Global Warming: A Moral Issue

Our world is on fire, and we are the ones burning it. Global warming is the term used to describe a gradual increase in the average temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere and its oceans. It is believed to be permanently changing the Earth’s climate, and not in a good way: the long term effects of global warming are debilitating to our world and the people living in it.

Global warming is caused by the trapping of heat by greenhouse gases in our atmosphere rather than letting them escape into space. Light and heat from the sun pass through the Earth’s atmosphere and heat its surface, which is then radiated back into space. However, Earth has formed a blanket of greenhouse gases primarily consisting of Carbon Dioxide (CO2). This blanket is trapping heat in our atmosphere, causing the Earth to be warmer than it is naturally. The more greenhouse gases there are in our atmosphere, the more it will affect us.

The main contributor of CO2 emissions is the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas. Televisions, lights and computers use electricity that is mainly generated from burning coal; motor exhaust is also a main factor in the rising levels of CO2. Every time we switch on a light, we are adding to global warming. The level of CO2 in the atmosphere has raised 30% since the industrial revolution, half of this increase occurring in the last 30 years, and now CO2 concentrations are at their highest levels in five years.

Another major contributor to the greenhouse effect is the gas Methane, produced by a number of sources including coal mining and landfills, but the number one source worldwide is animal agriculture, which produces more than 100 million tons of methane a year! Combining this problem, global meat consumption has increased greatly over the past fifty years and shows no sign of slowing down. Eighty-five percent of this methane is produced by the digestive processes of livestock - not only are these animals’ digestive patterns harming the Earth, cattle farmers are plowing down much needed vegetation to house their livestock for their short lived lives. The quanity with methane is that as the world population increases, agricultural activity must increase and so emissions of methane will also increase.

If our current trends are continued, we can expect nothing short of catastrophic consequences. The world’s glaciers are melting, which can cause mass flooding: sea levels are already rising due to the melting of the polar ice caps. According to the film "An Inconvenient Truth", if Greenland and the Antarctic Shelf were to melt completely sea levels can rise 40 feet, devastating coastal areas worldwide including lower Manhattan. These consequences can be felt in as little as fifty years.

Global warming is already affecting the weather. Storms and hurricanes have and will continue becoming stronger and more frequent as the oceans heat up, causing rainwater to evaporate. “An Inconvenient Truth” states that the number of category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years, one of which was Hurricane Katrina, the most devastating natural disaster to hit our country. That is only the beginning of what is to come if global warming is not taken seriously and put to a stop.

Global warming also holds several health threats to mankind. With the warming of the weather, it is allowing plants, animals and insects to migrate to land that before they were never able to survive on. With that, come diseases such as the West Nile virus — the West Nile virus came to New York City in 1999. Due to the hot summer, and pools of stagnant and polluted water throughout the city, it became the perfect breeding grounds for the mosquito vector, Culex pipiens. The West Nile virus is just one of many diseases that have already surfaced due to global warming. As the temperatures continue to rise, the insects will fly!

Scientists have an independent obligation to respect and present the truth as they see it. Over the past ten years, a study was done on 10% of every scientific article published in a peer reviewed journal. Out of 928 scientific articles about global warming, ZERO disagreed with the consensus that we are causing global warming.

Global warming must be recognized and slowed down as much as possible. The United Nations has already taken steps to halt its advance by forming the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Countries that ratify the protocol commit to limit their emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases - the Kyoto Protocol now covers more than 160 countries and has reduced over 55% of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, the U.S. – responsible for over 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, is hesitant to pitch in - President George W. Bush feels that the protocol is too costly, describ- ing it as “an unrealistic and ever tightening straitjacket.” Former Vice President and major global warming activist Al Gore accused Bush of show- ing the world a “slumping display of moral cowardice.” Gore feels that America should focus some time and money on global warming, not just terrorism.

For more information on global warming please visit www.climatecrisis.net - it is your world, do the right thing and save it. Do it for yourself, for your children and your children’s children.

Want to do something to help stop global warming?

Change a light – Replacing one regular light bulb with a compact fluorescent light will save 150 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

Drive less – Walk, bike, carpool or take metro transit more often. You’ll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don’t drive!

Recycle more – You can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.

Check your tires – Keeping your tires inflated properly can improve gas mileage by more than 3%. Every gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Use less water – It takes a lot of energy to heat water. Use less hot water by installing a low-flow showerhead and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (500 pounds per year).

Avoid products with a lot of packaging – You can save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide if you cut down your garbage by 10%.

Adjust your thermostat – Moving your thermost-mostat down just 2 degrees in winter and up 2 degrees in summer could save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

Plant a tree – A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

Turn off electronic devices – Turning off electronic devices when you are not using them will save thousands of pounds of carbon dioxide per year.
Stem Cell Research

BY NIDORA BELTRAN

Is stem cell research study ethical? The church does not believe so and it makes a good point — an embryo has to be sacrificed in order to obtain these cells. This goes against the moral principles of the Catholic Church, and even the U.S.A government does not fully support the research.

A living human embryo is destroyed when stem cells are taken — causing a direct destruction of innocent human life. The church says that even though in the end we will all die, that is not justification for anyone to kill. The church is not telling us to choose to save the embryos over the lives of suffering patients — we must help those who are suffering, but the end does not justify the means; there are treatments that do not require destroying any human life are at least promising. The church claims the choice is not between science and ethics, but rather between science that is ethically responsible and science that is not.

On the other hand, medical researchers in the field argue that it is necessary to pursue embryonic cell research because the results are expected to have significant medical potential, and that the embryos used for research are only those slated for destruction anyway. Many embryos are destroyed everyday, the very least we can do is use them for the benefit of all mankind. There are new studies emerging daily that support the idea that stem cell research will someday make a significant change in all our lives.

Already stem cells have saved thousands of lives, most often in the form of some marrow transplants for leukemia and many others conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, spinal cord injury, sickle cell anemia, heart damage, corneal damage and dozens more. But there are some who question the usefulness of stem cell research — embryonic stem cells have never been used in the treatment of human patients, and animal trials suggest that they are too genetically unstable and too likely to form lethal tumors to be used for treatment any time soon. But despite these speculations, doctors, scientists and commentators are confident that embryonic stem cell research will lead to the cure of many diseases. For example, recently through stem cell research scientists discovered that our treatment methods for cancer may have been targeting the wrong cells — if proven true, this could lead to an effective cure for cancer in the very near future.

Serious moral concerns about embryonic research have been raised by both religious and secular groups — these groups are opposed to the idea of treating early human life as a mere object of commodity in the laboratory. I believe these people, in an effort to protect life, are blinded toward the benefits that stem cell research can lead to. Many people deserve a better chance to survive, and if there is a possible cure for any disease, especially those that have already devastated hundreds of thousands, why shouldn’t scientists be allowed to work towards it?

Although I think that it is too soon to come up with a compromise both sides will be happy with, people must realize that in any new research chances are to be taken. If we had not taken chances in the past, we would not be enjoying all the technology we take for granted today. If we don’t take a chance now, how are we going to find out what can save lives?

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QCC’s Student Union

BY YONGZHI HUANG

Do you have large gaps between classes? Are you bored or tired? Need a place to relax and have fun? Well look no further - the lower level of the Student Union building is your home away from home and the perfect place to spend your free time here at Queensborough Community College.

Located directly behind the Technology Building, the Student Union Building is divided into an upper level and a lower level. The upper level is where most campus events such as the Job Fair and Parade of Nations are held. The lower level, however, provides for the students a place where they can go to enjoy fun-filled activities and entertainment.

If it’s your first time visiting the Student Union Building, don’t be afraid – what struck me the most during my first visit was how friendly and helpful the students and faculty members were: they treat people with respect and help anyone with any problems they may have. As the name implies, the Student Union Building is an ideal place to get to know your fellow QCC students outside of the classroom and is a perfect environment for students to come and share their college experiences.

While everyone is welcomed to relax at the student union building, there are rules that students must obey for their safety as well as others’. First, the only way you may enter the building is by presenting your valid, unexpired QCC ID card at the entrance - this is to prevent outsiders who are not enrolled at QCC from entering and causing distraction or harm. Second, no alcoholic beverages are permitted - this rule is strictly enforced, and failure to comply will cause expulsion from QCC and possibly all CUNY colleges. Last, everyone is expected to behave properly and keep foul language to a minimum. These rules are designed to give students the safest environment possible in order for them to enjoy their activities.

So what exactly does the lower level of the Student Union Building have to offer?

• 10 computers with internet access.
• A Bistro area with delicious gourmet treats
• A full sized kitchen with a sink, microwave, coffee maker, refrigerator, utensils and a vending machine
• Magazines for you to read such as Time, OK!, Newsweek, TV Guide and many more
• An arcade room with various games for your entertainment
• A plasma TV with cable access for your viewing pleasure
• 2 Pool/tennis tables
• A Billiard room with 5 tables and a jukebox with an up to date music collection

The Student Union Building is open from 9 AM to 8 PM on Monday through Thursday, and 9 AM to 5 PM on Fridays.

The Communique Staff wish you a happy and healthy Holiday Season!
A Female Leader Emerges In the Democratic Triumph

By Ko Wei Chen

On November 7th, the Democrats won control of the House of Representatives, proposing a sweeping agenda in the midterm elections for the first time in more than a decade. Riding on a wave of anti-war sentiment, the Democrats seized the opportunity to label Republicans as the cause for many of the problems in Iraq— the electorate responded accordingly, dealing Republicans a heavy blow in the House. Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, emerged as in force after the elections and is now all but guaranteed to be elected the next Speaker of the House when Congress reconvenes on January 2007. Pelosi’s task will not be easy, as many complex challenges await her; the next two years will prove to be a critical juncture in American political affairs, and Pelosi’s success or failure as Speaker will ultimately determine the future of not only the Democratic Party but America itself.

Pelosi is the first woman to lead a major political party in either houses of Congress, and once formally elected, she would be the first woman to serve as Speaker. She would also be the first Californian or Italian American to hold the post, and the second Speaker from west of the Rockies (behind fellow Democrat Tom Foley of Washington). As Speaker, she would rank second in the presidential line of succession behind the Vice President. While the Speaker is formally elected by the full House, this election is almost always a formality since the Speaker usually comes from the majority party in the chamber.

Pelosi is a tough, resoundingly liberal Democratic leader from San Francisco. Her powerful position grants her powers such as appointing the positions of all important House committees that can launch inquiries and tackle difficult questions like the War in Iraq. Ms. Pelosi and the Democratic Party will also have a powerful influence over taxes, spending, and other legislative agenda. In theory, the job gives her less control over foreign policy but, in her victory speech, she made it clear she would not be bound by such traditional constraints of power. She also made it clear that the Democrats wanted a “new direction in Iraq.” Her impact has already been felt by both parties. In response to the midterm elections, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld quickly resigned, leading President Bush to nominate Robert Gates, a former CIA director, to replace him.

President Bush’s declining popularity contributed greatly to the Democrats’ win — Pelosi and the Democratic Party emerged victorious in the midterm elections on an anti-war platform. The Democrats chose to unwaveringly associate all Republicans with Bush’s failed foreign policy and the Iraq War, even though it’s not true — this dealt a heavy blow to the Republican Party, which found it nearly impossible to defend itself.

The Democratic victory, as such, can only be described as questionable. The Democrats were quick to point out the failures of the President and the Republican Party, but were slow to provide any real solutions. It’s easy to blame the majority Party for the country’s problems in order to gain a quick election victory, but it takes long term solutions to stay in power, which Democrats have failed to provide. Ms. Pelosi will be burdened with all the failures of President Bush and the Republican Party, failures that will take years to fix if repairable at all. If she fails to succeed where the Republicans failed, they will be quick to point this out and the response in the next election will be devastating for the Democrats.

Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats have chosen to adopt a vanilla agenda instead of addressing long term solutions to correct the failures of President Bush and the Republican Party. The Democrats’ six point plan for 2006 (which can be found at www.democrats.org/agenda.html) is generic, to say the least, even for politicians. Instead of providing solutions for tough issues or tackling more difficult topics, Pelosi and the Democrats have chosen to improve security, education, and healthcare, to end corruption, fix social security, and to create energy independence. While these are important issues, these are things that every other politician across the nation, regardless of party, has promised to accomplish. The people voted for the Democrats in hopes of change, and looking at their agenda it appears that they have not taken any visible steps towards it.

Nancy Pelosi is a tough, smart, and respected leader — through her character she has garnered the support of her colleagues, as well as most Americans. However, she faces extremely difficult issues in the next few years — the heated topic of Iraq, on which the Democrats rode to victory in the midterm election, needs to be addressed by Pelosi and the Democrats, instead of blaming all the problems on Republicans. In addition, Pelosi and the Democrats failed to do much that one should not be surprised to see an early demise of the Democratic majority in 2008.
Free Services at QCC

By Michael Villacres

“Our buy one and get one free; Call within the next 20 minutes and we will throw in a second one for free!” You’ve probably heard these lines in commercials. They’re ploys that companies use to get potential customers to buy their products or services. Free appeals to everyone, but this is especially true for college students. Between college tuition, textbooks, food, transportation, cell phone bills, and all the other expenses that college students have, there really isn’t much currency left over. But what if I told you that instead of spending your money on a psychiatrist, you can get good treatment right on campus for FREE? No cost flu shots because the QCC Medical Clinic will give you one at NO charge? And if you didn’t want to use your money on a dating service to meet that special someone, you might search for a free alternative. These and several other valuable services are available right here at QCC for you to discover.

The first freebie is the Counseling office, which is located in the library building in room L-42. The Counseling office is directed by Dr. Stanley Rustin Ph.D. Now if you thought that the only thing done at the Counseling Office is Registration, think again. Dr. Rustin told me that in addition to that duty his office also teaches various educational lectures and classes on important issues affecting students as well as faculty, including, for example, Introduction to College, Mental Health, Suicide, and many other vital topics. These classes and lectures all help the faculty and the various clubs at QCC to “advertise” the Counseling Office to the student body. This in turn enables students to come in on their own or by a faculty’s recommendation or “escort service.” How do Dr. Rustin’s ten counselors and two part-time counselors, all of whom are fully licensed, stay current on the mental issues that are affecting students? Dr. Rustin attends an annual CUNY conference where counseling directors exchange information. Then Dr. Rustin passes on what he has learned to the students and the faculty. Last but not least, two reasons why you should visit the Counseling Office are you will have confidence in your counselor, as long as you do not pose a threat to yourself or anyone else, and the best reason of all is its FREE!

If you’ve ever asked a loved one for money you’ve already heard the response “get a job.” Where you should go next is the Career Services office of QCC. There you will be introduced to the office’s mission which focuses upon the professional development of QCC students. To accomplish this goal, the Career center offers instruction on how to conduct a good job interview, how to keep your job, succeeding at job fairs, and a number of other options. One of the most popular services is regarding a resume or cover letter. If you already have a resume, they will look it over just to make sure that it is ready to go by an employer. If you are a freshman then now is the time to go to the Career Services office according to its director, Ms. Constance Peluso. Don’t be worried if the first draft of your resume is a little rough. Director Peluso says that after all it is all a learning process. For those of you that have either thought about or have paid a resume service to write your resume, Director Peluso warns against that. She says the cons with that service are that students may not know what is truly on those resumes.

If you already have a career in mind then an Internship or CO-OP are both a good edge because they offer an introduction of sorts to a possible career field. Three tips for researching your career choice(s) are: Read, Talk, and Try it out. First read up on the career field. The QCC library’s staff can help you start this process for you. Next, talk to an expert in that field. And lastly, try an Internship or CO-OP to get a preview of your possible future career. Even if you don’t have a career they still have a plan. If after some Career Services counseling, the staff feels they need more help; then a referral to the Counseling office will be done. But in the end it’s up to the student. Director Peluso says Director Peluso. After all Career Services is not a job placement agency because the employer makes the final decision. Director Peluso put it best “We [Career Services] are here to help you [QCC Students] stand on your own.” To find out more about this and other ways Career Services can help you for FREE, go to room L-429 in the library building.

Another resource to helping students find their careers is the Discovery program located at Career Resource in room L-420, a branch of the Career Services office. Between 200 to 250 students use this room monthly, reported Alyia Fakhri, the resource room College Assistant. The resource room is open Monday thru Friday, with the hours changing every semester. So check often. The Discovery program is career profile software and is accessible also through headsets. In the Career Resource room there are General Positions binders for students that have no career or job in mind. Other binders are organized according to career fields. One of the advantages to using the binders over a computer is that some jobs in the binders are not posted on the computer. One employer that may seem attractive to students is QCC jobs. If using a PC is for you then you may want to use the College Central website. Here you can register, upload your resume, have it reviewed by experts and after your resume has been approved, then you may begin to search its job bank. If you want to print copies of your resume the limit is five to a student. In addition to the “Perfect Interview” interactive software and other Career center software, the Career Resource room has another program called Accent Master. Accent Master helps the user to speak with an American accent. Currently the program is available in Spanish and Chinese. All of these tools are yours FREE.

You may have seen a new neighbor in the Library’s basement. This is QCC’s new Campus Learning Center. Here students can take advantage of the at least 40 tutors. The center’s tutoring is grouped into four groups or “clusters.” They are: Business, Biology/Pre-Nursing, Social Science (to include Education and History), and Arts & the Humanities including Foreign Languages. Leading this new center is Bonnie Cook, the center’s coordinator. In addition she also works with the faculty advisor, who takes care of making sure that all newly hired tutors come properly prepared. The center offers walk-ins or you make an appointment for a one-on-one session. From Monday thru Thursday the center is open from 9AM to 9PM; on Friday from 9AM to 5PM, and on Saturday from 10AM to 3PM. This service is FREE for QCC students!

Last is the Health Services Center, located in Medical Arts building MC-02, headed by Ms. Isabel Hocevar. The Health Services Center (HSC) offers free immunizations tests for serious diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS), condoms for both males and females, and other services. The HSC is open Monday thru Friday from 9AM to 5PM, year round. Alcohol, safe sex, and Smoking Education are just a sample of the health topics available on brochures at the HSC. The HSC has info as well on health insurance representatives. The HSC offers preventive care to include dressing, immobilizations, icing, and other medical services. Ms. Hocevar can assist in an emergency until EMS arrives, having 14 years experience. Once you enter the HSC, you must sign-in and have your QCC ID. And make sure to check your Tiggermail, the QCC website and all over campus for further updates. Again all of this is FREE!

Your tuition makes you a student of CUNY and of QCC. In addition, you also get a “membership bonus” of services exclusive to both CUNY and QCC students, such as concerts, plays, receptions, and other special events. Also forget about the FREE insurance in the Library as well. Finally, take the advice of your Associate Dean for Student Affairs and take advantage of what your college has to offer you for FREE!!

What’s a Pain in the Back? By Theresa Randhawa

The most common physical complaint among American adults today is back problems. Have you ever felt a sharp pain or dull aching in your back? Have you ever had that awkward sensation or annoying stiffness break your focus? These are some of the most common symptoms that affect many people suffering from back problems. Other symptoms may include anywhere along your spine from the base of the neck to the hips, a sharp localized pain in the neck, upper back or lower back, especially after lifting heavy objects or engaging in strenuous activity, or chronic ache in the middle or lower back, especially after sitting or standing for extended periods.

Having back pain is usually one that is self-inflicted. Bad habits, poor posture, overexertion in work or play, and the pushing, pulling and lifting of things carelessly are all actions that lead to back problems. Sometimes, the effects are immediate, but in many cases back problems develop gradually. The most common type of back pain comes from straining the bands of muscles surrounding the spine. Strains like this can occur anywhere along the spine, but they happen most often in the curve of the lower back. The second most common place is at the base of the neck.

For students, sitting incorrectly at their desk and carrying backpacks are two of the top causes of back pain. A recent study determined that students who wear backpacks do indeed suffer from back problems over a long period of time. Nearly 3,500 middle school students were reviewed for the study. The study involved weighing the students and their backpacks, questioning them about how they used their backpacks and inquiring about any pain they had experienced. The results were sixty-four percent of the children reported pain; 21 percent of the children reported that the pain lasted for longer than six months. Nearly all of the students said that they were relieved when they able to remove their backpacks. Over 40 percent of the students in the survey walked to school wearing backpacks. The correlation between the children’s weight and that of their backpacks was that as the ratio of backpack-to-child’s weight increased, so did the reports of pain. Another research group at the College of Staten Island studied the connection between full-time students in classrooms and back pain. The study indicated that out of the 36 student participants, 83 percent of them said they had experienced back pain at one point or another and an estimated half of them associated their back pain with class-room chairs. The study was inconclusive but they determined that it was impractical for students to sit in straight-backed chairs and was recommended they should move or change posture frequently. They also recommended that they should only sit for short periods of time. Backpacks can be a safe tool for kids to use, but misuse and poor design can literally be a pain.

Seeing as how back problems can arise from a variety of causes, some of which are not readily visible, the main treatment can include pain relief, rest and the restriction of movement. Treatments under conventional medicine can include but are not limited to analgesics, anti-inflammatory medication, there is spinal manipulation, acupuncture, biofeedback, and body work. The most important preventive measure for lower-back pain is practicing good posture when standing and sitting.

For more information about back problems, you can also take a simple survey composed on WEBMD.COM. The specific link is http://www.webmd.com/hw/back/pain/a142525.asp. The website asks questions that address back problems and gives advice on actions one should take in a specific time frame to help with an individual’s specific situation.
Are Cell Phones Harmful To Our Health?  

BY IRENA FARMAN

If you’re outside right now in a populated area, look up. Go ahead look up, I’ll wait. Scour the crowd for people. See anyone? Okay so I am willing to bet that at least a few of the people that you are looking at are on the phone. Their cell phones that is. I cannot think of a technological advancement that has literally taken the world by storm in regard to everyday life. The cell phone has become a necessity for people, just like your bag, wallet, or keys; the cell phone reminds me of an old advertising slogan from Visa, “Don’t leave home without it”. With a cell phone, pictures can be taken, video footage can be captured, music can be stored, and the Internet can be surfed on. And the ideas are continuously flooding in. What can’t this amazing little technological invention do? The question may not be what the cell phone cannot do, but rather what the cell phone does that we’re unaware of. In other words, what effects could it possibly have, if any, on our health, that we have yet to experience?

Like any other advancement or advent in technology, we have the tendency to embrace and marvel the invention of a particular time or period, the printing press, the assembly line, machine guns, radio, television, and the computer. All were amazing, but also dangerous, and now the cell phone follows in the footsteps of its technological predecessors. A mere 10 years ago, even 8 years ago most people didn’t have cell phones. They were new to the market for them was growing but they weren’t a mainstay in the gadget world just yet. Fast forward to 2006, and not a minute goes by that one doesn’t see someone on a cell phone. Cell phones have become a necessity for people. I would have to say that most people do not know a lot about the possible effects that cell phone usage may have on their health, and the potential harm that radiation may be responsible for due to cell phone use.

There are two types of electromagnetic radiation, the first being ionizing radiation, which are gamma rays and x-rays, and these electromagnetic radiations can alter the chemical reactions in the body. The other is non-ionizing radiation such as visible light and microwave radiation, which is typically considered safe, and they give no long-term damage to body tissue. The real concern lies in Radio Frequency (RF) radiation, which does have the potential to heat human tissue. RF radiation is emitted by technologies that are wireless, such as the cell phone, cordless phones, and laptops. Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) which are any form of electromagnetic radiation, have added contribution to the rise of electromagnetic radiation in our world today. An article in the December issue of ODE magazine states that humans today are exposed to 100 times more electromagnetic radiation that our ancestors were subjected to 150 years ago. If you haven’t quite grasped the severity and danger of that above statement, just look away from the paper and think about it for a second, one of the things that we do now.

In 2002, according to the American Academy of Neurology, they tested the hypothesis that intracranial energy from cell phones may cause Acoustic Neurona. Acoustic Neurona is a non-cancerous, or benign growth that runs from the brain to the inner ear. When signal is sent to the brain along the 8th cranial nerve, the hearing and balance of a person may be interfered with. In an epidemiologic (the study of diseases) survey, which included the use of 86 control subjects, it was found that the people who used cellular phone had the higher rate of occurrence of a tumor on their contralateral side. The contralateral side is the opposite side from the body part that is acting in conjunction with the cell phone, as compared to their ipsilateral side of their head, which is the side the cell phone is being used on. In another study within the website science news.org, Swedish researchers claim that a 2 hour exposure of microwaves emitted by cell phones kills brain cells in rats. If confirmed this would be the first direct link of cell phone radiation causing brain damage. ODE news reported in 2004 that mobile phones harm body cells, and damage DNA. This was found in a research conducted by a German research group called Verum in which they studied the effects of radiation on animals and human cells in a laboratory. What they found was that the cells showed a significant increase in DNA damage, and that the cell could not always repair the damage continued in the next generation of cells. These mutated cells are one of the early signs of possible cancer.

Just days ago I saw a child, he couldn’t have been more than 10, playing with a cell phone that seemed to be his. He seemed to be speaking about something very meaningful and deep, possibly an existential debate on the essence of the soul, arguing the political landscape of Iraq in 10 years, or maybe he was closing out an important deal that would financially set him up for years to come, or...oh right he’s a kid. Why is he on a cell phone? Generations have gone by, without the need of a cell phone, so why can’t kids today be the same? Lines have to be drawn and this is issue is one of them. Not thinking about adults for a second, years down the line if it is found that cell phones are dangerous what impact would this discovery have on young people who’ve used this device since their early teens? It is a fact that children have thinner skulls than adults, and in the December 2006 issue of ODE magazine, Dr. Michael Kundli of Vienna says “the properties of brain tissues in children are different from adults because their brains are still developing. This is important for a physician, but some still don’t think there are issues with children and mobile phones, I’m not so sure.”

Mobile phone masts (cell phone towers) are also causing severe problems for the residents in the neighborhoods that they have been placed in. Warwickshire, England is a shining example of the danger of masts. The residents were fed up with the masts effects on their health, and decided to tear it down due to 34 of 50 people living within 500 meters of the mast developing medical problems. Out of these people, seven of them were struck with cancer. This is something that doesn’t seem coincidental.

In Germany a group of physicians have asked the prime minister of Bavaria to stop putting up new masts. After documenting those that lie near the masts residents family had high rates of headaches, fatigue, concentration problems and other symptoms. Just this past week on December 6th 2006, it was reported by the Associated Press that a group of researchers learned that cell phone users were no more likely than anyone else to suffer a range of cancer types. In the study, scientists tracked down 420,000 Danish cell phone users, 52,000 of the users having used the gadgets for 10 years or more. 27,000 had used cell phones for 21 years or more. The study, published by the Journal of the National Cancer Institute is the largest study to find no connection between cell phone use and the Radio Frequency energy they emit.

What the issue comes down to isn’t if cell phones are dangerous or potentially harmful, but if we are to stumble upon the answer and learn of their hazards will we do something, or are we going to let our lives continue to be exposed to a technology that has Electromagnetic Radiation? Are we going to be in the vein of those people who ignored the warnings of researchers from the 80’s, who foretold of cigarette smoking and risks that could be involved with smoking, who are now lying on a bed somewhere with holes in their throat, cancer, emphysema, or even worse lying in a grave. Will we be too late to take back our intellectual laziness, and our enlightened lethargy? Is the cell phone such an amazing technology that elders, parents, and so-called responsible adults cannot keep our children from using cell phones? Are children so stubborn that if we explain to them the slope of the situation they will not understand? I am reminded of the famous communications theorist Neil Postman who said, “Anyone who has studied the history of communication gry knows that technological change is always a Faustian bargain, technology giveth and technolo- gy taketh away, and not always in equal measure.” A new technology creates more problems for society. Sometimes, it destroys more than it creates. But it is never one sided.” Hopefully, the cell phone isn’t a harmful invention, but something that we continue to improve and not let compromise our health.

Smoking: Kicking the Habit

BY JILLIAN GUETZ

Smoking, one of the deadliest habits a person can get into. Many individuals are aware of the health effects such as lung cancer, emphysema (breakdown of lung tissue) and heart problems. Smoking can shorten your life by 14 years or more, and it can cost a smoker thousands of dollars a year. So why are people still lighting up? One word answers that question: Addiction.

Tobacco smoke contains nicotine, a stimulant which is one of the most addictive substances in existence. Like heroin or any other addictive drugs the body and mind quickly become so accustomed to the nicotine in cigarettes that person becomes dependent on it just to feel normal.

Statistics show that about 9 out of 10 tobacco user’s start before they’re 18 years old. Some teens start smoking because they think it helps them look older. Others smoke because they think it helps them relax. In actuality, the heart beats faster while a person is smoking. Some start because their friends smoke. Some people, especially girls, use smoking as a method of weight loss.

The body doesn’t need tobacco the way it needs food, water, sleep and exercise. In fact, many of the chemicals found in cigarettes such as nicotine and cyanide are actually poisons that can kill in high enough doses. The consequences of this poisonous happen gradually. Each time a smoker lights up, that single cigarette takes about 5 to 20 minutes off a person’s life.

Smokers not only develop wrinkles and yellow teeth, they also lose bone density, which increases their risk of osteoporosis, a condition that is characterized by a decrease in bone mass with decreased density and enlargement of bone spaces. Smokers also tend be less active than non-smokers because smoking affects lung power. It can also cause infertility problems in both males and women and can impact sexual health in males.

Passive smoking also known as secondhand smoking is as harmful as regular smoking. It occurs when unfiltered cigarette smoke is inhaled continued on page 6
Kicking the Habit
continued from page 5
by other people. It is confirmed that in adults, secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, breast cancer in younger women, heart disease, heart attacks and asthma induction. Secondhand smoke is also known to harm children as well.

In 2006, US Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona called the evidence against passive smoke “indisputable” and said “the science is clear: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance, but a serious health hazard that causes premature death and disease in children and non-smoking adults.” Passive smoking is one of the key issues that have led to the introduction of smoking bans particularly in workplaces. Secondhand smoke is also connected to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Infants who die from SIDS tend to have higher concentrations of nicotine and cotinine (a biomarker for secondhand smoke exposure) in their lungs than those who die from other causes. Infants exposed to secondhand smoke after birth are also at a greater risk of SIDS.

Advertisements also play a role in tobacco use. Before the 1970’s, most tobacco advertising was legal in the United States and most European nations. In the United States during the 1960’s and 1970’s, cigarette brands were frequently sponsors of television shows. One of the most famous television jingles of the era came from an advertisement from Winston cigarettes. The slogan, “Winston tastes good like a cigarette should!” proved to be catchy and is still quoted today. Many nations including Russia, still allow billboards advertising tobacco use. Smoking is still advertised in certain magazines, during sporting events, in gas stations and stores.

Not only is smoking bad for your health, it’s also expensive. In 2002, the centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that each pack of cigarettes sold in the United States costs the nation more than $7 in medical care and lost productivity.

Smoking is very addictive and it’s very hard for individuals to quit. Smokers wanting to quit can use a variety of nicotine substitutes, the most popular being nicotine gum. Nicotine patches are also used to help someone quit. Peer support groups can also be helpful to help you or someone you love quit and become tobacco free.

For more information to kick the habit, visit the following websites:

• www.tobaccofree.org
• www.chantix.com
• www.thescoppomsmoke.org

Déjà Vu: Is it Fact or Fiction?
BY ORMONDE-ANN HACKMAN

What is it like to experience Déjà Vu? It can be described as a feeling of familiarity with a new place or someone you have never met before. You may have found yourself dreaming of a particular destination that you have never visited. Later, you take a trip and it seems familiar to you; that’s Déjà Vu.

The new movie entitled Déjà Vu, starring Denzel Washington has audiences questioning: is the sensation fact or fiction? Written by Terri Rossio and Bill Marsilii, the concept behind the film is unique and fascinating. This movie takes you inside the mind and allows you to experience the sensation of Déjà Vu with every twist and turn of the plot. Terri Rossio is no stranger to successful screen-plays; co-writer of Box Office hits such as Pirates of the Caribbean, Shrek and Aladdin, among many others.

Déjà Vu is a love story like no other, with a mixture of romance, action, science fiction, comedy and drama. It is pure entertainment from start to finish. The story unfolds when there is an explosion onboard a New Orleans Ferry carrying hundreds of individuals. Federal Bureau A.T.F. (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) Agent Doug Carlin, played by Denzel Washington, is called on the scene to investigate the tragic crime. As he is brought deeper into the investigation, he discovers many unanswered questions and not enough answers. On top of his frustration, Agent Carlin develops an emotional attachment to a woman named Claire Kuchever (Paula Patton), who is at the center of this growing puzzle and ultimately finds himself in a situation that could change their future.

Déjà Vu is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and directed by Tony Scott. The movie was released under Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer Films, along with a Scott Free production. The list of co-stars include Val Kilmer (Agent Pryzwara), Paula Patton (Claire Kuchever), Adam Goldberg (Dr. Alexander Denny), Jim Caviezel (Carroll Oersted), Erika Alexander (Shanti), Elden Henson (Gunnars) and Bruce Greenwood as Jack McCready.

Not only rich in action and suspense, this movie also takes viewers into the mysterious world of quantum physics. The idea that parallel universes exist and that everyone living on planet Earth simultaneously exists elsewhere gives an exciting and playful twist to the film’s plot. What if the capability to go back into the past becomes a reality? Will the future outcome be any different? Déjà Vu touches base suggesting it is possible to travel back in time using a “Time-WINDOW.” The theory serves as the foundation for the film’s thrilling and distinctive storyline.

One of the best performances in Déjà Vu is that given by Denzel Washington. Winner of the NAACP Image Award, Golden Globe and Academy Award winner, this actor has an incredible range and resume. Washington’s impressive credentials include popular films such as Man on Fire, Crimson Tide, Philadelphia, He Got Game, Training Day, Malcolm X, Virtuosity and many others.

Jerry Bruckheimer is a talented producer with an exceptional gift of telling remarkable stories. This multi-Grammy recipient has produced an array of movies, many of which were highly successful, such as Bad Boys, Top Gun, Gone in 60 Seconds, Beverly Hills Cop and Pearl Harbor.

When Jerry Bruckheimer has a story to tell, it is told in a fascinating way. In years to come, I’m sure many of his films will be considered classics. Tony Scott’s direction for the movie worked brilliantly with the storyline; his visions made the scenes come alive. He has the ability to capture the viewer’s attention and keep them intrigued throughout the entire film.

Déjà Vu is an interesting film from beginning to the end; action fans will not be disappointed. The movie will have your mind playing tricks on you. It will make you feel like you have just experienced Déjà Vu yourself: The film shows the depths of true love (self-sacrifice) and that anything is possible when love is present. That message in itself is inspiring. I give Déjà Vu a rating of three happy faces.

Rating: ☀️☀️☀️
Rating System
 mogul3 An extraordinary movie with a great storyline
 mogul2 A wonderful movie, it’s worth checking out
 mogul1 The film needs improvement
 mogul0 This movie is horrible, don’t even waste your Time!

Rent: Bringing Back the Love on Broadway
BY DANIELLE MORGENSTERN

As the holiday season comes quickly upon us, what better way to celebrate than enjoying a play set in New York City. Rent is the story of angst-ridden teenagers trying to celebrate their love for each other while battling the freezing winter. Although many of us do not consider ourselves theatergoers, an exception should be made for this show.

Rent was written and produced by Jonathan Larson and debuted in New York City in the Nederland Theatre on April 29, 1996. Playwright Billy Aronson, who had the idea of an updated version of Giacomo Puccini’s ‘La Boheme’ back in 1988, was Larson’s inspiration. The two collaborated together, in a dilapidated apartment, and used an illegal wood-burning stove for warmth as they worked.

Rent had originally debuted on February 19, 1996, at its off-Broadway location at the New York Theatre Workshop before claiming a home on Broadway. It started off in the reading in 1993 that turned into the seventh-longest running Broadway show as of October 2006. Unfortunately Larson, the show’s creator, was never able to see the finished product. Ten days before his 36th birthday, and only hours after the final dress rehearsal of Rent, Larson unexpectedly died of an aortic dissection on January 23, 1996.

Rent is based on Larson’s own experiences, living as an impoverished writer in New York City. With a thirst to create, to thrive, to generally survive, the cast of Rent explores the prominent issues of the late 90’s: drugs, addiction, homophobia, homosexuality, transgender lifestyle, AIDS, multiculturalism, the love of music and of each other. Battling an empty wallet, the mainstream media, and a society with a bias towards anyone who isn’t “normal,” the cast of Rent musically show their audience the difference between tomorrow, and “No Day But Today.”

The play starts out on “December 24, 9 P.M., Eastern Standard Time,” as dictated by Mark, the aspiring documentary filmmaker. We “zoom to Roger,” the recovering junkie, who is HIV positive and is tuning his guitar. We soon meet Tom Collins, who is also HIV positive. Collins is both a philosophy teacher and an anarchist. As we see him being mugged in the streets of New York City, a young man, aptly named Angel, saves him. They both begin their slow and tragic relationship of love and acceptance of each other. Eventually

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Esmeralda Santiago’s When I Was Puerto Rican

By NASRULLAH MIR

Precisely what makes modern society’s conceptions of class unique, in the setting of innate inequality, is the conception of the mobile individual. In other words, the classes in our society are not as fixed as they were in many ancient organized societies. The idea of the individual can change their class, for better or for worse, depending somewhat upon their own actions has produced a culture in which symbolic markers of one’s status have become of great importance; simultaneously diminishing and enlarging the gap between one class and another. So, much of the inequality prevalent in the United States is defined by the unclear boundaries of class, and largely, class is considered to be a function of one’s value. However, many of America’s richest people inherited their wealth. These individuals did not need to rely upon talent or diligence to achieve their goals because these goals were automatically provided for them. This illustrates one of the central difficulties in the American ideal of equality: economically, wealth is often a result of a random fashion. Then, the American dream is destabilized by the somewhat false impression of social mobility; which presumes that race, gender, and inheritance play only small roles in social achievement.

Esmeralda Santiago’s autobiographical work When I Was Puerto Rican illustrates a number of the class issues affecting racial minorities in the United States. Of these, the most pervasive issue is the question of ethnic identity. The very title—When I Was Puerto Rican—suggests something very important about the way Santiago identifies herself; if she was Puerto Rican, she was part of a separate racial group. The last characteristic was a great impediment to her particularly in her native country; “I came with my magna cum laude degree thinking that everybody was going to be so proud of me in Puerto Rico. But the only job I could get was as a typist at $3 an hour. . . . My boss said to me: ‘You can have ten Harvard degrees, but you’re still a woman in Puerto Rico.’” The process of writing was Santiago able to escape the unbearable effects of being a female minority in order to achieve social success. Her story appears to be one of affirmation of the American dream; yet, the true emphasis of her writing is toward the notion that part of herself was lost through the effort—she is fragmented.

Through Santiago’s approach to the traditional tale of growth and self-actualization as the limit and possibly failure of a conventional identity become apparent: it cannot be accurately applied to individuals who live their entire lives as racial, cultural, sexual, and economic outsiders.

Essentially, part of Santiago’s racial identity needed to be surrendered in order for her to change her social rank for the better. However, Santiago already has three strikes against her with respect to social mobility: she was a Puerto Rican, she was part of a separate racial group, and she was a female. The last characteristic was a great impediment to her particularly in her native country; “I came with my magna cum laude degree thinking that everybody was going to be so proud of me in Puerto Rico. But the only job I could get was as a typist at $3 an hour. . . . My boss said to me: ‘You can have ten Harvard degrees, but you’re still a woman in Puerto Rico.’” The process of writing was Santiago able to escape the unbearable effects of being a female minority in order to achieve social success. Her story appears to be one of affirmation of the American dream; yet, the true emphasis of her writing is toward the notion that part of herself was lost through the effort—she is fragmented.

Rent

Continued from page 6

we meet the lesbians of the show, Maureen and Joanne. Maureen had, once upon a time, dated Mark, but cheated on him with a woman.

Maureen is a performing artist, who protests against the endangerment of her own performing space, a building made from being Maureen’s girlfriend, is a Harvard-educated lawyer. Benjamin “Benny” Coffin III, ex-friends with Mark and Roger, is herein considered a “yuppie.” Benny sold them out, and now expects rent from them both, even though he himself shared the very same apartment space with both men only years before he got rich. Finally, there’s the stripper Mi-Mi, who is a junkie and HIV positive. She finds Roger late one night in the cold apartment, asking if he could “Light My Candle,” for the stash she had in her leopard skin-tight pants.

Rent represents survival. It is a story of overcoming the societal judgment and disease. Despite the sensitive issues it addresses, like taking your AZT’s to keep a body riddled with HIV alive, or an S&M dancer nearly overdosing on heroin, it is a story of the countless songs that are sung to keep a heart light. One such song, the highlight of the show, is the score, “La Vie Boheme.” Being that Rent is based on Giacomo Puccini’s La Boheme, Larson gives tribute here to numerous poets, artists, bands, writers, expressions, emotions, as well as symbols of drugs and of sex. Mark begins with a eulogy to the dearly departed concept of “La Vie Boheme,” and goes straight into the lyrics: “To days of inspiration, Playing hooky, making something out of nothing, the need to express, to communicate, to go against the grain.” The song “La Vie Boheme” instills in its listener a sense of rebellion; even a sense of self, in a world embodied in the ideas of mainstream materialism, by giving mention to inspirational people who tried to change the views of a biased world.

As you begin falling in love with each of the characters, recognizing their faults or their strengths, you begin to gain appreciation for Larson’s writing. When Angel falls ill to his HIV-killing diseases, or when Mimi disappears and Roger finds himself seeking his song of “Glory,” the music that fills the theatre of the Nederland Theatre makes you really appreciate every one of those 525,600 minutes in a year.

Verisimilitude, as defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary, means the quality or state of being true. This is what Santiago desires that most movies hope to give their audience when they purchase their tickets. And, if you are paying at least ten dollars per ticket, you want to see a damn good movie. Babel succeeds in giving that feeling and achieving it.

I had the opportunity to see this movie on December 1st at the Museum of the Moving Image. I decided to see this film at the museum for a promotional screening, which also included a commentary by the director himself, Alejandro González Iñárritu. Babel, Iñárritu’s latest movie, includes many powerful themes displayed in four connected stories that Mr. Iñárritu, along with Guillermo Arriaga, the screenplay writer, uses to portray their views of immigration, globalization, human communication and other facets of our constantly complex lives.

The first of the four stories takes place in Morocco. A farmer purchases a rifle to protect his flock of sheep and entrusts it to his two sons, Yussef and Ahmed. In a moment of sibling rivalry, the two brothers set out on a passing tour bus to gauge the effectiveness of the weapon. They believed the weapon to be ineffective as the bus continued to drive away. Suddenly, the boys see that the bus stops. The question is then that they realize the weapon might have worked all too well. They learn later that an American on that bus was shot and might possibly die.

The next story, that of Richard and Susan, is an American couple on a sightseeing tour in Morocco. You learn that both of them are trying to cope with the loss of their infant child, Sam, and problems with their own marriage. Susan, who is played by Cate Blanchett, is shot while riding in their tour bus. Meanwhile, Richard, played by Gael Garcia Bernal, takes Susan to the hospital and the children they left at home, and Arima their nanny. Amelia, who was expecting the parents’ quick return home, has to go to her own son’s wedding and cannot due to Susan’s unfortunate circumstance. Thus, she must care for the children a little while longer. She makes the choice to take the children with her to her son’s wedding, which takes place in Mexico. Amelia’s nephew, Santiago, played by Gael Garcia Bernal, takes her and the children to the wedding. Things go well at the wedding until Santiago, slightly intoxicated and impetuous, drives back to the border with Amelia and the children. They receive an unfriendly welcome, leading to misfortune for all.

The fourth story takes place in Japan. Chiyo, a deaf-mute teenage girl, is dealing with the suicide of her mother and the budding emotions of a girl looking for affection. This is the most unique story, since you see a language used in the movie that is rarely given much attention in cinema: sign language. Chiyo tries dealing with her emotions by making advances to the young man made up around her, but is denied with each new try. Her character is a challenge to understand since there is never a word uttered by her; it is only her emotions and actions that can tell the story. The film is very engaging during the story. Her complete silences, from hearing or “speaking” to others, makes her story very intense. Chiyo’s loneliness is easily continued on page 8

Babel

By CLAUDE COPPELAND

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felt by anyone sitting in the audience. The young woman who played the character, Rinko Kikuchi, did a great job of acting. Her performance is proof that not every significant role is summed up by the dialogue that is said by that person but understanding the character on the screen. Ms. Kikuchi succeeds in doing this without even saying a word.

Babel gives a new meaning to the phrase "the shot heard around the world". A simple hunting rifle triggers a chain of events that brings unseen and unfortunate consequences to various people. Alejandro González Iñárritu came out after the final credits greeting his audience, and received a huge applause. He took his seat atop the stage and gave his commentary on the vision that he had for this movie, along with a few of his personal views on the world today. Babel, as explained by Mr. Iñárritu, is actually the final film of a trilogy starting with the movies Amores Perros and 21 Grams. I had seen both previously, and they are great introductions to the style of filmmaking and storytelling that Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo Arriaga have developed in their projects.

Mr. Iñárritu spoke of his own personal issues, such as that of immigration. He is not an American citizen, and thus deals with immigration officials on a fairly regular basis. He goes to Mexico about every 6 months and returns to his home in Los Angeles. Mr. Iñárritu pointed out that many of the most striking scenes in Babel were without dialogue. It was the non-verbal action of the characters that were meant to give the audience an impression of emotion without words in certain scenes. Cate Blanchett, the actress who played Susan, was persuaded by Mr. Iñárritu to play the role, because she did not see why her character was of any significant importance. Her role mostly consisted of physical acting instead of any major dialogue. He told her that such a role would need an actress of her caliber since it is harder to portray emotion on the screen than to just say a few words that might not have as much affect as the facial expressions and other non-verbal actions she had to do in the movie. The acting throughout the film was well done and the connection of the stories was very original and conceivable to occur in real life. The actions taken by the characters do not seem theatrical but almost as if these are retellings of stories that happened to people in the world. A film that deals with so many issues that are very affecting for all of us today can not be appreciated unless it is serious and focused on what the film wants to portray to the audience. The combined efforts of Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo Arriaga are consistently present throughout the film and make it a very original work of art.
**Bonding Issues**

By Brad Colombo


We've seen a Scotsman (Sean Connery), red-head (Roger Moore) and a Shakespearean actor (Timothy Dalton) play the role of the rough, witty, resourceful British spy, and now it's time for a new man to step into the stylish duds of James Bond for the latest addition in the 40-plus year film franchise. Daniel Craig has chosen to accept this daunting mission.

The men who have filled the shiny shoes of the suave, debonair individual with a license to kill are a diverse bunch, so a blond hair-blue-eyed Steve McQueen lookalike is a welcome ingredient in the melting pot and is yet another who has taken the role and made it his own. Thankfully, he's no George Lazenby, who put Bond believers to sleep with his rather bland, generic take. The similarity to McQueen goes deeper than looks, Craig's acting even resembles the grace of the former. Craig's take is of the more gritty, tough, ruthless variety, that can be found in Ian Fleming's 1953 Casino Royale novel, which the picture is based on. It's different and more faithful to the way Fleming envisioned the tuxedo-wearing double-O agent in ink.

This mission finds a newly named 007 pursuing terrorists in a post-9/11 scenario, and one of the most dangerous higher-ups, Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen), a blood-crying (as in his tears are composed of his own blood) cards shark, who uses his winnings to pay for his weapons of mass destruction. It's up to Bond to foil this problematic plan by besting Le Chiffre at his own game, to prevent him from obtaining his terror-inducing tools.

Most of the film sees Bond taking on Chiffre in a high-stakes game of Texas Hold 'Em in a Montenegro casino. This is nothing new to those who are familiar with the previous films, in which Bond matches skills with maniacal villains in numerous gambling forays. The depressing difference is Bond cannot be found at the game table for a large portion of the film. It's a little excessive. It was fun to see Bond best the baffles game after game in the films of yesteryear, but seeing him simply play cards for more than 5 minutes gets really repetitive. Though, it was quite the sight to see Bond casting his icy cold stare across the table at his opponent, much like McQueen in the Cincinnati Kid, further establishing that unibrow link between the two in terms of style.

Anybody who can match such a powerful presence as McQueen's deserves the viewer's attention, and the viewer may not have much of a choice, because Craig's mere presence is so efficiently engaging, it's hard to take your eyes off him.

Pre-game, between rounds and after the game is where all the nerve-wracking properties happen. The action is well conceived and is the type that only a 007 flick can deliver. It's over-the-top, fast-paced, head-cracking, stylish, gun-slinging, adrenaline-pumping excitement that makes your muscles tense and eyes widen. But when Bond returns to the card game, it has the effect of drinking a gallon of coffee and having the caffeine wear off. The tension fades, and it's the tension and suspense that makes a Bond film. There is no room for repetition and boredom in this series, which is known for being anything but.

Much like a spy, a 007 flick must keep moving and try new things at every turn to keep one step ahead of the opposition and avoid predictability. This film partially has the right idea. But the seeming endless rounds of Texas Hold 'Em are what is keeping this film bound to a table as a skin-piercing laser draws closer to its target. It needs to break free of its card game bondage and get moving. Rating: **1/2**

**Rating System:**

***** What Oscar nominations are made of.

**** Not sensational by any stretch of the imagination, but it's certainly worth a look.

*** Satisfyingly good. Buy a ticket to these.

**1/2 Not sensational but certainly worth a look.

** OK, but lacking. You'll survive without seeing this.

*1/2 Below the waist-line in terms of quality. Things can't get any worse, right? Wrong.

* One is the loneliest number and with good reason. Films are a popularity contest, the better they are, the more stars they get. Meaning that the first star will have better company depending on how good a film is. If a star is a lesser, the corresponding film deserves to be one, as well. Don't watch these.

1/2 * Everybody hates fractions. Whole numbers are more viewer-friendly. That's how you can instantly tell these movies are extremely mediocre.

No stars. Whoever said "Less is more" isn't very familiar with the traditional movie rating system. This is beyond less, this is nothing. Watching these can cause severe retina damage.

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Soccer Hooligans in Europe

BY RAYMOND DIMALA

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, with many people gathering from many different locations to watch their favorite team take on the opposition. But as always, there are many trouble makers in the crowd. Some do minor damage such as throwing garbage on the field or start small fights. The more serious trouble makers decide to do things that could harm others. In Europe there are plenty of soccer hooligans that do crazy things for their favorite team – in some cases it may leave people scratching their heads and asking themselves, “How many years in jail did that get me?”

There are many cases where soccer hooligans have ruined games and frustrated others. In one case, occurring during a Barcelona - Real Zarazaga soccer match in February 2006, the game was already under way when the Real Zarazaga fans began making monkey noises every time Samuel Eto’o, a Barcelona player, had possession of the ball. As the game progressed and the monkey chants continued, Eto’o had enough and decided to leave the stadium. As he was leaving there were peanuts being thrown at him and finally a banana hit his chest. After being calmed by teammates and the referee, Samuel Eto’o thought it over and decided to stay in the game. According to Fox Sports World Report, the fans making the horrible chants were picked out by other spectators and were fined and banned from the stadium for 5 months.

Another such case is set in Italy, when AC Milan and Inter Milan were playing in a European Champions League. Both teams are very prestigious and have the biggest Italian rivalry since they are both from the same city. The game was played peacefully until the score hit 1-0 to AC Milan, when AC Milan goalkeeper Dida was struck on his shoulder with a flare that a fan threw. Play was stopped because fans began to throw more flares onto the field, and players and staff was to evacuate the field for their own safety. Although no one was injured, as a result of this the next five games for each club were played with empty stadiums with no fan being allowed to watch their home team.

The next case doesn’t occur in a stadium, but at a player’s house. During World Cup 2006, England and Portugal were facing each other in the quarter-finals with the winner to advance. A controversial moment came when England’s Wayne Rooney stepped on Portugal’s Ricardo Carvalho; Cristiano Ronaldo was then seen talking to the referee and whatever he may have said resulted in Wayne Rooney getting a red card and sent off in the World Cup quarter-finals. Needless to say, England fans immediately filled their hearts with hate for Cristiano Ronaldo. And unfortunately for Ronaldo, he plays for Manchester United, a team in England, and even more unfortunate is the fact that he happened to live in England as well. Consequently, Ronaldo’s house was vandalized by many England supporters and to this day he still gets booed as he plays. Soccer hooligans often terrorize the public because their devotion for their team is so high – if their team doesn’t do well, they will seek other ways to show their team spirit.

To counter this problem, Nike has teamed up with many different great soccer figures including many colored players, to send a message to the people of Europe to end racism. The campaign is called “Stand up Speak up” which was established in January 2005 with French player Thierry Henry greatly supporting the campaign. This only serves to illustrate the point that soccer hooligans are more dangerous than they seem – they cause much harm to players and as well as other fans. There probably won’t be a solution to soccer hooligans, not to say that the Stand up Speak up campaign is pointless; but how much of a difference will it actually make? Soccer Hooligans in Europe are getting out of hand, and there probably isn’t a solution to stop them, unless soccer clubs seriously enforce rules.

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BY MICHAEL EDWARDS

Isaiah Thomas, head coach of the New York Knicks has some boundaries ahead of him in the 2006-2007 NBA season. Formerly General Manager for the Knicks, this year Isaiah Thomas is now head coach. Last season Coach Larry Brown was fired because he did not help the Knicks have a good season. There were a lot of problems with Brown and players from the team, mostly Stephon Marbury. This season, the same stipulations for Brown goes for Thomas as he tries to lead the Knicks to a winning season.

The stipulations are that he must help the Knicks have a winning season or he is finished, in other words fired just like Brown was last season. This season looks promising for the Knicks as they have young talent, namely Reynaldo Balkman, and second year players Channing Frye, David Lee and Nate Robinson. Other players such as Jamal Crawford, Quentin Richardson and Stephon Marbury are going to have to produce in order to make this a promising season.

The only thing New York Knicks fans can do is cheer their beloved team on. This is not an easy task for Isaiah Thomas who led the Pacers to the finals. This is the New York Knicks we are talking about, a team that has been going through more downs than ups. The NBA season started October 31st and the Knicks kicked off the season against the Miami Heat and had a great victory. Some people say all good things must come to an end and now the Knicks are again going downhill, losing more and winning less. All we can say is good luck, Isaiah Thomas.

As of December 2nd, the New York Giants have lost the last 4 games in a row. Since week ten, they have not won a game. The Giants have lost to the Bears, Jaguars, Titans, and Cowboys. They went from being one of the best teams in the NFL (National Football League) to just average. The Giants had a 6 and 2 record before all of these losses.

Week ten marked the beginning of the Giants downfall. The New York Giants were set to play the Chicago Bears. Both teams were the best in their divisions, and the game was expected to be a future playoff game. Before the game, the New York Giants had a five game winning streak on the line. The Giants lost to the Bears to a final score of 38 to 20. In week eleven, on a Monday night game, the Giants lost another heartbreaking game to the Jacksonville Jaguars 26 to 10. In week twelve and thirteen the Giants had two shocking losses; the Tennessee Titans and the Dallas Cowboys. In both, they lost in the remaining minutes of the game. In the game versus the Tennessee Titans, the Giants were winning 21 to 0 in the last quarter. Titans rookie quarterback, Vince Young led the Titans to a comeback victory scoring 24 points in the last quarter, giving the Giants another loss. This loss added to the losing streak, making it three games in a row.

On December 3rd the New York Giants and the Dallas Cowboys played a great game of football. The two previously matched off on October 23rd in Dallas, where the Giants defeated the Cowboys. On December 3rd, both teams played an outstanding game. Unfortunately for the Giants, they came out on the losing end. The Giants came back over a minute left, only to have the Cowboys kick a game winning field goal with six seconds remaining on the clock. The game between these two teams gained much publicity because they are division rivals with close records (wins and losses). Another reason why this game had a lot of hype was because there was a lot of trash talking before the game. New York Giants tight end, Jeremy Shockey guaranteed a win against the Cowboys. Also, Giants defensive end Michael Strahan and wide receiver Plaxico Burress had an argument a few days before the game. The argument was about Strahan not being happy with how Burress was performing. Throughout the game, both teams played great competitive football. Unfortunately, the Giants had over 90 yards taken away due to penalties and lost with 6 seconds left in the game. With this loss, it extended the Giants losing streak to 4 games in a row.

It’s obvious that the Giants haven’t been playing the greatest football these past few weeks. They’ve had many key injuries to their team. The Giants lost six defensive players, two from each position. They lost both of their defensive ends, Michael Strahan and Osi Umenyiora. These two players are the heart and soul of the New York Giants defense. Umenyiora made it to the NFL Pro Bowl, and Michael Strahan is a future hall-of-famer. Line backers LaVar Arrington and Carlos Emmons were also added to the injured list. The Giants also sustained injuries to their Cornerbacks, Sam Madison and Corey Webster. On the offensive side, two key injuries had a big effect on the team; wide receiver Amani Toomer and offensive lineman Luke Petitgout.

The Giants are really struggling with the way they have been playing. Yes, they have had many key injuries, but hopefully the team will be at full strength soon. As a Giant fan, I hope they can get their act together and start winning again. Before this losing slump, the Giants were on a five game winning streak. Giant fans need to be hopeful that they can turn it around with the remaining games of the season.