below $4 billion and its share price is at $5.72. In 2000 the major three were at a market peak of $56 billion and their shares were at $94.62 billion, this drastic change proves the automotive industry has taken a severe downfall. The big three are now seeking help from Congress in the form of a $34 billion bail out to help recover their losses. With the brutal and ongoing recession, Republicans and others are concerned about taxpayers losing billions if the $34 billion bail out is approved.

The collapse of the U.S. automotive industry has been looming for over three decades, and numerous factors have contributed to Detroit’s down fall. The auto industry began falling apart when American politicians ordered the industry to build smaller cars to conform with new energy policies. Unfortunately, American consumers were not sold on the idea of energy saving cars, and instead developed an attraction for SUVs and trucks. GM, Ford and Chrysler produced SUVs and trucks, due to their popularity in American culture.

As Americans demanded the big foreign makers are establishing enough to take control of the industry with a network that can react more quickly than the U.S. automakers can compete with. The welcoming of foreign brands has caught up to us, as a nation this is an example of what happens when investing in overseas production; it leads to the destruction of our own production.

In the same New York Times article of November 16, 2008, it is stated that the automotive industry accounts for 2.3% of the nations financial output. Economists say 20% of the shrinking manufacturing sector is linked back to the automotive industry. If the top three do not receive the bailout from Congress it could lead to the end of the American car industry, ultimately resulting in a nightmare for our economy for years to come. With the American economy in a recession and the job market falling the fate of the Big 3 will affect many people’s lives and the nation as a whole.

On January 20, the Bush administration will pass into history, and the Democrats will have a large majority in both houses of Congress. The fate of the American auto industry will then lie in the hands of our new President elect, Barack Obama.

Romania’s Shameful Truth: Orphans living in Unbearable Conditions

By Jane Groysman

Many heads turned and eyes opened at the images that came out of Romania after the assassination of Nicolae Ceauşescu in 1989. Many were horrified and shocked at the state of the children, who were found malnourished and neglected in run down state orphanages. And although in the seventeen years since the assassination conditions have improved, there are still orphanages that provide an inhumane living environment for the children.

Romanian Dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu wanted to boost the economy by increasing the countries population. According to a Time article, “Busted by the Baby Boom,” in 1966, Nicolae Ceauşescu passed Decree 770 which outlawed abortions along with all forms of contraceptives, and increased taxes for single males and childless couples. Though the population of Romania skyrocketed, the end result was a major catastrophe. As a Wikipedia article “Nicolae Ceauşescu” explains, instead of an economic boom Romania faced a steep rise in poverty, an increase in homelessness, and a growing AIDS epidemic due to the lack of sexual education and disease awareness.

Many children were abandoned in state orphanages than the orphanages could provide for, resulting in devastating circumstances and inhumane living conditions.

The damage that Nicolae Ceauşescu’s regime caused is still evident in Romania today. “Romania’s Orphans Face Widespread Abuse, Group Says,” an article in the New York Times paints a picture of children bound to their cribs covered in their own feces and left alone for many hours at a time. Without toys, guidance, attention and the proper nutrition needed during these crucial years of development, many children grow up to have physical or mental disabilities. I.T.V. news Correspondent Chris Rogers exposed the inhuman living conditions of Romanian orphans in a 2006 undercover investigation of an unnamed Romanian Hospital. In many cases, the children are abandoned or unwanted either because they suffer from birth defects or their family has no means to support them.

Due to pressure of the European Nation many Romanian Orphanages were closed and replaced with fostering programs. But fostering programs simply cannot take in all the children that have been abandoned in local hospitals. According to The New York Times, in January 2005 Romania passed a law that prohibited placing children under 3 in institutions unless they were severely disabled. With no where else to place the children, hospital wards were turned into orphanages. I.T.V.’s footage shows the children’s ward to be understaffed, and lacking needed resources. Some of the children are left starving, reduced to skin and bones. Many are neglected and left to feed themselves. Due to being institutionalized, many children are left emotionally scarred by the conditions of the wards; one common side effect among the children was a disturbing rocking motion, a sign that they’re suffering from a lack of stimulation. A good number of the children become disabled from lying on their backs for months and are left unable to sit up. Many of the physical and mental disabilities found among the children could have been prevented; instead these children are left to spend their lives in institutions for the physically and mentally disabled. The conditions for children found in the orphanages for the disabled are not any better. In many cases the children are tied or otherwise restrained in their cribs so they do not harm themselves or other children. According to a New York Times article, the reporters discovered:

A 17-year-old girl who looked like she was 5 years old and weighed only 22 pounds; children wrapped in full-body restraints with sheets tied to beds and cribs; and children so malnourished that their skin peeld off their bodies.

Since overcrowding was a major problem contributing to the devastation of so many young lives, Romania attempted to cut down the number of abandoned children, opening its doors for international adoption and urging westerners to adopt Romanian children. Unfortunately, Romania was so desperate to dispose of its unwanted children that it was done rather carelessly. Parents were encouraged to give their children over to institutions where they were offered for adoption abroad. Estimates are that 30,000 babies were exported out of Romania in the 1990’s. According to a BMJ article, “Romania’s policy of emptying its orphanages raises controversy.” It became very easy for pedophiles and human traffickers to obtain a baby from Romania, making it a known pit stop for human traffickers. According to an article in BBC News, “Romania flouts own adoption ban,” on the request of the European Nation to preserve the safety of the children, in 2001 the Romanian government banned international adoption. But there are still a great number of orphans abandoned in orphanages each year, and Romania has to decrease the number of children institutionalized in order to join the European Union. One result is that in many cases the orphanages began returning children to their biological parents regardless of why they had been put up for adoption, and many people have not been thrilled with the idea. British aid worker Sarah Wade, who fostered a four year old autistic boy, states in a BMJ article: (continued on page 13)
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Brazilian Jiu Jitsu: An Innovative Martial Art
By Shourya Kohli

Do you ever feel like your countless hours invested at the gym don’t really result in the physical or mental image you want? Do you continuously search for a workout regimen that claims to give you the edge in multiple aspects? Are flexibility, strength, stamina some of your aspirations? If the answer to these questions is yes, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu might be right for you.

Mitsuyo Maeda, according to shenwu.com, is accredited for bringing the art of Jiu Jitsu to Brazil. A very renowned Japanese fighter, legend has it that he won 2000 fights and lost none using his technique of Jiu Jitsu. He went on a mission to spread this art across the world and finally settled in Brazil, where he taught the art to Carlos Gracie Sr. and his brother Helio Gracie. The Gracie family embraced the art as their own hosting multiple challenges across Brazil called the Gracie challenge, and prevailed in all. The innovations of the Gracie family, most notably by grandmasters Carlos and Helio Gracie, and continuing with Brazilian Jiu Jitsu fighters today, through constant testing and refinement in the crucible of actual fights, has resulted in the unique style of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu became world famous in the mid 1990’s when Royce Gracie won a string of victories in the early Ultimate Fighting Championship competitions, an event pitting martial artists and fighters of various disciplines against each other. The overall fighting strategy of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is designed to equip a physically smaller or weaker individual with an effective method of defending against a larger and stronger attacker. When applying BJJ techniques, leverage is paramount, as leverage is the secret to the amplification and most efficient use of force. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu also has the most developed methods of fighting while on one’s back; a position weaker fighters will often find themselves in when attacked.

The art of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is focused more towards grappling, joint locking, and submissions rather that striking. Though Brazilian Jiu Jitsu might appear to the naked eye to be a vile style of fighting, there is a great deal of respect and legacy embedded in the training, and opponents share mutual respect for each other when sparring. In addition, participants must wear uniforms called Gi, which goes back to Jiu Jitsu’s roots as a martial art of Japan. It is also a rather difficult martial art to master, because it takes a great deal of practice to advance in the art.

Whether your goal is to trim down or gain some lean muscle mass, and at the same time gain insight about an exclusive martial art, or even fight professionally, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu has proven time and time again to be one of the most effective and sought after fighting styles. The best part is that professionally, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu has proven time and time again to be one of the most effective and sought after fighting styles.

Feeling Down During the Winter Season
BY SANDY GUEVARA

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also known as winter depression, is a form of mood depression that depends on the change of seasons. SAD usually occurs around the same time every year starting in the fall or winter and ending in the spring or in the summer. SAD was first identified in the 6th century by Greek scholar Jordances. However, it was first diagnosed by Dr. Norman E. Rosenthal in the U.S. in 1984. Seasonal Affective Disorder can also happen in a reversal form called Reverse Seasonal Affective Disorder, in which an individual will tend to get oppositional symptoms during the summer.

SAD is said to be caused due to low light exposure. According to kidshealth.org, “Experts believe that, with SAD, depression is somehow triggered by the brain’s response to decreased daylight exposure.” This hypothesis is yet to be understood by experts as to how or why it happens. When light exposure is minimum two hormones, melatonin and serotonin, changes the mood of an individual. These hormones relate to an individual’s sleep cycle, energy and mood. When it’s dark increased levels of melatonin are shown. Serotonin is the opposite, when serotonin is high there is high exposure to light, so lower levels of serotonin are shown during the winter.

You can detect Seasonal Affective Disorder because it comes along with symptoms. Some symptoms of SAD are depression, fatigue, lack of energy, socializing less, high level of sleepiness, weight gain, an increase in appetite and difficulty concentrating. Reverse Seasonal Affective Disorder also has symptoms which may include decrease in weight and trouble sleeping. These symptoms vary and one should consult a doctor if suspecting SAD or its symptoms. “It is very important that you do not diagnose yourself,” states myclevelandclinic.org.

SAD can affect anyone but it is more common amongst 70 to 80% of women in their 20’s, 30’s and 40’s. SAD can also affect an individual depending on what part of world she lives in. When living near the equator it is less likely to develop SAD because there is more sunlight. According to myclevelandclinic.org, “It is estimated that 1 percent of Florida residents, 4 percent of Washington, D.C. residents and nearly 10 percent of Alaska residents suffer from SAD.”

Treatments are available to those diagnosed with SAD by a medical doctor. Treatments may vary depending on how severe SAD is and treatment available to those with mild SAD is to increase light exposure during the winter months. Other types of treatment include intense light therapy also known as phototherapy, this involves the patient sitting somewhere where bright lighting is available and occasionally glancing at the light. This kind of therapy should be done in the morning or in the afternoon during dark hours. Talk therapy is also helpful to the patient because he or she can start to understand their medical condition by talking to someone. Another treatment may include prescribed medication, this helps to regulate the hormones associated to SAD.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can become a very serious problem if not treated correctly and if it is not properly discussed with your doctor. Severe depression and bipolar situations can develop with SAD. “As many as 20% may have or may go on to develop a bipolar or manic-depressive disorder,” according to an article on wikipedia. If you know someone with SAD or if you suspect yourself of having these symptoms, you should consult and seek evaluation by your doctor or talk to someone about it.

Super Drink?
By Elvis Mazzotta

Is there anything bad about doing your body good? Introduced In 2005, MonaVie juice blend is a powerfully packed juice with many nutritional benefits. MonaVie is made up of the worlds most powerful fruits, including the Brazilian acai berry. Along with the acai berry, MonaVie is also made with 18 other super fruits including cupuacu, camu camu, acon, acerola, blueberry, bilberry and pomegranate.

As reported by the MonaVie website (www.monavie.com), the acai berry is used as the foundation for their formulas because of its unparalleled antioxidant levels and extraordinary nutrient content. MonaVie makes three types of juice. The first is MonaVie Original, which delivers many powerful antioxidants and phytonutrients to help fight free radicals and maintain your body’s overall health. The makers of MonaVie also say “it delivers the antioxidant capacity of approximately 13 servings of fruits and vegetables in just four ounces.”

The second type of blend is called MonaVie Active. This formula features the added benefits of plant-derived glucosamine. “Glucosamine has been scientifically proven to promote healthy joint functioning by targeting mobility and flexibility.” MonaVie active is designed to support joint performance and recovery. Many athletes have reported that they use MonaVie Active and the MonaVie website has a section dedicated to all the athletes that claim they use the product and their opinions.

An article written in Newsweek in August of 2008 by Tony Dokoupil, titled “A Drinks Purple Reign,” interviews people who testify about MonaVie. Beating back cancer, curbing anxiety and controlling the symptoms of autism were all reasons people said they loved the product. Among those interviewed were former Daytona 500 champ Geoff Bodine, who credits MonaVie with helping him recover from one of the worst crashes in NASCAR history, Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone, who says it will help him live another 50 years (he’s 85); and Boston Red Sox outfielder J.D. Drew, who sells the stuff on his MySpace page.

The third type of juice blend is MonaVie Pulse. This formula is designed to support your cardiovascular system. This juice blend contains added heart benefits derived from plant sterols, which studies suggest play a key factor in lowering cholesterol. It also contains resveratol and many omega 3 fatty acids, which help maintain healthy cholesterol levels. The makers advise that MonaVie Active has not been tested on children under 12, pregnant women or women that are nursing, so it is recommended the people do not consume MonaVie Active. MonaVie Pulse is targeted specifically for adults watching their cholesterol and concerned with heart health and MonaVie Original can be used by people of all ages.
**Super Drink?**

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The same article in Newsweek also had claims that MonaVie is a scam, that it is nothing more than an overrated fruit juice and that it eludes drug regulation by the Food and Drug Administration by letting its distributors (as opposed to MonaVie itself) make the health promises. As reported at Monavie.com “there is no official approval process or certificate issued by the FDA to approve the sale of any food or juice product. The Food and Drug Administration has established stringent regulations, called Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) to ensure the safety and manufacturing of foods sold in the United States. MonaVie is manufactured in a GMP-compliant facility. The ingredients contained in MonaVie products are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS), and obtaining prior approval from the FDA is not required.” As one can see, however, the statement on the company’s site does not directly respond to the questions raised in the Newsweek article. More information needs to be made available.

There are other drinks on the market claiming to be 100% acai juice, and to be as healthy as MonaVie, but MonaVie insists its product is one of a kind. MonaVie claims that it uses a unique freeze drying procedure and that its juice is frozen in the form of a puree to maintain nutritional composition. MonaVie has applied for a patent on its process to ensure its product is one of a kind.

MonaVie retails at about $40 a bottle and is not sold in stores. MonaVie is sold by individual people to friends and family. In order to get your hands on MonaVie you must know someone who is selling, or become a retailer and purchase the product at a wholesale price. In order to sell the product there is a $39 initiation fee and responsibility for sales of at least eight bottles of MonaVie a month; people can retail the product and build their own sales tree to make money off the product.

**Strength Comes First!**

BY BIANCA CHANCY

Would steroids be a choice for you? It has been for many people but what they lack is knowledge of what this class of drugs can actually do to the body and how steroids can cause both reversible and irreversible changes. For example, steroid abuse has been associated with liver tumors and a rare condition called Peliosis Hepatis, in which blood-filled cysts form in the liver. According to alcoholism.about.com, the tumors and the cysts sometimes rupture, causing internal bleeding.

Steroids have been around for many years but really gained popularity circa 1987. As many know, when taking steroids you must work out to see results. There are so many different types of steroids each giving you a different result. Trembolin works for someone who is losing muscles, adding fat and who wishes to reverse that, it is a known cutter and great mass builder but it is a very toxic drug. According to muscletalk.com, Primobolin Depot is a good beginner’s cycle, and “comes in an oral form called Methenolone acetate... However, due to the non-alkylation of the methenolone in this form, it is not realistically a very useful drug for the male bodybuilder as the liver will mostly destroy the Methenolone acetate ingested.” There is also GLT which one takes for forty days and it will reconstruct your whole body. For example, bone mass becomes greater, one’s size increases greatly and noticeable changes in facial features are known to occur, for instance, noses growing two times bigger than normal size. There are many other steroids that can be found and purchased on the internet.

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Of course, people use steroids for many different reasons and they can be found, for example, in prescription drugs such as asthma pumps. Athletes sometimes take steroids in the hope of becoming stronger and changing their appearance. But taking steroids can turn sour for athletes. If there is any trace of steroids in an athlete’s body when tested prior to a competition, they will be penalized and their entire athletic career can be put at risk. Library.thinkquest.org tells us that Andreea Raucan, a well known gymnast from Romania, got her gold medal taken away when the international Olympic committee found pseudoephedrine in her system. Pseudoephedrine is a decongestant that shrinks blood vessels in the nasal passages. Diluted blood vessels can cause nasal congestion (stuffy nose). Andreea had a cold and said this would be found in the medication that she was taking.

Library.thinkquest.org also said many teenage boys use anabolic steroids to grow faster and gain a lot more strength than they normally would. The problem with anabolic steroids is they can make you violent and very depressed. According to thinkquest.com, one of every fifteen teenagers uses a steroid – that is 500,000 teens in the United States. You might wonder how teenagers can obtain such drugs. Steroids are sold online so only a credit card is needed. Are parents being held responsible for their children’s actions?

Some people may think that there is a steroid that does not have any side effects. This is not true, there is no such thing as a “healthy” steroid, and all steroids carry some type of side effect. First, they are harmful due to the way the body changes and increases in such a short period of time.

Muscleenhancers.com says one may witness premature balding, dizziness, mood swings including anger, aggression and depression, nausea, vomiting, trembling, high blood pressure which can damage the heart or blood vessels, aching joints, liver damage just to name a few. For women you would see facial hair growth, masculine trait development and loss of feminine body characteristics, for example, shrinking of the breast and also menstrual cycle changes. Men also can face testicular shrinkage, pain when urinating, breast development, impotence (inability to get an erection) or even sterility (inability to have children).

As time goes on fat may be transferred to different parts of your body such as you face, shoulders, or even abdomen. Some steroids change bone structure due to calcium loss, the skin can become thin with time and more easily bruise. Such effects are more likely with higher doses and longer treatment.

SPORTS CORNER

Let’s Play Ball!
By Lana Mercado & Victoria Urbano

For sports fans at QCC, baseball is not just a game, it’s a passion. For the past eleven years, the men’s baseball team has won 12 CUNY Championships, 2 Region XV Championships, and have participated in 2 National College World Series. Last year they defeated rival teams including Bronx Community College, and brought home the championship title. Interviewing the new head coach, Richard Kashdan, and the 2008 MVP, Victor Gonzalez, we were able to get an insight into what has been going on with the team lately and what they are doing for the coming season. Gonzalez, who is the number one pitcher on the team, has a lot of natural talent. We asked Gonzalez some questions about himself and his place on the team:

What motivated you to play baseball, specifically taking on an important position?
Gonzalez: “I grew up as a pitcher.”

Does school get in the way of playing? How difficult can it get at times; especially around midterms and finals?
Gonzalez: “Yeah, school does get in the way. It’s hard and difficult; I just go home and do my work.”

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What’s In A Name?

By Chris Evangelista

“[They seek him here, they seek him there
His clothes are loud, but never square.
It will make or break him so he’s got to buy the best,
’Cause he’s a dedicated follower of fashion.”
R.D. Davies (The Kinks)

Change is the word that Americans have been hearing for the past twenty plus months. We heard it in Barack Obama’s campaign and we are currently hearing it when the media talks about business. However, change is not only happening in politics and the economy. Television shows have changed as well. Viewers have been immersed in a tornado of reality TV. At risk, however, is a sense of individuality and style which has fallen victim to this dynamic media catastrophe.

Personally, I do not think all reality shows are horrible. Networks like Bravo and the Travel channel produce interesting, educational and entertaining reality shows. For example, “Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations” tops my list of favorite TV shows. It makes me cringe in disappointment, however, that shows like “My Super Sweet Sixteen” exist. For those of you who do not know what it is about: an MTV crew follows around spoiled 15 year olds then films the sweet sixteen party planning and the parties. The idea of filming an individual’s rite of passage does not seem all that terrible. The part that makes me sad is that the show encourages the next generation to give up their individuality to become a consumer robot for the fashion industry.

Keep in mind that fashion is not only found in clothing. Fashion also consists of lifestyles and philosophies. There was a time when geeks were losers. They were poked fun at for carrying various types of gadgets and for being able to work well with computers. Today, these ‘geeks’ are at the top of fashion. It is now in fashion to own gadgets and the newer, the better. Also, graphic novels have existed for quite some time now but only became a part of fashion recently. Most of the successful movies of the current decade were inspired by comic books. The release of “Watchmen” (the most celebrated graphic novel of all time) next year only proves how being a graphic novel enthusiast is in fashion. This new hobby of diving into the fashion “mavericks” (a surfer term for the big wave spot off the Californian coast) is frightening to witness. Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent and Valentino Garavani are just a few of the many admired talented designers in the fashion industry. To me, they are extraordinary human beings. They have turned sheets of fabrics into works of art. They cater to an individual’s need to project themselves to society. Coco Chanel gained popularity by designing women’s apparel for practical use (her design freed women of corsets). She was such an innovative designer but to the next generation she is not even a person. She is just a name with a symbol. In “My Super Sweet Sixteen,” shallow teens try to outdo each other’s party by lavishly spending their parents’ money. The filming crew captures these would be 16 year olds (usually along with their mothers and best friends) boarding flights to New York City or Los Angeles. On these trips they shop for ‘party necessities’ including their outfits and extravagant accessories. These wishful teens seem to be so eager to have their parties stand out. (continued from page 13)
What’s In A Name?

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The irony is that none of these parties really stand out. All the girls are caught up with what is in fashion right now. They all want to get their hands on the newest Louis Vuitton bags. They all go to the same high end boutiques to buy their outfits. Tiffany & Co. is their preferred jewelry store. Everyone gets either a BMW or a Mercedes Benz. Their musical guests consist of either emo bands or an obnoxious wannabe rapper. Though eager to come across to the audience as someone different, everyone ends up the same. Does it really matter where you get your lipstick from? A lipstick is a lipstick. These girls become victims of an industry they all wish they were a part of. It makes me sad that these girls do not get a chance to develop their own style because they all prefer to follow the wave of fashion. They volunteer themselves to become experimental fashion guinea pigs and it is troubling that they think it is a good thing. It is frightening that people only buy certain items because they see others doing the same. Teens are opting for the same look young female celebrities are wearing. Where is their sense of style and individualism?

According to countrystudies.us (a website containing on-line versions of published books), the early ’50s was a time of conformity. Society did not pay much attention to ‘children’ (the term teenager did not come into the picture until the late 1950s). It was the norm that the youth were told what to do. The kids eventually grew tired of it. It was in fashion to rebel and the ‘greaser’ (denim jeans and a leather jacket) look was born. The fashion of the 1960s focused on the human silhouette and the style was about simple clean lines. By the 1970s, teens wore whatever they felt like wearing. Fashion definitely made a bold statement during those decades. The youth influenced the garments fashion designers created.

It is quite disappointing that young people today are influenced by corporate trends rather than making an impact on how designers create their clothing lines. The attitude of the youth today is mostly based on the idea of buying something because of its social status and symbolism. Fashion would have never known the talents of Coco Chanel, Ralph Lauren, Zac Posen and other respected designers if people only followed the fads of their time. These designers broke away from the norm. Their garments caused society to stop and think about fashion. Today, that is not the case. People base how they dress on the “what’s hot and what’s not” list (a list that comes out at the end of each season). This game of ‘follow the leader’ prevents talented underground designers from stepping into the spotlight. It is a crazy thought that somewhere on Earth brilliant designers are struggling to get people to try on their garments.

People have to remember that the clothes they wear allow others to have a glimpse of their personalities. When one wears head-to-toe designer fashion, the message that is projected to society is that this person probably sacrificed a part of their individual freedom in exchange to be labeled. However, individuals with a sense of style make fashion work for them. Stylish people would never be completely satisfied with designer fashion if it does not fit what they visualize in their minds. A person of style would not be afraid to criticize mainstream fashion because they have their own ideas on style. I am still hoping that my generation and the next could have an effect on fashion. I wish for another fashion revolution - the kind that was witnessed by the world during the late ’50s and throughout the 1970s. I want for us to be remembered as creative and original beings rather than mirroring minxes in a staged show hosted by the fashion industry.

Ho, Ho, Ho Happy Holidays for Whom?

BY KENISHA PERKINS

The Holiday season is usually a time for happiness, peace and joy, but due to our economic crisis, vis-à-vis the failed economy, mortgage rates and unemployment hitting an all time high, this year more and more people will be catching the Grinch fever. According to a recent article in The New York Post, 533,000 new cases of unemployment have been filed in November alone, which is 2% higher than in October of this year. For many people, spending a substantial amount of money on lavish gifts this year is out of the question.

On what is traditionally considered the biggest shopping day of the year, Black Friday, retailers saw a three percent increase, a 10.6 billion dollar jump from their figures of 2007. It seemed that shoppers had decided to spend more than previously intended and expected. However, although the projected sales exceeded expectations, many companies are struggling, and in the weeks following Thanksgiving sales have plummeted.

Apparel retailers are experiencing the most considerable decline. Companies such as Macy’s, J.C. Penney, Abercrombie and Fitch, and Saks experienced a double digit decline in sales for the months of October and November. Although seeing a consistent decline in sales and forced to close the doors on a few Old Navy locations, Gap Inc. which projected a huge decline in sales actually increased their sales due to aggressive promotions and discounts.

According to ABC polls 50% of people plan to spend less this Holiday Season, than in 2007. Many analysts attribute this to the theory that parents are doing without gifts this season and are mainly buying gifts for their children only at stores like WalMart where they can find popular toys for less. WalMart is the only chain to see an overall increase in sales in recent months.

According to the same ABC polls, two thirds of the people questioned will wait to purchase gifts until the final days leading to Christmas to receive the best selling price. Many were still unhappy with the current sales and feel the retailers could be giving better deals. Americans are being more and more cautious on where they spend their money and what they spend it on. Taking the risk that the items they want may already be sold out; Americans cannot afford to be choosy when there are so many economic troubles breaking their pockets. The typical American family owes an average of $20,000, is still recovering from the higher gas prices earlier in the year, and with increased food prices cannot afford to play Santa in 2008.

Romania’s Shameful Truth: Orphans living in Unbearable Conditions

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According to the same ABC polls, two thirds of the people questioned will wait to purchase gifts until the final days leading to Christmas to receive the best selling price. Many were still unhappy with the current sales and feel the retailers could be giving better deals. Americans are being more and more cautious on where they spend their money and what they spend it on. Taking the risk that the items they want may already be sold out; Americans cannot afford to be choosy when there are so many economic troubles breaking their pockets. The typical American family owes an average of $20,000, is still recovering from the higher gas prices earlier in the year, and with increased food prices cannot afford to play Santa in 2008.

The laws are stupid and ineffective. Of course, something needs to be done to help the children here, but at the moment all the Romanian government is doing is signing forms—sending children back to their parents without looking at each individual case. It doesn’t seem to matter that the parents might be alcoholics or have no means to look after their kids as long as the numbers are cut.

This contributes to another social problem often found on the streets of Romania—children who have run away from home or orphanages are left to fend for themselves by begging for change on the streets. According to a BBC article, “Romania’s blighted street children,” in Bucharest, Romania an estimated 2,000 children are living in tunnels underground. They believe that this is their best option of a home. There is no electricity found in these tunnels, candles are used as a source of light. Many of these children are suffering from starvation and use aurolac, a paint thinner, to stop and think about fashion. Today, that is not the case. People base how they dress on the “what’s hot and what’s not” list (a list that comes out at the end of each season). This game of ‘follow the leader’ prevents talented underground designers from stepping into the spotlight. It is a crazy thought that somewhere on Earth brilliant designers are struggling to get people to try on their garments.

People have to remember that the clothes they wear allow others to have a glimpse of their personalities. When one wears head-to-toe designer fashion, the message that is projected to society is that this person probably sacrificed a part of their individual freedom in exchange to be labeled. However, individuals with a sense of style make fashion work for them. Stylish people would never be completely satisfied with designer fashion if it does not fit what they visualize in their minds. A person of style would not be afraid to criticize mainstream fashion because they have their own ideas on style. I am still hoping that my generation and the next could have an effect on fashion. I wish for another fashion revolution - the kind that was witnessed by the world during the late ’50s and throughout the 1970s. I want for us to be remembered as creative and original beings rather than mirroring minxes in a staged show hosted by the fashion industry.
Immigration America

By Kathleen Crowley

Immigration is an issue that has, is and always will affect our country. The U.S.A. is one of the most desired places to live in the world. People immigrate from all over the world to the United States of America for various reasons, primarily, with high hopes of a brighter future. There are many opportunities in this country that immigrants would have never had back in their homeland.

Immigration has changed drastically over the years. Today, it is difficult trying to get a visitors visa, let alone applying for a “green card” or becoming a citizen. Immigration has long changed since the days of Ellis Island, where immigrants would go through a process which consisted of a lot of waiting, a medical exam, a legal inspection, exchanging their currency for American dollars, and then be on their way to their new life. That process held until 1921 when a passport, visa and passing a literacy test grade became required. More than 12 million Americans passed through the doors of Ellis Island on their journey and over 40% of Americans can trace their roots to Ellis Island which was the largest immigration processing center in the United States.

For many immigrants who came through Ellis Island, seeing the Statue of Liberty may have been the first sign of hope for their future, and it is a welcoming symbol of American culture. Immigration to America has been seen by many as an exciting voyage to a new country, a new beginning, and experiencing a new culture. However, sometimes it has not been everything it was made out to be. There is also a dark side to immigration that many are unaware of. Obtaining any kind of legal documentation in the U.S. is a long, grueling and complex process. So much so, that some don’t even bother, and the ones that do are sometimes stuck waiting for years.

Life has always been a challenge for immigrants arriving in America. Money is usually very tight, it is tough finding a job, and even though you now live here you don’t automatically receive all of the privileges that American citizens do – for example, a driver’s license, voting rights, and complete freedom of travel, and if you don’t speak English there are many more hardships.

We are nearing 2009, and with the New Year President elect Barack Obama will come into office. It appears that he has come up with a promising immigration plan, but only time will tell if he will deliver. He plans to improve our immigration system, secure the borders, and perhaps most important, bring people out of the shadows. With any luck, we may soon have a functional and efficient immigration system that we so desperately need.

Immigration is a big part of our culture. The United States is made up of immigrants, and everyone deserves a fair chance to become a part of our democracy. It is time for people to stop living in the shadows of their own despair. Our system is only as strong as our weakest, and that is why our immigration system needs to be altered to accommodate more people’s needs.
A Quantum Leap

Review by Brad Colombi


Two years ago I reviewed Casino Royale, the first James Bond flick to star Daniel Craig. Though a decent entry in the Bond canon, I criticized the picture for lacking an enthralling sense of pace, and getting bogged down with frivolous fluff including a seemingly endless card game. This time out Bond puts down his cards and steps away from the poker table but still delivers a winning hand with one of the best Bond movies in many a year.

From the opening scene, Quantum of Solace captures its audience with a heavy dose of action in a thrilling car chase sequence. In Casino Royale, Daniel Craig reminded me of Steve McQueen at the poker table in the Cincinnati Kid. In what seems to be all too much of a coincidence, the car chase was so exciting it reminded me of the unforgettable game of car tag played in Steve McQueen’s heralded classic Bullitt. This comparison is an honor, and Craig definitely has much of the same cool factor that McQueen possessed.

Quantum’s perfect pacing and massive catalog of action sequences more than make up for the lack of excitement in the previous film, but some of the same nuisances return, such as bland baddies who seem to lack any form of personality or originality, and I still miss the mind-bending gadgets of the Bond movies of yesteryear. Yes, this is supposed to be a more realistic Bond, but his trusty gadgets had become synonymous with the forty-year-plus franchise, making it hard to let go of that Bond film staple.

But out with the old and in with the new, as Quantum’s plot is actually very different than most other Bond film, yet much like the early 007 classic, Goldfinger. The story sees Bond battling a member of the terrorist organization Quantum, who strives to take over Bolivia’s water supply as part of the organization’s master plan for world domination. Any change from the usual nuclear weapon threat cliché, the most commonly used Bond plot, is a welcome one.

But too much change isn’t always for the better, and Quantum recognizes its rip-roaring roots. One scene had me smiling, as Quantum pays tribute to the golden gem Goldfinger, with one particular scene that shocked audiences back in the ’60’s. To spoil it would be a greater crime than anything Quantum could cook up.

Director Marc Forster has gotten Bond back on the right track, remembering that the key draw of a Bond movie is the intense, explosion-filled, state-of-the-art action and the undeniable cool factor that the lead protagonist emits. As a result, it is a massive improvement over Casino Royale from top to bottom. One thing’s for One thing’s for certain, it sure beats the heck out of a 30-minute card game snooze fest.

Rating: ***1/2
Rating System:
**** Puts your life to shame. The very best.
***1/2 Almost makes that 7-dollar popcorn seem worth it.
*** A good movie. Worth your time and your dime.
**1/2 We’re getting lower, but it’s still worthy of a viewing.
** Subpar stuff. Not a health hazard yet, but we’re getting there.
*1/2 Starting to get a headache, the chills? We’re quickly approaching dangerous territory.
* Eep! A total catastrophe. Proceed to the nearest exit.
½* My eyes! My eyes! My eyes!
No stars! Makes the Great Depression look like a parking ticket.
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As the beginning of the fall semester began, I was walking through the bookstore just as any other student looking for texts would, and to my most pleasant surprise I saw one of my favorite books as a requirement. The book is Waiting, by the author Ha Jin. A sudden wave of jealousy overcame me. Recalling that this semester is my last at Queensborough, I realized that in all my English courses at QCC, I have never read anything remotely as enjoyable as Ha Jin’s book! My feelings of jealousy and resentment soon cleared and I started thinking about Ha Jin. Not only is he my favorite author, but he’s the strongest example of what it means to live out the American dream. Authors such as Ha Jin deserve the utmost recognition and more.

Ha Jin began writing in English about twelve years ago. Ha Jin is originally from Liaoning, China, and he entered the Chinese Army at the age of fourteen. His father was an officer and that allowed him special privileges. The legal age for entering the army was sixteen, but he lied out of fear of being attacked by the Russians. He stayed in the army for five and half years. However, serving all those years made Ha Jin realize he wanted to be a educated person. He yearned for books to read. He applied to Heilongjiang University and it was there that he fell in love with American Literature.

Ha Jin went on to earn a Masters in American Literature from Shandong University. Soon after graduating he and his wife came to America in hope of pursuing his doctorate from Brandeis University in Atlanta, Georgia. After witnessing the Tiananmen Square massacre, he and his wife decided to stay in the United States with their son.

When work was scarce in America, Ha Jin turned to writing which worked out favorably. He has written two books of poetry, two collections of short stories, and two novels. He has earned the PEN/Hemingway prize, and the Flannery O’Connor Award for fiction. My personal favorite, Waiting, won the 1999 National Book Award and the 2000 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction.

Ha Jin has never published anything in Chinese nor has he returned to China since he left. Ha Jin has only written and published in English. The pure simplicity and the beautiful grammar he uses makes one take in English such as a child would, almost with a new found appreciation, so to speak. There is truly nothing like it. Reading Ha Jin is stepping into China and becoming friends with Chinese people, learning the culture, and yet all the while being a fly on the wall. One can experience family interactions, communism, and the social norms of the Chinese people. Ever wonder what it’s like to leave everything familiar to you for a better life and to start anew in a brand new country with hardly anything to your name? How about what foreigners really think of America? Ha Jin provides this and more in all of his writings.

The Bridegroom and other short stories is a collection of short stories about the suppression of working people by communism in China and how the people react against it, argue for it, and behave towards each other. The everyday lives of people turn simple situations into deep moral battles, leaves you thinking about the story for hours.

Waiting is a story about a man, Nan Kong, who has had his life and all decisions made for him. Marrying a woman his parents chose, he never loved yet out of respect stayed in the marriage. He then joins the army and falls in love with a fellow comrade nurse. Every summer he returns to his wife and begs for a divorce, only to return to a very disappointed girlfriend. The protagonist of Ha Jin’s novel remains stuck between two realms of reality, the old country lifestyle with a dedicated wife and child to come home to, and the big city life in the military with a beautiful young girlfriend who is always just fingertips away. Waiting will leave you speechless.

“A Free Life” is the story of Nan and PingPing who leave China for a better life and settle in Georgia, becoming a restaurant owner, then a home owner, leaves Nan thinking the American dream was a lie. Nan becomes so focused on making money and surviving in America that he puts his true desires for writing behind. Journey with the Wu’s and their struggles for a good life in America while trying to raise a growing boy facing obstacles of his own.
Little Plastic: Big Card Company Scams

By Catherine Lopata

Finally the moment you’ve been waiting for, an opportunity of independence and responsibility; a credit card. These nifty pieces of plastic are so much easier to carry than wads of cash. They provide a faster, easier and “greener” way to pay bills than the conventional check and mail. Nowadays you need a credit card for virtually everything. You can’t book a flight or get a hotel without one.

For a college student, having a credit card is a dream come true. It can establish your credit line so one day down the road you can buy that dream house or land perhaps take out loans to send off your own children to college. Ultimately, credit cards offer the utmost convenience in furnishing whatever you want, whenever you want. Nevertheless, credit card companies have to make money. Given that, there are many ways you can easily get sucked in and end up deep in debt.

In today’s failing economy mass markets are trying to find ways for Americans to spend more and credit card companies are feeling the effects. According to a New York Times web article published January 14 2008, “American Express said that starting in early December the growth in the rate of spending by its 52 million cardholders, a generally affluent group of consumers, fell 3 percentage points, from 13 percent to 10 percent, the first slowdown since the 2001 recession.”

One of the ways that credit card companies attempt to attract buyers is by basic marketing. With an array of colors and prints credit cards are appealing eye-candy. Top designers such as Kimora Lee Simmons, owner of Baby Phat fashions, has a baby pink MasterCard with her logo emblazoned across the front. Such visuals are meant to generate a more avid shopper.

Usually credit card companies, including MasterCard, Visa, and American Express, thrive off of credit enhancement securitization to keep the consumer in debt. Banks that provide credit cards do the same. Web encyclopedia Wikipedia.org defines securitization as “a structured finance process, which involves pooling and repackaging of cash flow producing financial assets into securities that are then sold to investors.” In other words, securitizations are specialty programs designed to keep the American people immersed in debt. Such programs consist of cash advances and credit protection. Oftentimes, to get the consumer to enroll, the credit card companies offer an extremely low to no interest rate for the first month or first year (which is very hard to find now thanks to the economy).

Immediately upon the end of that “grace period,” one is suddenly slapped with the highest interest rate legally possible. In an article published by USA Today, Kathy Chu and Bryan An Acibado quote Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., “Securitization is an important economic tool. But when we saw the subprime (mortgage) meltdown occur, we started really looking at credit cards as the next crisis. We have to crack down on the abuses.”

What They Don’t Tell You:

1. Cash Advances: Credit card companies provide you with the ability to take out money from your credit line when in desperate need of money. Watch the interest rate, it can be as high as 138.00% and often more than not the interest accrues daily. Sometimes they trick you by sending “blank checks.” These checks are a gimmick to get you to take out a cash advance.

2. Credit Protection: It can be helpful, but an extra $5-$10 a month on top of your purchases is not something you really need. A good credit card company will protect your identity without the consumer digging into their pockets. Remembering to shred all sensitive documentation is the cheapest and best prevention to credit protection.

3. Finance Charges: The cost of borrowing. This can get pricey. Watch for financial transaction fees and interest. Take note of when fees take place and how they are calculated. Most importantly screen your billing cycles. How many days, 20-30?

4. Overdraft Protection: Some banks offer over draft protection with your link credit card. They link the accounts so if ever you over withdraw the bank will take out a cash advance to cover your balance. Once again there is a charge for this service and a very hefty one too. If not paid immediately the interest can accumulate daily.

Most importantly do not buy what you cannot pay for. America is guilty of spending more than what it can afford. The current crisis is a classic case of Caevat Empor. Consumers must beware of what they are purchasing and what the debt they are taking on. Stay abreast of your finances and make better decisions when purchasing. There is plenty of helpful, educational information available in these tough economic times. If precaution is not taken, you can be taken by the ugly wrath of debt. A little bit of plastic can cause a lot of trouble.

The P.C. – Takeout vs. Homemade

By Daniel Nguyen

Computers today come in many forms and can serve any of your needs. There is the high performance gaming computer, the running all day long computer for the office, media computers for editing pictures and music, and the everyday computer with the essentials can be done. Everybody wants a computer, but with all the technical specifications available, most people do not understand how to choose a computer or how much one should cost. Terms like RAM, Front Bus speed, DVD-R 8X, L2 Cache, DDRII, 7200RPM, SATA and many more can be confusing. Instead, why not think about buying a computer like ordering take-out versus going to the super market and making a home cooked meal.

When buying a P.C. (Personal Computer a.k.a. desktop, not laptop) you have two paths to choose from. One path is to buy a “pre-built” computer from big companies such as IBM, HP, DELL, and Sony for example. The other path is to go to a computer store or online and shop for individual components from smaller companies and install the pieces one by one and hope it works. Both paths have advantages and disadvantages and depending on what you are looking for is one going to be more favorable.

What are the advantages of buying a pre-built computer? First off it’s…. PRE-BUILT! You don’t have to do any work putting it together, all you do is buy from the store (or website), pick it up (or have it delivered), plug in the power/monitor cable/mouse/keyboard, flip the switch and you’re ready to go! Another advantage is that if a problem arises, you can call the company and tech support can assist with problematic software and hardware issues and can replace parts for free. Most pre-builts also come with monitor, mouse, speaker, and keyboard packages. When it comes to software, everything is already included including, for example, CD-burning, operating system, and music players, also you get it cheaper because big companies buy the software in bulk meaning savings go on to you the consumer. Depending on your needs, a pre-built can be a little cheaper than making your own. This is great if you don’t have the time to research, build, and test a computer over and over again to make sure it works.

The disadvantages, however, can turn you off as much as the advantages can turn you on. First, companies who pre-build computers often use third party or generic components which do not perform nearly as good or last as long as quality parts – they do this to save money and pass the savings to you. The downside is that the parts get worn out quickly which can lead to slow down, crashes, or burnt out parts which need to be replaced which costs you money. And warranties are often expensive costing up to $100 to $500. If you do decide to buy one (which you should) the company will fix the problem for you. But you may have to spend money for shipping to and from realizing that the damaged component will be replaced with another generic component. Also, no one likes long hold times on the phone. The software, although pre-installed and cheaper overall is also littered with trials and other unnecessary media which can slow down and take up space once you start filling up your hard drive with music/videos/games and other software. Companies often give you a choice to customize your system with features (very limited) such as bigger hard drives, ram, video cards, and bigger monitors. It’s great for them to simplify it but it often costs a lot more money for something you can easily do yourself.

In the end if you’re looking for higher performance a pre-built will cost more. Again, all your money goes into convenience. They do everything for you if you give them the money and the results may not be what you expected for what you paid.

When cooking at home, although the cost of the ingredients are higher, you get much more food, better quality, better taste, and you know what you put in the dish. Building a homemade P.C. has become so much easier since being first introduced in the 1980’s thanks to magazines, television, and the internet. Such sources explain everything about how to put one together and what to look for. You can even find definitions for all the technical terms. The skills you need are how to read, look at pictures, and exercise patience. It’s so easy, even a cave man can do it! Benefits? First, you will know what components are installed in your computer. This means if you’re willing to spend money on quality parts, you will get quality performance and longevity. You can find much more and better deals on each component since you’re buying the parts separately from different companies. If one of your parts happens to fail, most brand name parts usually have a 1-5 year free warranty so you can ship back one piece instead of a whole system and it’s usually free. Shipping one piece can be around $10, versus $30 to ship an entire system.

The software on the other hand will be more expensive but you will know what goes in and it can be customized to your preference. Installing only what you chose and the absence of trials and other advertisement software will help your computer perform faster and last longer. Also if your software fails on you, you don’t need to call a tech, you can just uninstall and install it (continued on page 19)
CURRENT AFFAIRS

Protecting Your Identity

By Andrew Rafaelowitz

Unless you have been living in a cave for the past ten years, you understand and are aware of the threat of identity theft. What you might not be aware of is how the crime is evolving and how it continues to grow exponentially.

In a 2005 report by John D. Arrebery of the U.S. Department of Justice, the crime of identity theft can be grouped into several subcategories. These categories include but are not limited to internet auctions, foreign money offers, sweepstakes/lotteries, telephone services, catalogs, credit protection, spoof sites, et al. According to CreditReport.com, identity theft was the top complaint to the Federal Trade Commission for the past five years from 2001-2005. The Federal Trade Commission reports a staggering 30 million victims over the past two years. Losses have been reported as high as 52.6 billion USD by the FBI. Over 3 million people have had their credit cards taken control of by criminals and have amassed over 36.7 billion USD in damages.

In 2006, New York experienced identity theft by 16,452 state residents. This figure is down from 17,387 in 2005 and 17,680 in 2004.

A very popular way identity theft is hitting the community is by criminals pretending to be family member (most commonly going under the alias of a grandchild) and asking for a sum of money to be sent via a money transfer service. A common approach is to ask an elderly relative to send money to assist a relative to get back into the United States. These criminals are able to hit and miss with relatively great ease and prey on the fact that the elderly are not aware that the threat is real and highly effective. There is often a generic script used by the criminals that makes vague statements and avoids the use of names and instructs their victims follow a set of instructions to get money to change hands as quickly as possible.

Another form of identity theft is Phishing. Phishing is the process of acquiring highly sensitive information such as credit card numbers and social security numbers via websites that look legitimate and trustworthy. Incidents of Phishing went from 6957 cases in October 2004 to 15050 cases in June 2005. One way to protect yourself from losing money via phished websites is making sure all of the links you click on with sensitive information are the correct sites following the link. Another way of protecting yourself is to purchase anti-phishing software. Government has stepped into the spotlight with the introduction of the Anti-Phishing Act of 2005 from Senator Patrick Leahy. If convicted under the act, those guilty face five years in prison and fines up to $250,000.

Another popular form of fraud is found on the internet and it is called the Nigerian Scam or 419 fraud. The crime is a confidence trick where the ones targeted are persuaded to send money to gain a greater sum of money back in return for services rendered. Many times the money talked about can be in the millions of U.S. dollars with a percentage in the ranges of 10-20% usually promised in returns for helping out financially. This scam started in the 1980’s by university students in Nigeria eager to scam businessmen in the oil industry. Nowadays, this fraud utilizes both the naivety of its victims and phishing websites. This form of fraud often extracts the most amount of money out of its victims because of the high reward promised in return for the risk.

Prevention of Identity theft crime comes in many forms. The most important way to protect one’s finances is too stay aware and to pay attention to any foreign fees in bank statements. Keeping receipts out of reach of contact of others is a good method to minimize the risk of a stolen identity. Software for identity theft protection has become a booming industry in the United States over the past ten years offering many different software packages that sniff out and report suspicious sites that can lead to unwanted losses.

The P.C. – Takeout vs. Homemade

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again which saves you many minutes on your cell. Overall, you save time because your computer will run faster enabling you to complete tasks faster, and the parts will fail less since there is a measure of quality behind them, hence less time spent with the overcharging computer repair guy.

In today’s world, not knowing the ins and outs of a computer can hinder you severely in terms of career or even home life. Many employers look for some experience in computer knowledge whether it is software and hardware, and it can make you look good when your boss asks you to fix their computer or what to look for in a computer. Over many years of scrapping, formatting, burning, buying, and building computers, while never having taken a computer class, I learned that I can fix simple problems that many people without the knowledge will waste agonizing over slow computers and dishing out hundreds to thousands to a technician or buying a new system.

My advice is to build a P.C. as opposed to buying one off the shelf. In the long run, you save more money, time, trouble, and gain invaluable knowledge. Make sure that you do your research whether you buy or build and see what fits your needs and wallet. Also don’t forget to look around for deals.

Let’s Play Ball!

continued from page 11

Where do you see yourself in five years? Are you going to continue playing baseball after college?

Gonzalez: “After I’m done with college, I will probably go to Missouri College to play there because of the coach.”

What do you plan to do differently for yourself this year than from what you did last year?

Gonzalez: “Work a lot harder, I was lazy last year.”

How does it feel to take the title of 2008 MVP?

Gonzalez: “I did not expect it, I feel honored but I would give it up to go to the World Championships.”

What do you do on an ongoing basis to keep your skills up to date aside from practicing with the team?

Gonzalez: “Nothing much, just work out at home. We run all the time. Since I’m an pitcher all I can do is run. How much of your time has been devoted to being a pitcher? Do you think it’s the harder position to play on the field compared to playing another position?”

Gonzalez: “Any position a player plays (he) thinks it’s hard; (but you) can’t play a game without a pitcher.”

Playing baseball for over 51 years, Coach Kashdan, known as “Abuelito,” Spanish for grandfather, was a pitcher for a few teams. He had worked with the previous coach for a number of years, so he has always had an input on the QCC baseball team. We asked Kashdan a few questions to get an idea of his thoughts on the team as the new head coach.

As the new coach, what are your expectations for the team? What are you doing and going to do differently than the previous coach?

Kashdan: “I feel I have large shoes to fill. I expect to do well and go through with the CUNY Championships. It all depends on how the team feels, if they have healthy arms and backs.”

What are some of the things you are doing to ensure the effectiveness of the team you are leading?

Kashdan: “Lighten the schedule so we don’t burn out the players. Following the same design as the previous coach. I’ve known him since 1993-1994. I’m a people person. I am not here to stand over the boys. My main goal is to try to get them to play as a team. The key is balance, having the right combinations. I try to keep everyone happy so they can stay focused as a family. I think the team is family oriented.”

Was there ever a time as the assistant coach where you disagreed with the objectives and directions of the previous head coach? How did you handle it?

Kashdan: “I stay on top of it. Good communication is the key. They know they can call on me anytime. It is important to feel comfortable and not stay under pressure.”

What are some of the worst and best things you’ve seen on the team?

Kashdan: “It is based on good relation. I listen to them; I am not looking for a yes but for insights. Coach Craig Everett, the previous coach, was open to constructive criticism; it wasn’t just his way or the highway.”

What do you look forward to in the coming season?

Kashdan: “Last year they did not do well on the team. They were lazy and they did not have the drive and the focus. They appeared to show no interest. They won the CUNY, and the Regional. They never gave up. The expression goes: It ain’t over till it’s over.”

You never know what is possible. I look forward to a successful season. We need team gelling. With every last play they have to be able to move on. Because of a loss they should not feel that they would be taken out of the team but rather that they should move on. I want them to want the ball to come to them.”

Overall, both the MVP Gonzalez and Coach Everett emphasized how important it is to care for one another as a family but also as a team. No matter what happens, it is always important to stick together and to have each person’s best interest at heart. In the end, no matter the age or gender, baseball is a sport favored by many. So when the spring comes, check the games out and support QCC’s baseball team!
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