Get Your Benefits ASAP

By Maleeha Lodhi

In Queensborough Community College, there are many programs available to help us reach our goal while minimizing our stress. One of the programs available for most QCC students is the Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP). Not only is ASAP available in QCC, but it is offered in other two year colleges as well. ASAP was created to increase the graduation rate, and the transfer rate to four year colleges. If you are a Queensborough student hoping to guarantee more accomplishments for your learning objectives, ASAP is here to help you.

The ASAP offices were originally located in the W building next to the bookstore, however, through this summer, the ASAP building will be in the science building, in the basement underneath the cafeteria.

“We are here in the science building right now because our program is expanding and hiring more advisors,” explained Danielle Izzo-Buckner, the senior student manager in the ASAP program. “They are renovating the space in the W building to give more privacy with our students and to have more space for the new advisors coming in. If everything goes well, we will be going back in the summer.”

In order to be eligible for ASAP, students must:
1. Have earned no more than 15 credits
2. Have maintained a 2.0 GPA
3. Have qualified for in-state tuition, which means they must be residents of the New York state
4. Complete FAFSA form even if you are not eligible for financial aid
5. Not be in the Nursing program

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Presidential Election in France: Why Does it Matter?

By Francisco Lake

The much-anticipated French election between Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen took place on Sunday May 7. Emmanuel Macron won with a landslide victory. The president elect of France won by 65 percent to Marine Le Pen’s 35 percent of the votes in France, according to CNN.

Emmanuel Macron, a former investment banker, was briefly the Finance minister for François Hollande in 2012. He is not considered a left or right candidate but a centrist one, which is one reason why he was so interesting to many during the election. He has no experience in politics, similar to Donald Trump in the United States.

Yet unlike Trump, he wants to globalize France more and open its borders, as opposed to his far right former opponent Marine Le Pen, who resembled Trump in her anti-immigration stance.

Le Pen wanted to deport illegal immigrants and push Islamic extremism out of her country by putting limitations on Muslims wearing headscarves. She has years of political experience, having been born into a political family. When Marine Le Pen was 13, her father became the leader of the Front National, also known as FN, a nationalist party. One reason why the French people were hesitant to vote for Le Pen’s party is that her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen was a Holocaust denier and he also wanted to deport Muslims because of his xenophobic beliefs. Le Pen shares many of her father’s beliefs in her campaign speeches and through her actions, but in 2015 according to BBC, she denounced his beliefs publicly and re-signed.

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The Excelsior Scholarship

By Iban Vazquez

Governor Andrew Cuomo has shook the whole game up for New York college students throughout the state as his highly ambitious project to bring free college education to students was announced. Cuomo named his plan the “Excelsior Scholarship” which is meant to assist college students to pay their schools tuition. However not everything is clear as day as a vast majority of college students would not be able to benefit Cuomo’s proposal.

“This society should say we’re going to pay for college because you need college to be successful,” and New York State is going to do something about it.” These are Governor Cuomo’s words spoken with ambition in January 2017 while trying to take the initiative on college education. Many would consider the plan to be

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MTA Sued Over Inaccessible Subway Stations

By Samea Chowdhury

People with disabilities face many barriers in transportation. Many disabled people stay at home instead of going out because it’s such a hassle for them to find modes of transportation for routine errands, jobs and leisure.

The problem is most acutely felt by the disabled living in or visiting New York City where the subway is considered the most convenient way to travel. Citing the subway system’s pervasive inaccessibility, Disability Rights Advocates (DRA), a nonprofit legal center, filed two class action lawsuits in state and federal court against New York City subway on April 25 on behalf of several nonprofits and three individuals.

“The system of New York transportation is very terrible” said Karim Zahar, a 45-year old wheelchair-bound accountant. “Most of the time Uber drivers and MTA drivers often don’t see the person in the wheelchair. They only see the chair itself as a problem. They sometimes skipped the stops where I am standing.”

The New York City subway system, operated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), is one of the most heavily used transit systems in the world and its vast network of tunnels sprawls across the city. The trains transport a populace that has largely forsaken cars and congestion. According to the Center for Economic Transformation census data, “New York City has one of the lowest rates of car ownership in the United States. In densely populated places like Manhattan car ownership rate is down to 23 percent of the households.”

The first action, filed in state court,
Kupferberg Holocaust Center National Endowment for the Humanities Colloquium Series

By Gisella Snailer

Last Wednesday, Queensborough Community College held an event in the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives (KHRCA) that was made possible by a $500,000 challenge grant awarded in 2011 by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Queensborough was chosen as one of six community colleges nationwide to receive this grant to strengthen its humanities program. This was a result of the United Nations’ 2005 resolution against genocide that pledged to support remembrance of the Holocaust as a means of preventing ongoing and future genocides. The idea of this resolution was that broadening awareness of the Holocaust and other similar historical events would not only help people better understand the past but allow them to make connections to current global situations as well. Thus we can use the Holocaust as an international lesson and work towards a better future for humanity.

Queensborough has fully embraced the mission of the United Nations’ resolution to develop teaching about the Holocaust. Since receiving the grant, Queensborough has made enormous strides to develop its humanities program with the KHRCA as the heart of its efforts. The KHRCA serves “as a model of excellence in enriching students’ experiences and deepening their understanding of differences among cultures,” as the brochure explains.

One of the key ways in which this is accomplished is through a series of colloquia that have been held at the KHRCA annually since 2012. Each yearlong seminar highlights a specific human rights issue around which multiple events are based. The topics that have been discussed thus far include “Genocide, Justice and Human Rights,” “The Holocaust in a Global Context: Connections Across the Community College,” “Testimony Across the Disciplines: Cultural and Artistic Responses to Genocide,” “Gender, Mass Violence, and Genocide,” and “Feeling Genocide: Displacement, Exile, and the Refugees,” respectively.

The KHRCA’s most recent colloquium, “Girlhood, Displacement, and Resistance during the Japanese Occupation” on May 3rd of this year featured a presentation by Dr. Kathleen Alves, Assistant Professor in the English Department. In her presentation, she shared her own family’s experience of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines from 1942 to 1945. Dr. Alves created a unique experience for her audience by retelling the stories of her Filipino ancestors who survived the horrific atrocities brought on by the Japanese.

She began by defining the term “internally displaced person” as someone who has not crossed the border to safety, but remains “on the run at home.” In other words, such a person is one who is forced to flee his or her home but who remains within the country’s borders under the government’s control even if that government is the reason for their displacement. These people are among the most vulnerable in the world, and by the end of 2015, 41 million people were internally displaced worldwide as a result of conflict and violence. Seeing as this is the highest figure ever reported, it is clear that this topic is still relevant.

Dr. Alves proceeded to describe in detail how displacement impacts civilian experience in the case of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. She explained how Japanese forces claimed that their purpose for invading was to “emancipate the Filipinos from the oppressive domination of the USA” and allow the Filipinos to “establish a paradise for Filipinos on the beautiful land of Philippines.” Unfortunately, the reality was quite the opposite. The Filipinos’ civil liberties were severely suppressed, and their economy was geared entirely to meet the demands of the Japanese war effort. Banks were closed, properties were confiscated, travel was severely restricted, and industry was put to a halt. In addition, the Filipinos were cut off from the news, and the only information they received was Japanese propaganda from Japanese broadcasting. Filipinos mostly relied on gossip and rumour because they could not trust what the Japanese were telling them. Some even risked their lives by illegally listening to an American radio station called “Radio San Francisco” with the hope uncovering the truth. Some of the most horrifying atrocities, however, included the sexual enslavement of Filipino women and girls and the execution of any American living in the Philippines. What’s more, these executions were often followed by gang rape of the widows and imprisonment of the families.

Through the personal accounts of Dr. Alves’s family members, the audience gained insight into “the reality of genocide and the trauma of displacement,” as the KHRCA brochure states. Furthermore, hearing this story from a fellow member of the Queensborough community helped the audience move beyond abstract compassion and “helped bridge events of war and genocide” from distant regions “to the local and familiar.”
Student Journalists Unmask Principal

By Nicole Archie

Throughout history during various political eras the question of the importance and necessity of journalism and the media pops up like clockwork. This questioning behavior is pushed today as we watch our President ban journalists from work. This questioning behavior is pushed today of journalism and the media pops up like clockwork. President Trump banned reporters from networks like CNN, Politico, the Los Angeles Times, Buzzfeed and the New York Times and instead admitted more conservative stations like Fox News, NBC, ABC, CBS, The Wall Street Journal, Washington Times, Breitbart, Associated Press, and Time, although the Associated Press and Time did not attend in solidarity with the stations that were banned. Reasons like these are why we need journalists who practice true journalism as there are always two sides and multiple perspectives to a story. High school journalists from Kansas prove this to be true when it came time to introduce Pittsburg High School to its new principal, Amy Robertson. It all started when 17-year-old high school junior Maddie Baden set out to write a profile on Ms. Robertson for The Booster Redux, Pittsburg High School’s student run newspaper.

According to Pittsburgh Community School District 250, Robertson’s “diverse and extensive experience impressed district staff and leadership and repeatedly propelled her to the top” of the list of candidates applying to the job. But when given direct, concrete questions about her professional life and credentials Booster Redux staff only received questionably indirect answers, which concerned the staff. When the rest of the staff members Gina Mathew, Kaili Poomitske, Trina Paul, Connor Balthazor and Patrick Sullivan expressed their uneasy feelings about the situation to paper advisor Emily Smith, who seemed to know how intimidating it can be for a teenage student to question an adult, let alone a high authority within the school, coaxed the student journalists to be confident and push for the answers they needed. With a teacher behind them and uneasiness still in the back of their minds, the students displayed their fact checking skills on Robertson’s professional background, which only raised their suspicions even more. During the first stages of gathering evidence Robertson was asked where she obtained her Master’s and Doctorate degrees, to which she accredited Corllins University, all they found was a bogus website obviously staged as the direct links to different newsstands with a front page headline, “District Hires New Principle”, and byline, “Background called into question after discrepancies arise”. In addition to the discrepancies that arose during Robertson’s short time as principal of Pittsburg High School, it was revealed that the school in Dubai she mentioned during her hiring process which she credits her decades of experience from actually had it’s license temporarily suspended by the Education Authority in Dubai. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority suspended the Dubai American Scientific School’s license based on its failure to follow rules and regulations relating the health, safety, student attendance, and the illegal hiring of teachers. Principal of the school, you guessed it, Amy Robertson, isn’t even allowed to speak on behalf of the school due to failure to be approved by the KHDA to even hold a principal position. According to the executive director of customer relations at KHDA Abdul Rahman Nasser, “She neither holds a permit from KHDA, nor a labor minister permit”, to add more insult to injury Gulf News reported that Robertson’s issues with immigration have prevented her from getting said permits.

By following all of the protocols that comes with journalism in order to execute the uncovering of this information, these journalists have showed what truly goes into investigative journalism in a world that thinks anyone can call themselves a journalist at the drop of a hat while simultaneously taking journalism for granted. The art of fact checking, which the staff of the Booster Redux have properly displayed, is a much needed skill necessary for writing a story in order to keep the public informed. These students have certainly done their jobs as journalists to kind of teach their town a lesson of trust in when and when not to trust as well as who and who not to trust just by word of mouth. Although Superintendent Brown says that Robertson’s background and conflicting claims would have come to light, these students simply sped up the process in an unbiased, non-harmful, truth seeking way, which is what true journalists do.
Taking Advantage of Workshops at QCC

By Kimberly Rivera

Isn’t it stressful thinking about how to get things done or what you want in life, what interests you? Thankfully, Queensborough Community College offers many workshops to students throughout the year to help everyone figure that out...

“These workshops are so fun and helpful, it makes me feel better”, said Emily Chu, a student at QCC.

All of these workshops benefit you because they help you in whatever you need. Some of these workshops are for researching transferring to a four-year college, which is what you should consider when trying to look for the right college. They also have etiquette in the work place, meaning learning about how to move forward in our career.

The workshops also include self esteem, and how setting goals for our career. They also have etiquette when trying to look for the college, which is what you should consider when trying to look for the right college.

“I signed up for the one where you get over stage fright, I think it can help me a lot to feel like I can actually do it”, said Daniela, a freshman at QCC.

“We went to the workshop, I felt a little awkward at first, but it was very nice and interesting. Mr. Atkins explained everything and it was so helpful. I wish I would have signed up for more before because I am pretty sure I would have liked them!”

Many of the workshops repeat throughout the semester. So just in case the workshop you might want to attend is going to be at a time and date where you won’t be able to make it to, it might be repeating again at another time slot. Some of the workshops last one or two hours, depending on what the workshop is covering.

For example, for some workshops that might cover a lot, like ‘Job Search Techniques and Dress For Success’ lasts for two hours. Also, ‘Self Esteem: The Effects On Your Career Planning’ lasts for two hours also. But that’s because their presenter is a Licensed Life Coach.

“If you aren’t sure of what the workshop is going to cover, you can easily click on the description label that is below the name of the workshop, and it has a small description about what the workshop will be covering. All the workshops are in different buildings, and different rooms so pay attention to the location.

“If the workshop is a date that is in the future, you receive a ‘reminder’ email prior to the workshop. If you aren’t able to attend to the workshop that you have signed up for, email Mr. Atkins to let him know.

“I felt so lucky to be able to attend these workshops because not only does it help you, but you also meet new people. Some people have so much in common towards you and it is just incredible how much knowledge and personality one can gain”, said Jasmine Martinez, a sophomore at QCC.

“I would most definitely recommend everyone to at least try and attend one workshop, it really is worth it.”

The Effects On Your Career Planning

In order to attend these workshops, you must be a QCC student. But you have to sign up on the career and employment workshop registration page. In order to get to that page you can go on QCC’s website. In the top right corner there is a search label, you click on that and type in workshops. You click on the first website that shows up and you can easily see all the workshops available.

“I took so long to sign up for a workshop, I did it my last semester. I felt like it was going to be a long process and I had to fill out many things. I was just lazy. But when I signed up, it wasn’t really that much… just my name and email,” said Melissa Tang, a student who just transferred to Queens College from QCC.

Watch Your Step

Drive, the walkway is littered with cigarette butts. Even though Queensborough Community College has issued a campus wide smoke-free policy the students are still in danger. The law stipulates that all public areas including schools, parks and beaches are No Smoking zones. Despite this law, students have decided to smoke directly outside of the campus gates.

This behavior continues to put non-smokers at risk not only from walking through the endless tobacco smoke to get into the campus but also because of the layer of cigarette butts they have to walk on. Addison Tamura, a QCC student says, “I think students should not be smoking by the gates of the campus. They should be going to classes and head home after.

Many people know the dangers of smoking and secondhand smoking however they are unaware of the impact of cigarette butts. Contrary to popular belief, cigarette butts are not biodegradable. Cigarette butt waste is a huge environmental issue as these butts can release toxic chemicals including nicotine, benzene and cadmium. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, depending on the levels of exposure these toxins may cause dizziness, confusion and rapid or irregular heartbeats. Additionally, birds and other animals may digest the plastic filters from these cigarette butts causing severe harm to our wildlife.

According to Keep America Beautiful, only 10% of cigarette butts are properly disposed. This happens because there are not enough trash receptacles for proper disposal of cigarette butts. This is evident on the QCC campus as Brandon Crespo, a QCC student, mentioned that he prefers to throw his butts on the sidewalk instead of putting it in the regular trashcans. This is understandable as disposing a lit cigarette butt in a trash can with paper can cause a fire. Another student who wishes to remain anonymous declared the area outside the gates is a hangout spot for he and his friends where they smoke, talk and listen to music. This student also stated that he does not view cigarette butts as trash and as such throws it in the walkway.

How can QCC help with this problem? Instead of the everyday trash receptacles by the known smoking locations outside the campus gate the college could place smoker’s poles or cigarette receptacles. A quick search on Amazon.com for cigarette receptacle resulted in the find of Rubbermaid commercial smoker’s pole for $159.95. It is not mainly about the actual purchase of these receptacles but also about placement, cleaning and maintaining. However, having these receptacles will give the environment and non-smokers a better chance of living toxin-free. Additionally, campus security can enforce litter laws. Cigarette butts are litter so students should be fined when seen disposing of butts on the street. An additional search on Amazon.com found do not litter signs specific to cigarette butts starting at $7.79.

QCC smokers put your butt where it belongs; there is enough waste in our surroundings. Help save the environment and protect wildlife. Additionally allow students and faculty who have decided not to smoke to remain toxin-free. If you choose to stop smoking contact the New York State Department of Health at 1-866-NY-QUITS for help quitting through the tobacco control program.
New York Junior Tennis & Learning Offers Character Education and Mentoring for All

By Diana Jean-Baptiste

Have you ever heard of “NYJTL”? New York Junior Tennis & Learning is a non-profit organization that specializes in the enhancement of our youth through daily instruction. NYJTL is run through all five boroughs in New York City. The mission statement for this organization is to develop the character of young people through tennis and education for a lifetime of success on and off the court.

Although NYJTL has been around for 45 years servicing our communities, many people have not heard about this program. Most kids do not have access to summer and after-school camps because of location or even price. Loukens Jacques, a site director at PS37 used to attend NYJTL. When he was younger, it was always his dream to work at NYJTL. When he got older, his dream came true in 2014. He said the reason he wanted to work for NYJTL was because the staff there inspired him to become a better person and he wanted to do the same for other kids. As one of the youngest consular at NYJTL, he is faced with many challenges. He describes himself as an overachiever so all of the challenges that he faced has taught him to not let kids walk all over him and to speak for himself.

NYJTL is now the largest non-profit youth tennis and education program in the nation, serving over 75,000 K-12 students. According to the official website, NYJTL is the largest non-profit organization in New York City. The mission of NYJTL is to provide access to city-wide tournaments, activities, educational field trips, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) literacy activities, educational field trips, and access to city-wide tournaments.

NYJTL

By Vertulie Pierre-Louis

Can you believe there are 23 states where pre-school costs more than college? New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has recently proposed a new program called “3-K for All.” It will give parents the opportunity to enrich their children’s development. As the title “3-K” suggests, all children of three years old are able to enter. In this case, parents don’t have to worry about cost because 3-K for All will be free. According to The Official Website of the City of New York, Mayor de Blasio has stated, “This extra year of education will provide our children with a leg-up in educational and social development that they cannot get later on.”

“3-K for All” will give children the ability to start advancing their math and reading skills before they enter Pre-Kinder. Early education will now advance our future. Early education will now advance our future. Early education will now advance our future. Early education will now advance our future. Early education will now advance our future.

3-K for All

should give similar advantages. What about the children living outside of the city?”. 3-K will give children the ability to start advancing their math and reading skills before they enter Pre-Kinder. Studies show by the time these children enroll in high school or college, they will be ready to face any challenges. Some people may not know the difference between 3-K and preschool. Preschool is more of a daycare setting, which is more play-oriented. However, 3-K is not to get mistaken for Pre-Kinder. Although they both have similarities Pre-K is for children at the age of four years old. Furthermore, the 3-K program will also be an advantage to children because they are now able to get out of their natural environment. For instance, some children are overly dependent on their parents. This attachment can possibly make it hard for some children to develop. However, if children enroll in 3-K they will now become more independent, since the objective is different from preschool. Children’s performance level will increase because of the academic structure.

3-K for All

By Diana Jean-Baptiste

“NYJTL”?

By Vertulie Pierre-Louis

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O’Reilly Still Going Strong Despite Fox Kick-Out

By Charlene Carlies

After two decades of work with the company, Bill O’Reilly is finally out of a job from Fox News amid all of those sexual assault allegations. The mega television and radio personality was fired from the job on Wednesday, April 19, 2017. In a statement released by 21st Century Fox news on the decision, “After a thorough and careful review of the allegations, the company and Bill O’Reilly have agreed that Bill O’Reilly will not be returning to the Fox News Channel.”

According to the Daily News, O’Reilly was fired just nine months after his former boss Roger Ailes was released due to his own sexual assault allegations and accusations. Ailes had denied those claims, and even received $40 million in settlement agreements. O’Reilly has also denied all of the allegations, calling them “unfounded.” In a statement, O’Reilly said, “Over the past 20 years at Fox News, I have been extremely proud to lead and be one of the most successful news programs in history, which has consistently informed and entertained millions of Americans and significantly contributed to building Fox into the dominant news network in television. He continued, “It is tremendously disheartening that we part ways due to completely unfounded claims. But that is the unfortunate reality many of us in the public eye must live with today. I will always look back on my time at Fox with great pride in the unprecedented success we achieved and with my deepest gratitude for all my dedicated viewers. I wish only the best for Fox News Channel.

The Fox company came under great pressure after an article by The New York Times published April 1 exposed O’Reilly on his wrongdoings. The article revealed how both Fox News and 21st Century Fox had continued to support him, even as the company reached settlements on five women who complained on various instances of sexual assault and other inappropriate behavior against him. It was discovered that the settlements came to a total of $13 million, to quiet his accusers and put the lawsuits to an end. After the allegations came out, more than fifty advertisers and sponsors left his show, “The O’Reilly Factor”. Women’s right groups had also demanded he’d be fired as well. The Murdoch family, who owns Fox News, finally came to the decision to fire him after viewing the results of an internal investigation that showed multiple women who reported inappropriate behavior by O’Reilly.

James Murdoch, son of media mogul Rupert Murdoch, said on the decision, “We did a thorough investigation, a thorough review, and we reached a conclusion. Everything that we said in our statement is all you need to know.”

The sexual allegations against Bill O’Reilly dated back as early as 2004, after a lawsuit that went public accused him of trying to entice a Fox News associate producer. The news of O’Reilly departing came while he was on a recent vacation to Italy, and even met Pope Francis at St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican.

While O’Reilly is finished with Fox, he still has his successful publishing career to lean on. Henry Holt, O’Reilly’s publisher, has stated that it still plans to publish his work. “Our plans have not changed”, a company spokeswoman wrote in an email. O’Reilly is also scheduled to do podcasts from his website. His podcast, “No Spin News” returned at 7pm on Monday, May 1, according to his website. The podcast will be free to hear through Sunday, but after that listeners will have to pay a subscription fee in order to access the service. After his exit, O’Reilly’s show “The O’Reilly Factor” was dropped to just “The Factor”. Substitute host Dana Perino is currently taking over the show, and Tucker Carlson will be taking O’Reilly’s time slot at 8pm.

Breaking News: FBI Director James B. Comey Has Been Fired

By Natalie Gaylaev

Shortly before the Communiqué went to print, the country learned of FBI Director James Comey’s firing at the request of President Donald Trump. Here are the facts we know now:

James Comey was fired on Tuesday May 9, 2017. Comey learned he was fired via the TV news, along with the rest of the nation, while addressing bureau employees in Los Angeles. He was speaking when screens behind him started to flash the news, and Comey was initially under the assumption that the announcement was a joke. Video footage shows him laughing and saying he thought this was a funny prank. Comey only fully realized his fate when President Trump’s letter reached FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Comey was in his fourth year in what was supposed to be a 10-year term. He is the second FBI director to have been fired by a President in bureau history. The first was William S. Sessions who was fired in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. (According to The Washington Post, a report stated that Sessions had “abused his office by setting up official appointments to justify charging the government for personal travel, improperly billed the FBI nearly $10,000 for a fence around his home, and refused to turn over documents on his $375,000 home mortgage, which investigators said they suspected involved a “sweetheart deal.”) There has been no charge of corruption in Comey’s case. The reason for the 10-year term that Congress established was to insure that FBI directors would not have to endure political pressure of any kind. However the President has the authority to fire an FBI director for any reason.

Mr. Comey was the lead investigator on whether Trump’s advisors colluded with the Russian government to influence the 2016 presidential election. President Trump claims he fired Comey because of how he handled the investigation of Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server, although Trump is on record praising former FBI director for having the “guts” to pursue the charge.

A few Republicans are outraged by this decision. “I’ve spent the last several hours trying to find an acceptable rationale for the firing of Comey’s firing,” Senator Jeff Flake, Republican of Arizona, said on Twitter. “I just can’t do it.”

Representative Justin Amas, Republican of Michigan said on Twitter that he now supports an independent commission to investigate the Russia links to Mr. Trump. He called President Trump’s repetition of the claim that Mr. Comey had cleared him three times “bizarre.”

Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, said the firing could make Americans suspect a cover-up.

Mr. Comey was well liked and respected in the FBI, even by those who criticized his handling of the Clinton investigation. Agents saw him as a good manager and an independent director according to the New York Times. FBI agents were unhappy with the firing and worried that President Trump would appoint a White House ally to replace the FBI Director.

“It is essential that we find new leadership for the FBI that restores public trust and confidence in its vital law enforcement mission,” President Trump wrote.

As of now there is no word as to whom President Trump will be appointing to replace and take over the F.B.I Director’s seat, although Andrew McCabe is acting FBI Director. A few candidates that are in the running for the position as FBI Director:

• Adam Lee, Special Agent in charge of the FBI’s Richmond division
• Michael Anderson, Special Agent in charge of the Chicago division
• D.C. William Evanina, Director, National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC)
• Paul Abbate, an FBI executive from the cyber division

James Comey released a letter on Thursday afternoon, May 11, two days after his firing, to his former employees, in response to his termination, stating “I’m not going to spend time on the decision or the way it was executed. I hope you won’t either. It is done, and I will be fine. Although I wish you all the best, you have the mission deeply.” He also stated, “What makes leaving the FBI hard is the nature and quality of its people, who together make it that rock for America.” Then he wished them well and signed it, Jim Comey.
MTA Sued Over Inaccessible Subway Stations

Continued from page 1

alleges that lack of elevators across the system is a violation of the New York City Human Rights Law, which aims to “eliminate and prevent discrimination from playing any role in actions relating to employment, public accommodations.” The state suit asks the MTA to remedy inaccessibility by installing working elevators in all subway stations over a “reasonable period of years.”

“I have a cousin who has a disability of walking, she needs to take her wheelchair everywhere even on subways and bus,” said Nina Deb a 38-year old mother working at the J.F.K Airport. “It’s really terrible what they are facing now, we are living in a first world country and we don’t have proper facilities for disabled people.” She also noted that even non-disabled people with small children in strollers are having problem navigating subway station and buses.

According to the papers filed by the Disability Rights Advocates, only 112 of 472 subway stations are wheelchairs accessible. Furthermore 80 percent of the New York subway stations are inaccessible to anyone using a walker, wheelchair or unable to get down stairs. This makes New York City subway system least accessible of the country’s 10 largest transit systems. Boston’s transit system which is older than New York’s has accessibility rate of 74 percent.

The federal lawsuit focuses on the failure of the MTA to maintain operable elevators. The lawsuit alleges that MTA’s failure to maintain elevators where they do exist is a violation of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Moreover, the inaccessibility is heightened by the MTA’s failure to provide prior notice of outages of elevators or offer alternatives to the elevators. In the federal suit, DRA seeks a court order for the MTA to adopt system-wide policy to ensure proper working of the elevators and outages and other service interruptions come with “adequate notice and alternative accommodations.”

“Both the lack of elevators and the frequent breakdowns make wheelchair users like myself very vulnerable,” said Dustin Jones a plaintiff to the lawsuit. “I broke my leg last year and I lived a life of urine and stall in mid flight with passengers on them. Filed court documents claim that the MTA “suffered 9,109 elevator outages in year ended June 2015, of which 4,117 were unplanned.”

Inclusion of New York City in the lawsuits has rankled city officials who argue that the subway system is run by the MTA and thus the City should not be a defendant. “The attempt to make a claim against the City is misplaced” said New York City spokesman Nick Paolucci, as quoted in a New York Post article from April 25. However, a DRA attorney says the reason city is named because many of the subway stations are owned by the New York City and only leased by the MTA.

The MTA has not commented on the lawsuits but has issued a statement contending that the MTA’s plan to spend $334 million to replace existing elevators and escalators in the coming years. The statement further avers agency’s plan to spend over $1 billion to make 25 more stations accessible and ADA-compliant. Also the MTA will be spending $334 million to replace existing elevators and escalators in the coming years.

“I broke my leg last year and I lived a life of disabled people, can’t express how it feels like to be out from home. People aren’t really nice. They are always in a rush and pretend I am invisible to them. I am sure it must be even more difficult for disabled people to be on street” said one college student Sejal Kumar.

Mr. Kumar hopes that these lawsuits increases accessibility to the subway system and brings more attention to “the issues around the full inclusion of people with disabilities in day-to-day life.”

Presidential Election in France: Why Does it Matter?

Continued from page 1

moved him from the Nationalist party after she became the leader of it when her father stepped down. Le Pen represented populism in France. Populism is defined as concerns for the ordinary people, but the extremity of Le Pen’s beliefs and the history of her party had put her into a corner such that most of the French people couldn’t stand with her.

Macron’s campaign was in favor of labor reform and supports the European Union. Similar to Le Pen, he wants to stop anti-Muslim extremism, though not through the banning of Muslim headscarves, but by shutting down places that advocate “jihadist” ideologies, according to Al Jazeera.

Le Pen’s campaign ran on anti-immigration and anti-Muslim extremism. She wanted to close off France’s borders and when Donald Trump’s immigration ban was put into effect, Le Pen supported him. She refused to wear a hijab and canceled a meeting with a Lebanese leader, according to BBC. Many French voters went to Macron for the sole reason that they didn’t want Le Pen to be president, according to CNN.

The world was watching to see if France would actually follow the sudden surge of populism that has swept through Europe but seemed to stop in France. The populist movement has had an effect on Europe with Brexit (Britain’s exit from the European Union) and in the U.S., through the election of Trump. According to the BBC, many French people didn’t want either candidate, but looking at the polls, more than half of them agreed that Macron is better than Le Pen in their eyes. President-elect Macron and Mr. Trump will be working together for most of Macron’s term, so we shall see what this entails.
**Missing Girls in D.C. Area**

By Shanika Carlies

Earlier this spring, the hashtag #MissingDCGirls trended on social media. It was the first time the public was made aware of the disappearances of many girls in the Washington, D.C. area.

There has been backlash from people speaking out about the issue that the media and city of Washington, D.C. have done little to address and combat the problem. The outcry to find these girls was so urgent from the public that even celebrities posted about it on their social media pages and got involved. The majority of the girls that went missing earlier this year were Hispanic and African American.

There are a few contradictions to this issue that have surfaced after the missing girls became known. Some sources are saying that these girls are runaways, others theories are saying that there is some type of sex ring happening within the community. Some people even went as far to say that there is organ harvesting was secretly occurring.

The social media chaos started when the Washington D.C. Police Department posted 12 separate cases of missing girls between the dates of March 19-24. The DC Police Department’s initial intention was to alert the public of the recent pattern of missing girls throughout the area. Social media seemed to distort the information with the time frame of the disappearances from a range of days to a 24-hour period. This caused people to respond in great distress, calling the action of the police to do more in order to find the missing children. According to the Department, the only way to find the missing children is for the public to help.

**The Excelsior Scholarship**

Continued from page 1

The Excelsior Scholarship covers up to $5,500 for CUNY or SUNY tuition and up to $6,000 for a private college.

**Can current students receive the Excelsior Scholarship?**

Yes, current students can apply for the Excelsior Scholarship as long as they are on track on pursuing their degree. This applies to anyone who is attending a CUNY or SUNY. The tuition for SUNY schools is roughly about $6,500 according to suny.edu. If a student is graduating from a community college and is pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree they will also be able to receive assistance through the Excelsior Scholarship.

**Free College?**

Governor Cuomo made headlines as he guaranteed that students would be able to go to college for free. However it may not be such the case as the Excelsior Scholarship covers up to $6,000 for private colleges while in the other hand it only covers up to $5,500 for a student attending a CUNY or SUNY. The tuition for SUNY schools is roughly about $6,500 according to suny.edu. For the idea to be free, it is not necessarily true. If a student were to go to CUNY, there is a possibility that the Excelsior Scholarship would cover the tuition only if they attend a two year college.

The Excelsior Scholarship is a step forward for future generations of college students being able to pursue their dreams without worrying about college tuition but there will students who will be excluded from Cuomo’s project.

A student taking a semester off from college would not qualify for the Excelsior Scholarship, and if a student were to wait a semester to attend college after their high school education then they will not receive assistance as well. This will break the dreams of many individuals who perhaps need time to attend to a family situation or decided to have a taste of the workforce before attending school. Again, in order to receive assistance from the Excelsior Scholarship one has to take 30 credits every academic year which means part time students will not be able to apply for program. The Excelsior Scholarship is shying away from part timers who essential go to school part time due to their own responsibilities such as work or family.

Lastly one of the requirements of the Excelsior Scholarship is to live in the state of New York the same amount of years as the number of times one received aid. If a student received aid from the Excelsior Scholarship for two years, then they must live in the state of New York for two years once completing graduation. This may be a barrier for many who perhaps feel as if they job market is in more demand in other states than in New York. But one has to stay in the state and if they were to move they would have to pay back the money.

As the Excelsior Scholarship opens up for applications in late may for the fall semester of 2017 the ups and downs of the program will still have a significant impact for hundreds of current and future New York college students. Even if the Excelsior Scholarship would not cover 100% of college tuition on itself alone one must remember that it is part of an assistance that will separate from Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and financial aid. Therefore if a student to qualifies for TAP, the Excelsior Scholarship and financial aid then their college tuition within a CUNY or SUNY will be free. Governor Cuomo has taken the responsibility to make college education a must in today’s world and it is a policy that is applauded among government officials, families, and students making sure that New York creates a more talented future.
SCIENCE

How Can We Help Prevent the Extinction of Bees?

By Domenica Jaramillo

Now that springtime is here, millions of animals and insects are making their way to our modernized world. In this case New York City, a city with a population of 8.491 million people that consumes various food from different sources. Research done by the company Cheerios concluded that “I in 3 bites of food that we eat is made possible by bees.” Bees are one of the biggest pollinators of the world by producing 84% of the fruits and vegetables we eat. Without bees, the world ecosystem would experience a severe clash because bees are one of the major regulators of nature. Their extinction will affect the lives of all the living beings on the planet, especially the ones dependent on flowers, certain fruits and vegetables. The US department of agriculture reported that honeybees’ losses in managed colonies hit 42 percent in 2016. Therefore each year this percentage will continue to increase if we take no action.

The popular brand of cereal Cheerios wanted to help with the major losses of bees so they decided to create a project named “bring back the bees” which consisted of taking buzz the bee away from the illusion of their packages to demonstrate how much in danger of disappearing bees are if we do not help them. Additionally Cheerios decided to give away more than 1.5 billion of seeds from different flowers across the United States so millions of Americans could plant them and help prevent the extinction of bees.

Now if you weren’t one of the lucky people who received the packages of seeds, you can still create your own garden with a few flowers such as bergamot or monarda (bee balm). It is recommended by the honeybee conservancy to use natural fertilizers and pesticides to prolong the life and health of the bees. There are other ways to help the bees, if you find one on the ground tired you can revive them quickly by giving them a mixture of sugar and water on a tablespoon. This will give them the necessary carbohydrates to get back to work.

Another way to help the bees is to be aware of their nature – unless you are not hurting the bees they will not hurt you. As one Queensborough community college student, Diana Moreno, said, “every time I see a bee, I don’t know what do.”

This situation is relatable for many people but we need to understand that bees are usually harmless creatures as long as you are not invading or threatening their territory or removing them to the situation where a bee is bothering you, “You should remove yourself from the area as quickly as possible, being careful not to wave your arms or swat at them as this will alarm and aggravate the bees,” as advised by one be removal and relocation service, “M.M. Bees.”

If you see a group of bees swarming don’t spray pesticides or harm the bees. They naturally do this behavior of joining together in a spot because they are not protecting a queen or hive. They are just preparing for spring. They are not dangerous but if you want them removed, call a beekeeper and let a professional take care of them. In New York City, there’s Adkins Bee Removal, a company that provides their services to the five boroughs and Jersey, which removes bees from all places including roofs, attics, walls or trees. Lastly by doing all or any of these actions of helping the bees survive either planting a garden or giving them water with sugar, we are severely reducing their rate of extinction of these wonderful insects that provide many benefits to the planet.

Earth is suffering dramatically due to the effects of global warming. The climate changes we are facing on Earth are a direct result of global warming due to the burning of fossil fuels. Gasses from fossil fuels are ultimately warming Earth. In 2016 Earth by gathering in our atmosphere and absorbing the radiation released from the sun that has bounced off of the Earth’s surface. Solar radiation would typically leave the Earth but since the concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that remain in our atmosphere for centuries, the radiation can’t be released resulting in the planet becoming warmer.

Climate scientists have gathered data and agree that the Earth is warming despite the ongoing debate between whether global warming is happening or just a hoax. The Scientific Consensus on climate changes averages Earths’ temperature to have risen between 0.4 and 0.8 degrees Celsius over the past one hundred years as noted on livescience.com, a current events website on the planet Earth.

Scientists believe that over the past fifty years, the increased volumes of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by the burning of fossil fuels are the primary reason towards global warming. Scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have recently predicted global temperatures to increase between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees Celsius by 2100. As a result of the planet becoming warmer each year, the sea levels are rising due to the melting of the polar ice caps. As the ocean becomes warmer tropical storms increase intensity picking up more energy. As earthobservatory.nasa.gov states, “For two decades, scientists have predicted these things would happen as the Earth warms.” An assessment report released by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, a working group of the Arctic Council which is an intergovernmental organization consisting of eight Arctic nations states that, “changes in the Arctic snow and ice fundamentally change ecosystems, destroying habitats, which will impact the Arctic people. The Arctic loss of snow and ice and the release of greenhouse gases from melting permafrost will enhance global warming.”

Global warming is linked to extreme weather as edging rising temperatures create long heat waves, frequent droughts, heavier rainfall, flooding, and more powerful hurricanes, experts from NRDC.org say. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine confidently announced in 2016 that certain weather events such as heat waves are a direct result of climate change. “Drought conditions jeopardize access to clean drinking water, fuel output of control wildfires, dust storms, and flash-flooding across the United States.” The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s assessment adds, “many land, freshwater, and ocean species are shifting their geographic ranges to cooler climes or higher altitudes in an attempt to escape warming. They’re changing seasonal behaviors, traditional migration patterns, and some face increased extinction risk due to climate change.”

According to The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the United States has the largest heat-trapping pollution by burning the Earths’ fossil fuels to produce electricity which is about two billion tons of carbon dioxide each year. The United States’ second largest pollutant is our transportation which creates about 1.7 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions a year. The United States has begun taking steps forward toward preventing further global warming but to preserve our planet, together with other countries, we must drastically cut down the dependence on fossil fuels. Climate change can be fought by cutting pollution and expanding clean energy. In the United States, the NRDC is pushing for clean energy standards and national limits on carbon emissions. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has pledged “to reduce carbon pollution from our power plants by a third through the Clean Power Plan.” The United States Department of Transportation has proposed “carbon pollution and fuel economy standards that should cut emissions.” At the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris, “195 countries- including the United States- agreed to pollution-cutting provisions with a goal of preventing the average global temperature from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius” as explained on nrdc.org. The Union of Concerned Scientists explain on UCSUSA.org how “we can make the transition to a clean energy economy today, while protecting our climate”.

Though most strategies to control emissions must be enforced by our governments, individuals and industries can transition to clean energy on their own. In a study conducted by earthobservatory.nasa.gov, “Americans emit 19 tons of carbon dioxide annually while driving our cars and heating our homes- more than the average per capita emissions in any other country. If we reduce our personal emissions by five percent, the total United States emissions would drop by 300 million tons.”

To successfully reduce these numbers, we can purchase fuel efficient cars, replace appliances in our homes, use LED light bulbs, adjust our thermostats, and increase renewable energy by installing solar panels. Taking actions to prevent the emissions of greenhouse gases must be taken seriously by spreading awareness and transitioning to clean, reusable energy.
Top Summer Vacations for the College Student on a Budget

By Angelo Rocchio

Going away on a trip during the summer is probably the most affordable time to get away from home and enjoy some time off. But finding the perfect getaway for the best price can be a little tricky with so many options to choose from.

To help narrow down to the most affordable options, here are some travel ideas and even a few websites that can help plan and pay for all the aspects of your trip. Blue Ribbon Travel & Cruises, and EF Educational Tours offer travel deals and packages that book hotels, along with airfare and can help find tours.

Most people are unaware of the various cruise lines that actually leave from New York City. Norwegian Cruise line has a full fleet of exciting ships, including the Norwegian Gem that departs from the Manhattan Cruise Terminal. The Norwegian Gem sails from New York to Orlando Florida, and two destinations in the Bahamas including Great Stirrup Cay, and Nassau.

This seven day round trip starts at $450 per person. This ship is all-inclusive which means free meals! Cruises are included with amenities like swimming pools, hot tubs, casinos, bars, clubs, and so much more for the perfect getaway. Once you dock in the various locations, you’re able to relax on the beach, or book your own private tours, such as snorkeling, scuba diving, horseback riding on the beach, trips to Disney World or even Atlantis.

One of the destinations that Blue Ribbon Travel offers services to is Miami. They have a long weekend, three-day deal anytime throughout the summer. This package includes airfare and a hotel room at the Confidante Miami Beach.

Miami is home to some of the most beautiful beaches and exciting nightlife and luckily this hotel just so happens to be right along the beach with a waterfront view. This package starts at $580.

If you are looking for something more affordable that is driving distance from home, perhaps check out Niagara Falls. Sometimes taking a road trip with your best friends can be the most exciting part of a vacation that takes away the stress of traveling by plane. It is about a seven hour-long drive to Niagara Falls from New York City.

The Sheraton at the Falls Hotel located on the New York side of Niagara Falls is four-stars and has a starting rate of $85 per night. It is walking distance to Niagara Falls. Sometimes taking a road trip with your best friends can be the most exciting part of a vacation that takes away the stress of traveling by plane. It is about a seven hour-long drive to Niagara Falls from New York City.

The Sheraton at the Falls Hotel located on the New York side of Niagara Falls is four-stars and has a starting rate of $85 per night. It is walking distance below the falls; the views are truly magnificent. Just remember to bring your passport if you plan on checking out the other side to Canada.

If you’re looking for a more relaxing getaway, perhaps Cancun, Mexico is the better choice. Cancun is filled with the most beautiful beaches and great weather since it is located off the hurricane belt. During the nighttime, you can even watch the sea turtles come out of the water and lay eggs in the sand on the beach.

The smarter choice for the student on a budget would be to stay at a hotel that is an all inclusive, this way all of your meals and sometimes even drinks are included in the price of your hotel. One of the less pricey all-inclusive is the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach, Cancun. They have prices starting at $171 per person, depending on what type of room you will be staying in, however the price of the round trip plane ticket is separate. Most activities you can find right on the beach too where the hotel is located, like snorkeling, jet skiing, wake boarding, and much more.

If you have a more broad range in your budget, these last two trips are definitely for you. EF Educational Tours offers the opportunity to take you on a 10-day trip to Costa Rica. This full package comes with daily trips planned out for you each day, such as a journey through a rainforest, kayaking, horseback riding, zip lining, a crocodile cruise, and time to relax on the beach. Although the price rounds out to be $3,000 it includes all meals, hotel rooms, a tour director, private transportation between each city, and even covers the cost of the round-trip flight.

The second tour that EF has to offer is one of their most popular tours of 2017, the Greek Islands. It is an 11-day trip that travels to four cities: Athens, Mykonos, Santorini, and Paros. The daily planned trips include exploring the Acropolis, wine tastings, sailing adventures, exploring volcanic beaches, and indulging in the exciting nightlife of bars and clubbing on the islands. The price of this trip is $3,500 but includes most of the amenities as the first trip, such as the hotel rooms, tour director, ferry rides between cities, and the airfare.

There is no better way to embrace new cultures and expand your knowledge, than traveling. If that means relaxing on a beautiful beach, you work hard, you deserve it! It is a great way to change your perspective as to how you see the world for the better and expand your horizons. This summer is the best time to start.
It’s Time for a Daycation

By Stephanie Jimenez

No matter how badly you may want to travel somewhere during the summer, many don’t have the time or the funds to do so. A daycation is similar to a vacation in that instead of spending weeks away, you can spend the day doing something fun and relaxing but then come back home that same day. This not only saves you time but it also saves money since you don’t have to rent out a hotel room. This is convenient for those who still must work during the summer or have other obligations that require their attention during the hot summer months. Staying within the city during the summer can still be a fun adventure, even if you have lived within the five boroughs your whole life. New York is the city that never sleeps so there are countless activities for both family and individuals to see and experience.

During the summer, the temperature can reach above 100 degrees in certain places in the city. The best way to cool off is at the beach. New York has several beaches that can be accessed by car and by MTA. Since these beaches are in New York, they tend to become crowded during the summer months so arrive early to find the right spot on the sand for you and your family.

Coney Island beach is conveniently located in Queens and can be just a few stops away on the N, Q, D, and F subway line. There is an amusement park for both children and adults to enjoy. If you don’t want to go for a swim or ride the rides at the park, the boardwalk offers a variety of shops that sell food and souvenirs. Fireworks on the beach can be seen every Friday night during the summer making this the perfect beach to create amazing summer memories to last a lifetime.

Rockaway Beach is the only beach in New York where surfing is legally permitted. Surfing lessons are offered on the beach. A park with sprinklers can also be found right off the boardwalk for kids to play. The boardwalk also offers shops to explore and buy food.

Long Beach is located in Nassau county. This beach is best accessed by taking the Long Island railroad because the traffic can become heavy throughout the day. Unlike the other beaches, there is a $15 admission fee per person. This beach offers a volleyball court and access to rent a bike. Even though alcohol is prohibited on the beach there are a few bars on the boardwalk along with shops to buy food and souvenirs. True to its name, Long Beach is long, which means there is almost always space on the beach no matter how crowded it becomes.

The summer is the time to spend with family and friends, but it can sometimes be hard to find places that to entertain the young ones. The Bronx Zoo is a great place to take children of all ages. It offers a large variety of animals from all around the world. There are also several interactive activities that both children and adults would enjoy like a petting zoo within the larger zoo. Even though it is the most expensive of all the zoos in the city, a trip to the zoo would be an amazing experience for any child of any age.

“When I took my daughters last summer, we spent the whole day there,” said Queensborough Community College, Yamilex Rodriguez. “From the time they opened to the time they closed, we did not get to see all the animals because the zoo is so large. My daughters had fun and was so tired when she got back home. We were tired for days but it was worth it. I had just as much fun as her.”

If you need a break from the heat in an air-conditioned space, the city offers many museums for children that will stimulate and encourage their curiosity and deplete their energy in a fun way. The New York Hall of Science, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, and the Long Island Children’s Museum each offer many interactive activities to stimulate your young minds while not breaking the bank.

For adults, it can be hard to find a place to relax and unwind in the city that never sleeps. Everything and everyone seems to be in constant motion in New York. The Top of The Rock Observation Deck in Rockefeller Center offers breathtaking views of the city. It gives individuals the opportunity to see the city from an aerial point of view and is an experience you will never forget. The Botanical Garden in Brooklyn is a beautiful location to walk around and relax. Similar to the Botanical Garden, the Cloisters are part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and feature medieval pieces and architecture. The Cloisters is an outdoor exhibit that is centered around a beautiful garden made for roaming. It is an escape from the city life without escaping the city itself.

For those who are willing to travel a few hours, Splash Splash, which is located in Long Island is a great place to spend time with loved ones. The park offers a large variety of water activities and slides to entertain any age group. Six Flags Great Adventure in New Jersey offers many rides for those who seek a thrill. “My boyfriend and I have been there twice this month already. The thrill you get when the rides drop takes your breath away,” said Queensborough Community College second year student, Letícia Silverio.

“I have been going every year and I can never seem to get enough,” said Letícia.

For those who seek a new kind of adventure, Tree Top Adventures in in Long Island gives individuals the opportunity to complete in obstacle course within the trees. Every tree is given a level of which you can chose to complete while harnessed for your protection. This is a unique experience that not many are aware exists in New York.

When planning a daycation, remember to pack certain items for the trip no matter how long it will take. Pack a first aid kit for emergencies. Wear appropriate footwear for the location. Bring something to make eating outdoors possible because accidents can happen and it is better to be safe than sorry. Sunscreen and bug repellent are highly important. The sun can cause skin cancer and excruciating sunburns. Mosquitoes and ticks have been known to carry diseases that can be harmful and even life threatening to humans. Remember to always pack your own lunch because food sold at stands can be expensive and unhealthy. Bring water to stay hydrated. This upcoming summer can be fun and exciting without leaving the city limits. There are many places to see and experience. Make this a safe and fun summer filled with sun and laughter and memories to last a lifetime.

Ready for a Vacation?

By Wendy Rivera

As this spring semester ends and summer approaches many Queensborough students find themselves planning their summer trips. Our students come from everywhere and might want to take a break from Queens as well. A well-deserved relaxation period after school deadlines, part-time jobs, and other stressful daily activities, lead students/faculty to want to get away from it all. But, as a QCC student, budget-friendly trips may be hard to find. A lot of patience in research is needed to not burn your wallet. Here are some helpful tips for planning a summer vacation that won’t ruin your savings.

For cheap airfare, Student Universe is a site that has affordable flight deals, especially for international travel. This is available for not just students but faculty as well. Verification of enrollment at a college is so simple as long as you have a college email account (.edu). However, you cannot book more than one ticket at a time, so it is not ideal for securing a seat with another person or group.

The New York Times has a travel section with its own unique tips. Articles written under “The Frugal Traveler” is another alternative in finding affordable, trendy vacation spots. Lucas Peterson, the writer for this column, mentions important topics that deal with navigating the world at a tight budget.

Many websites, such as, Studenttravel.about.com is a great resource for students to use. It is packed with links from “best stays” to “what to pack”. It is important to note that this website is based on advice and commentary with no booking assistance. Yet, Studenttravel.about.com is a fabulous resource for those students to narrow down the best recommendations and travel advice, which is necessary during busy semesters. They also feature guides for females traveling alone, which have links to the customs, behaviors, and other laws that women should be aware of.

There are many websites to compare and contrast airfare prices, that being said, options are the not the problem. The problem occurs when people do not take the time to check multiple websites to find a desirable, reasonable price. Or they do not know where to begin in the travel search. For a student, it is important to be aware of offers made to fit their economic status.

It is vital to do a lot of research! Even if it is for a short amount of days. One simple all-around student travel guide is called STA Travel. They almost inform students are exciting student discount packages within the USA or international. STA Travel takes all the pressure away when it comes to planning a vacation around a busy school semester. They are able to help plan a person’s whole itinerary. Their toll-free number, 800-781-4040, also accommodates every person with an traveling expert to assist them in find deals and vacation packages.
VOLUNTEERING

By Cierra Lachmenar

Thinking about a career and what we want to pursue in life is a hard decision. Sometimes we have a passion for what we thought we wanted to do and suddenly that passion has changed into something else that caught our attention. The best way to gain experience and see if that career truly is for you is to volunteer. The first step is to do research and see if the career that you hope to get into has volunteer or internship opportunities.

Volunteering has many benefits. One of the benefits of volunteering is that it looks good on your resume. Many students like to do volunteer and help out in the community. That’s why in certain jobs, it’s a requirement to volunteer somewhere related to your career field. I mean why wouldn’t you want to volunteer? If you don’t like that type of job anymore you can just leave. The good thing about it is that you’re not committed to this full time. When you volunteer, you develop new relationships, new communicating skills, and new friends. Later on in life when actually looking for a job to apply to; the communication skills and new ties that you made will be a bonus for you.

According to Psychology Today, there are four reasons why people should volunteer. The reasons are, it makes you live longer and healthier, it establishes strong relationships, it’s good for society, and it gives you a sense of purpose. Psychology Today states that, “Volunteers are happier and healthier than non-volunteers. In fact, during later life, volunteering is even more beneficial for one’s health than exercising and eating well. Older people who volunteer, things for society, physically function long, have more robust psychological well-being, and live longer.” When volunteering, we help society especially businesses and organizations who mostly rely on volunteers. “Many businesses, and almost all mission-driven organizations, are successful only if they make strong volunteer workforce. In fact, places like museums, social service organizations, and faith-based organizations often rely on more volunteers than paid workers to meet their goals and fulfill their mission. These businesses are committed to doing good things for society.” When people volunteer, they start asking questions on how they could volunteer and help out in society. When volunteering we get a sense of purpose. Volunteering makes us feel good about ourselves because we are doing something for a change. Volunteering gives us a sense of purpose because we are doing it because we want to. When people volunteer they volunteer for something they have a strong urge on changing.

Volunteering makes us into a better person. Over the weekend I was doing my project on animal shelters and when I went to go visit some, there were hundreds of volunteers at the animal shelter fair. I interviewed one of the staff there and he said that most of the people who are here feel a strong connection to the animals that come in and out of their place. He told me that even on his days off, him and the other volunteers would come up to the animal shelter and interact and walk the dogs when they have nothing to do. When he told me that I was amazed because it is thoughtful to come somewhere on your day off to be with animals who have nowhere to go and have no one to show them any love. Hearing what he had to say and how it made me feel, made me want to push myself to actually volunteer at a animal shelter. I have always wanted to but never got around to doing so. The words that the staff member told me made me open my eyes on how it will make a big difference in the live of the animals and the lives around you who you meet on a daily basis.

Later on in life, when we get older we will realize that what we did was for a good cause. I strongly believe that people who volunteer are selfless people. They know they won’t get paid but they still do it because they want to make a change. The more people volunteer, the more we get people to help out with situations that barely get attention. Volunteering allows us to take changes outside of our career field and experience other fields. It allows us to go beyond the goal that we set for ourselves. Volunteering allows us to gain the confidence we need and makes us into a better person as a whole. It pushes us to have the urge to make a difference in the world and see that there are things out in the world that needs to be heard. I hope that in the future, many people consider volunteering because of the benefits it offers us.

HOW TO BUY A GOOD USED CAR

By Benjamin Saakyants

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LIFESTYLE

Mental Health is Just as Important as Physical Health

By Casey Daniels

Welcome to May! We are almost halfway through the year. The Zoedic Wellness Checklist would remind you to get your visual exam, skin screening, annual physical, and dental cleaning. Notice anything missing from this checklist? How about your mental wellness? Your mental wellness is just as important as your skin, eyes, teeth, and body. This checklist is proof that our mental health isn’t considered as important as our physical health.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIHM) gives annual data on serious mental illnesses in the United States. A serious mental illness is a behavioral, emotional, or mental disorder that can be diagnosed by symptoms that develop over a period of time and cause major distress or problems. These disorders include bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, or eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia.

NIHM reports that one in five adults Americans suffer from a serious mental illness annually. That’s approximately 43.8 million adults out of over 300 million, which makes up 18.5 percent of our population. Similar statistics were recorded amongst adolescents in America as well. One in five adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 experience a serious mental illness during their lifetime—that’s 21.4 percent of the population. Adolescents between the ages of eight and 15 who suffer from a mental illness makes up approximately 13 percent of the population.

Mental health isn’t taken as seriously as our physical health, especially when it comes to children and African Americans. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports that more than 15 million children need mental health services but there are only 8,300 child psychiatrists in America. When children show clear signs of mental issues, such as bad behavior or isolation, they’re deemed a badly behaved child when they might actually be showing early signs of anxiety, depression, or something more serious. In 2013, 64 percent of children with major depression were untreated. Three million adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 have had at least one major depressive episode in 2015. Suicide was the third leading cause of death amongst 10 to 14 year olds and is the second leading cause of death amongst 15 to 24 years olds.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness also reported that over the last 15 years the suicide rate of African American children between the ages of 10 and 14 has increased 233 percent. They have also reported that African Americans are 20 percent more likely to have mental health issues and they mostly rely on family, religion, and their communities for emotional support rather than seeking out professional help when necessary.

The amount of those committing suicide and suffering from suicidal thoughts has become increasingly high. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), in 2015 9.8 million adults had serious suicidal thoughts, 2.7 million adults planned their suicide, 1.4 million adults attempted suicide, and of those 1.4 million suicidal adults 864,500 had been carrying out their suicide plans. There are only 300,000 adults who made no attempt or plans to commit suicide. In fact, suicide has become the tenth leading cause of death amongst all ages. In 2015, there were 17,793 homicides and 44,193 suicides in the United States. Ninety percent of those who died by suicide had diagnosable symptoms of some form of mental health illness prior to their death.

Yet despite these dramatic statistics, mental health is still not looked at as seriously. “The brain and body are connected,” Sagar Parikh, an associate director for the University of Michigan Comprehensive Depression Center says. “That is an insight that is very much neglected. Mental physicians see physical health as a top priority, not taking into account that if a mental illness is not properly treated that puts a huge strain on their physical health. Depression is actually the leading cause of disability worldwide,” says Lindsay Holmes, a deputy healthy living editor at the Huffington Post. “The illness prompts crippling symptoms, from headaches to gastrointestinal issues to a loss of motivation. Research is continually showing that disorders like anxiety could be hereditary, and results in fundamental brain differences. What’s more is that depression puts people at an increased risk for cardiovascular disease and strokes. The disorder can also exacerbate chronic pain. We need no more evidence that these illnesses are as ‘real’ and as important as physical issues.”

Holmes also reports that medical experts are suggesting that depression screening be a part of an annual physical exam performed by physicians. While this step is great it doesn’t not very helpful because follow-ups would then be a mental health specialist’s responsibility, which isn’t accessible for everyone.

Mental illnesses are a disease that is now seen to be killing people more than HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and tuberculosis. It may not be something that can be shown on a blood test or x-rays but it is chronic and deserves to be more acknowledged.

If you or anyone you know are displaying symptoms of a mental illness or having suicidal thoughts or behaviors please seek professional psychiatric help or contact the following:

National Suicide Prevention Line: Available 24/7 to help those with suicidal thoughts or behaviors. Just call (1-800)-273-8255.

Crisis Text Line: At NO cost and NO charges for standard texting if your phone service is Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, or Sprint, you can text CONNECT to 741741 to speak to a trained crisis counselor.

NYC Well: Text WELL to 65173 or call 1 (888)-692-9355 if you are a New Yorker in crisis and need mental health support.

HopeLine: Provided crisis counselors who help with crisis and suicide prevention. You may call or text (919)-231-4525 or 1 (877)-235-4525.

Adelescent Crisis Intervention & Counseling Line: 1 (800)-999-9999

Adolescent Suicide Hotline: 1 (800)-621-4000

National Drug & Alcohol Treatment Hotline 1 (800)-662-4357

National Youth Crisis Hotline 1 (800)-448-4663

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Ghede Nibo

By Nicole Bastien

There is a lot that can be said about the Voodoo world, but this time let’s just talk about Ghede, the most well known man in the voodoo culture. There are a lot of people that have been misinformed about the Ghede spirit. First, what is Voodoo? Voodoo is a pop-culture Afro-Caribbean religion that originated in Africa and made it’s way to Haiti. Although, some followers are misinformed about the Ghede spirit. First, what is Voodoo?

Ghede Nibo

as one of the oldest spirits. He is there when you are born, and will be around when you die. He was the corpse of the first man who ever died. People describe him as a tall, good looking, dark skinned man who loves to wear high hat on his head. He likes to smoke cheap cigars and eats apples. He is the one who waits at the crossroads to take souls into the afterlife.

Ghede is the good counterpart to “Baron Samedi” who is considered to be Ghede’s father, because when he died it was the spirit Baron Samedi who crossed him over into the afterlife. When it comes to this spirit, if you have an infertility problem you pray to him for a child and he will grant it to you, but if you have a dying child you pray to him to protect this child from dying. He is known to be the protector of children and he believes they have the right to live a full life.

Ghede died of a very violent death, because someone took his life away from him after a night of partying. He will not take a life before it is time for them to go. Papa Ghede has a weird sense of humor, a divine ability to read other’s minds, and the ability to know everything that happens in the worlds of the living and the dead. Another way to reveal himself to you, is

The best known man in the Voodoo culture
Is “13 Reasons Why” Too Risky to Watch?

By Anurada Somwaru

The new hit Netflix series “13 Reasons Why” released in March, caused a tremendous amount of controversy relating to its unsettling depiction of suicide. Based on a young adult novel by Jay Asher, the compelling story was meant to bring about awareness to teens and adults about the impact of suicide.

After the show aired, many claimed that it was glorifying suicide and causing suicidal teens to look up to Hannah Baker. Clay Jenson, played by Dylan Minnette, unravels the truth behind Hannah Baker’s sudden death through a set of tapes. Clay is our guide through Hannah’s life and why it leads to an abrupt end.

In the first episode, Clay comes home to a mysterious package on his porch. As he opens the package, he’s faced with seven cassette tapes that are labeled on each side and a hand drawn map. He scurries off to find an old school boom box in order to listen to the tapes. As he listens to the first tape, Hannah Baker’s voice, portrayed by Katherine Langford, unexpectedly brings a chill and confusion over Clay. As he continues to listen he tries to figure out why he might’ve been listening to a voice weeks after she took her own life. On the tape, Hannah begins to explain the reason behind the tapes and the rules she has for them.

She proceeds to explain that each tape contains a reason why she killed herself, and that he’s on one of them and in order for him to understand why, he must listen to the tapes accordingly and do as she says. She mentions that he must listen to every single one of the tapes and then pass it on to the person that is next on the list. If he, or any of the other listeners fail to do so, a copy of the tapes will be played in public for everyone to hear. The map included was for the listeners to physically follow as they listen to each tape so they can get a better understanding of what Hannah is trying to show them.

In order to keep track of what is reality, we have to acknowledge the enormous Band-Aid on Clay’s forehead. Clay and Hannah take turns at narrating; the story is told from Hannah’s perspective through the tapes, and is followed through in reality by Clay. As the tapes begin to unravel all sorts of information Clay and the viewer had no idea of, we come to learn that they were causing tension amongst those who were mentioned. Everyone mentioned on the tape were furious and wanted to get rid of the tapes as soon as possible because it would ruin their reputations. We learn that Hannah is blaming her death on multiple someone’s who might have done her some kind of harm when she was still alive.

Throughout the multiple flashbacks, we get to see how each person mentioned on the tapes had an influence on her death. It all began with a list made by Alex Standall, who’s played by Miles Heizer. The list was a ‘best/worst’ list targeting Hannah for one of her ‘best’ body features. It lead to catcalling and inappropriate gestures towards Hannah by the boys at her school. Something like this can cause for a teenage girl to feel uncomfortable in her own skin, especially when it was intentionally created by someone they know very well. As the tapes continued to play, Hannah made sure to mention the boy she liked, her ex best friend, girls who she thought were her friends, a stalker, Clay, a rapist, and the school counselor.

Although there were solid reasons why Hannah Baker felt hopeless, we’ve come to believe that the sole purpose behind the tapes was to seek revenge. She wanted everyone to know what they did was wrong and that they will have to live the rest of their life knowing that. Typically, when one is being blamed for another person’s death, it can cause a lot of trauma on that person. As the series continued we did in fact notice that those mentioned on the tapes were distraught and feeling a sense of hopelessness themselves. The death of Hannah also showed that she was still in control even after her death, she had control over the lives of those mentioned on the tapes.

Throughout the show there were series of viable incidents that can in fact ruin a person’s life, but there was no alternative to suicide presented. Suicide is never the answer, and shouldn’t be seen as an easy way out of a situation. It should not be glorified and seen as a way to get everyone to hear your voice after you’re gone.

The last episode of the season, showed how brutal suicide really is. The scene created goosebumps for viewers because they weren’t expecting such explicit content. The scene shows Hannah slowly getting into a full bathtub and as she breathes steadily, cameras focus on her wrists as she slits them with a razor blade. The content was extremely graphic from the slit to the blood gushing out from her arm, nothing was held back from the viewers.

Not only was the scene unexpected and so explicit but it can be triggering for those who are suicidal and suffer from mental illnesses. Producers of the show, including executive producer Selena Gomez, fully support the scene and claim that it was a way for viewers to realize that suicide is no joke, it’s harsh and you must be afraid of it.

Now that the show managed to get a load of attention from all age groups, there’s no way to prevent someone from watching it, or erasing their memory if they’ve seen it already. The only thing left to do is for parents to have an open conversation with their children, and teens and allow for them to openly express what or how they feel about the show overall. It’s important for everyone to discuss the negatives and positives of the show as well, to differentiate what was necessary and unnecessary. It’s important that young people understand the risks of suicide and that they have someone who’ll listen to them.

by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want. Sometimes he will ask for you to hold a prayer on his behalf, or he can ask you to have a big celebration for him where he will show up by presenting his favorite colors, favorite drinks, the cheap cigars, and by singing whatever he would want.
**Review: Fate of the Franchise**

By Kevin Brito

“The Fast and the Furious” franchise fun-train is slowing down and heading towards its final stop. Unfortunately the final stop was not the recently released “Fate of the Furious.” In fact, the cast and crew are already making their ninth installment. The only question on my mind is: Will the next movie be as lame as this one? I’m hoping that the franchise’s final stop will either (a) take the franchise to a whole new direction that makes sense for all of the characters, or (b) finally end the franchise like it should have in the last movie. But most likely, they will (c) drag on the “fun” train until no one thinks it’s fun anymore. In this movie there is a serious lack of fun that there was in the other installments. Other than the endless hordes of henchmen, there was hardly any real competition for the fast family to face except the new super villain hacker, Cipher (Charlize Theron). Other than that, there was... well, nothing else. I’ll try to keep my discipline as minimum, but it’s not like there are any real plot twists in this movie anyway.

With Dom (Vin Diesel) and Letty (Michelle Rodriguez) married, Brian (Paul Walker) and Mia retired, and the rest of the crew doing whatever it is that they do because the movie doesn’t really tell us, the family is living a somewhat normal life, if normal means committing a heist on a German military base to steal an EMP. And that’s what they do. The family alongside with Hobbs (Dwayn Johnson) is covertly hired by the American government to steal the EMP when suddenly Dom betrays the crew and takes the EMP to Cipher. A scene before this, we see Cipher threaten Dom by holding Elena (Elsa Pataky), a love interest for Dom back in “Fast 5”, and her newborn baby, who, plot twist, happens to be Dom’s son—sounds interesting right? Well, not the way they show it, that’s for sure. That one conflict is the only real one in the entire two hours and forty minutes of the film.

One other conflict should have posed a bigger problem but it turned out surprisingly funny and refreshing. After Dom takes the EMP by crashing into Hobbs’ car, Hobbs is captured by the German police and is sent to the same prison where Ian Shaw (Jason Statham), one of the main villains of the last movie, is located. The feud between Hobbs and Shaw is hilarious, with the back and forth death threats and banter, and a surprising amount of chemistry between Johnson and Statham. These two together, and even Jason Statham alone, are the best part of the movie.

After Mr. Nobody (Kurt Russell), an agent with the American government, breaks them out of prison, he forces Hobbs and the rest of the crew to work with Ian Shaw to stop Cipher. Ian Shaw single handedly murdered a loved character, Han, from the previous movies, but hardly anyone really shows a problem with him. After committing that evil of killing a family member, Ian Shaw is welcomed... really? There weren’t any consequences for Shaw at all? Nope. All he gets is a little pushback from Roman (Tyrese Gibson), and Tej (Ludacris), and five minutes later, boom, he’s in. Yes, the family was forced to do this, but they did not put much of a fight.

This problem of this absence of consequences is a flaw throughout the film. For example, in that EMP heist scene, the family, in unison, drives off and is chased by the German police. Then Tej, a character that has never killed anybody on screen before, comes up with the brilliant plan to, quite literally, murder all of the cops with a wrecking ball. Yes, a wrecking ball. And the best part is, after he kills about twenty or so cops, he chuckles, and spits out a one liner, followed by more chuckles from the other characters. Now I know these movies aren’t big on thematic weight and I would have given this scene that excuse but this movie in particular tried very, very hard to be thematic (more on that later), and then completely ignores the actions of the characters.

Also, since when does the fast family kill good guys? After years of killing bad time thugs, murderous drug lords, oppressive corrupt politicians, and even terrorists, the family turns to killing regular cops. These police officers, as far as the movie tells us, are just doing their honest jobs and then they get crushed for it.

The only one to face any real consequence in the movie is Dom. (Here’s the biggest spoiler...) After failing to do something for Cipher, she decides to do punish Dom in one of the worst ways possible. Cipher kills Elena in cold blood while making Dom and his baby son watch. This scene is probably the darkest scene we’ll ever see in the franchise. What does kill this scene, though, is Dom’s “manly tears” afterward. You know, the one teardrop streaming down the straight face. Yeah. These films try way to hard to show how masculine the heroes are. Despite all of the scumbaggery things that Cipher does to the fast family, especially to Dom, she gets away at the end. Yup, after two hours and forty minutes of nonsensical action sequences, horrendous one liners, and cringy dialogue, the bad guy gets to parachute escape her way out of consequences. The feeling is empathy as well as if you have just wasted your time. In all of the other films, the big climax is always resolved and satisfying. Just when she was about to get apprehended by Shaw, she magically parachutes away. Did anyone try to track her down after? Nope. How far can she even go when she jumps off a plane (which was tracked down) into a random piece of land? Absolutely no one talks about her afterward either. It’s almost as if no one cares. Or it’s as if the writers don’t care...

Despite all of the action sequences and comedy gold from Statham and Johnson and occasionally Ludacris and Gibson, this movie manages to completely bore its audience by taking itself way too seriously.

Ironically, the film’s major theme is “choice.” Cipher is constantly lecturing Dom, with ridiculous metaphors and analogies that choices have consequences. It’s tiresome. The worst part is that Dom completely caves and talks exactly same way. Much like the film, he takes himself too seriously and there are way too many “cool guy” moments, where he expounds on a metaphor just before he does something heroic.

Just like it’s ridiculous one-liners, the movie also can’t go five minutes without someone saying “family.” This theme is taken so seriously by the characters that it backfires, becoming inadvertently comical. Whenever Dom or Letty said family, I heard people in the theater snicker and groan. It’s clear that this family business is getting very old very fast very furiously!

People argue that when you buy a ticket for a “Fast and Furious” movie, you know what you’re getting into. On some level, that’s true, but this movie does not live up the quality of the previous installments at all. The “fun” was lost in the self-seriousness of the characters and themes, as well as the length of the movie—forty minutes too long and way too boring.
Calling All Little Scientist and Their Parents!

By Arlene Coloma

Has your child or sibling ever asked how the Big Dipper became the Big Dipper, or how the stars came together to create an image like Leo the Lion? ARTech was a two month long pop-up activity that ran from March 1 to April 29. It had a station called StarLab, and in it you were given the opportunity to sit in a blow up planetarium under the “stars”. The show consists of an experienced host sharing numerous folk tales created by different cultures to explain how the constellations came to be. This particular station was very popular because it gave the children that attended the ability to participate by asking questions and pointing out constellations and what they look like.

ARTech nurtures STEM but also encourages children to create art—referred to as STE(A)M or Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. ARTech’s event provides numerous interactive activities for children of elementary school age and allows them to be hands on with all the materials provided. Children are naturally little scientists that create theories and test them out, according to Jean Piaget, a pioneer in childhood development. Children are always trying to understand how objects work and even if something seems new to them, ARTech is an exhibit that allows children to bring their ideas into life to test and play with them. This, Piaget says, is the best way for children to learn as well as gain experience through their ability and curiosity to explore.

Adely, a mother of two, attends Queensborough Community College and attended ARTech. “We visited the Star Lab which was fantastic,” she said. “I especially loved how the story telling method involving all the constellations which was presented in a very simple to understand way. We all left with a different perspective of the sky and a favorite constellation”.

Adely and her family like many others left ARTech were amazed and left with a new perspective on STEAM. She mentioned she would’ve liked if the event was more widely advertised especially in communities that have many minorities.

While the ARTech exhibit has closed, similar stations can now be seen in The New York Hall of Science and The Children’s Museum located in Manhattan. Upon entering the exhibit, the children and the accompanying adult are given a map that shows all the different stations. Each station is unique and meet’s the ARTech’s goal which can be seen on their website, “to inspire young minds to explore and consider how their principles impact their daily lives”.

“Children’s early exposure to STEM and art is great for the child to gain the experience necessary, to be able to understand more complex concepts that they may encounter during their daily lives as they grow older,” Professor Jeffrey Jankowski, a Psychology Professor at Queensborough Community College explained.

Multiple different stations have been programmed with collaboration with the New York Hall of Science as well as The Children’s Museum. A few of the stations that are provided are Ball Pool, GIF Making Station, build it the Velocity Station and a few others including StarLab. Many if not all of these stations can be found in the locations that helped with programming this event. When participating in the “Velocity Station”, you need to be ready to be hands on because this station encourages the children to create a cardboard car and test it on a ramp. This activity station alone supports the child’s instinctive idea to be hands on and use art and their creativity as well as their personal knowledge to build their car in such a way that it will make it down the ramp. It also teaches children a multitude of things that are required just to make sure the car moves such as the shape of the wheels, the weight of what the child decided to use to decorate the car.

One exhibit in particular at the New York Hall of Science, called the Rocket Park, allows the visitors to explore rockets and spacecraft that helped begin the Space Race and will be great for those who enjoyed Star Labs.

Admissions to the New York Hall of Science located in Corona, Queens is as follows: Adults (ages 18 & Older): $16.00, Children (ages 2-17): $13.00, Student (With College ID): $13.00, Senior Citizens (age 62 & Older): $13.00. There is a free general admission on Friday afternoons 2-5pm and Sundays 10-11am. The Children’s Museum of the Arts located in Manhattan is as followed, ages 1-65: $12.00, Seniors 65+: Pay as you wish and there is a pay as you go with on Thursdays 4-6pm. From January 26th – May 20th, 2017 the exhibit “Weather or not, that is the question” explores the environment and extreme weather.

If your children or siblings are hands on and little scientist in the making these locations will be perfect for them and give them the opportunity to explore and gain new experiences.

**War** Creates a Troubled Picture, Despite its Stars

By Kurt Glenn

When you have a star-vehicle on Broadway, you need the material to make it work. That’s the thing with the new musical War Paint. Despite the wondrous talents of its two prestigious, Tony-winning stars, Patti Lupone and Christine Ebersole, this biographical musical on the lives of beauty icons Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden, feels ambitious and needed to flesh out more.

Taking place in the New York fashion world between the 1930s and the 1960s, the show focuses on the rivalry between cosmetic queens Rubinstein (Lupone) and Arden (Ebersole). Even though they avoid meeting with each other during the course of the show until the end, they try to outdo each other by stealing each one’s product and even stealing each other’s right-hand man (Rubinstein hires Arden’s cheating husband, while Arden steals Rubinstein’s former assistant). But soon in the mid-1950s, they both soon become overlooked by consumers thanks to new beauty brands like Revlon and Este Lauder and they even refuse to advertise their products on television unlike the other brand names. Arden and Rubinstein finally meet face to face at the show’s climax reflecting on how much they changed many women’s ways to look beautiful.

There are some funny wisecracks in Doug Wright’s book, but I wished that the material should have developed more on what determined Helena and Liz to have a career in beauty and how their work reflected women throughout the years. Scott Frankel and Michael Korie’s ’40s-50s period-set score is one of those pieces of music that your head won’t remember a lot the day or the week after you see it.

But I got to give some credit to director Michael Greif (of Rent and Dear Evan Hansen fame) for making a show that is elegantly designed to the tunes, thanks to Catherine Zuber’s sparkling costumes and David Korins’ wonderfully crafted sets. Expect these two elements to be nominated for the Tonys this year.

While I thought that Ebersole gave a respectable portrayal as Arden, I found Lupone’s interpretation of Rubinstein to be a bit cartoonish. Neverless, when the two share the stage together alone singing their duets, the show itself catches its fire. They are both nicely supported by their two men, John Dossett (playing Arden’s significant other, Tommy Lewis) and Douglas Sills (as Rubinstein’s business partner, Harry Fleming).

At the performance I attended, there were so many women in the audience, apparently fans of the show’s two big stars. I think that many fans of both the Lupone camp and the Ebersole camp will both get their money worth here. But for others, at best, this feels more like a promised-yet-shallow-production that should have worked on its wrinkles.

The Buzz on War Paint:

Rating: ** (So-So)

**Bottom Line:** Both admirers of Lupone and Ebersole will be satisfied here. Others will find it an ambitious but forgettable musical at best.

**Recommend Best for:** Ages 12 and up. Not much objectable material here besides a scene of an adult situation in the first act.

**Playing at:** The Nederland Theatre on 208 West 41st Street (between 7th and 8th Avenues). Scheduled for an open-ended run. For tickets, go to ticketmaster.com or call 877-250-2929.

Kurt Glenn is the theatre critic of the QCC Communicante. His most recent and past reviews can be read at glennbiz.blogspot.com.
SPORTS

By Jamil Aponte

The 82-game season has finally come to an end and the road to the NBA Finals has begun for the remaining 16 teams. The matchups are set and while some may look more obvious than others, anything is bound to happen because playoff games are no regular season games. The players give it everything they got because any mistakes could possibly send them home.

The Boston Celtics took on Chicago Bulls in the first round of the playoffs. The Bulls over the last off-season have stacked up as they picked up former Celtic, Rajon Rondo and former Miami Heat, Dwyane Wade. The bigger talk of the series though is Isaiah Thomas, who has had a breakout season leading the Celtics to where they are at now. The weekend of the first round of the playoffs, a tragic news story was published in The Boston Globe about how Boston Celtics star Isaiah Thomas’s sister, Chyna Thomas, died in a one-car accident on Federal Way, Washington’s Interstate 5. “The article went on to provide some more details about what had actually happened. It was a devastating event and the big question was how will this would impact Isaiah Thomas’s performance on game day.

Some analysts said it would break him and throw him off his game while others felt it would make him stronger and he would go “beast” playing out of her spirit. At first, it seemed it would throw him off his game as the Celtics fell short in the first two games which had them losing 0-2 in the series. The doubts started to come into play and many said they were done but they bounced back. Isaiah Thomas will help lead his team to the second round as the Celtics swept the Wizards. Game two of this series was a night to remember for Thomas due to the fact that he scored 53 points but more importantly, because he did that on his sister’s birthday. John Wall and the Wizards aren’t going out without a fight as they won games three and four tying the series 2-2.

The Celtics have been battling their way to victory throughout the first two rounds but it’s a whole different story on the other side of the East. LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers have been making it really easy as they start off 8-0, sweeping both Indiana Pacers and Toronto Raptors. This is a similar sight since last season they started the playoffs 8-0 as well, they are now the first team in NBA to do so back-to-back. It does not stop there either, LeBron is the first player since Kobe Bryant, in 2010, to score 30+ points in 6 straight NBA playoff games. The Cavs are on a whole different level and LeBron, being no stranger to Finals and championships, is on the verge of another one if this keeps up. What did DeMar DeRozen of the Raptors have to say after his defeat? It was really simple. “If we had LeBron on our team, too, we woulda won”.

The West is slowly unraveling and the teams to beat seem to be the Warriors, Spurs and Rockets. The San Antonio Spurs and Houston Rockets both squeezed out of tough first round matchups and are putting on a back and forth series making it anyone’s victory at this point. Spurs’, Manu Ginobili had a huge game five as he blocked MVP candidate James Harden in the final seconds of the game sealing the win for his team. The momentum had definitely switched as the Spurs would walk into Houston blowing the Rockets out 114-75 clinching a spot in the Western Conference finals against the Golden State Warriors.

The Warriors are a super team and have added new cannons to the ship to try and regain the throne again from the Cavaliers. Kevin Durant, former OKC player, is now a Warrior and his announcement shocked the world in positive and negative responses. The fans embraced it ecstatic of course because he’s a phenomenal player, which is also why the fans around the world, especially Oklahoma City, did not take his leave so lightly. Many “fans” posted pictures of them burning his jerseys and complained about how he left only to win an easy ring. This is a déjà vu of LeBron taking his talents to South Beach since he left to join a super team as well.

LeBron did go on to win the Heat eventually so if history does repeat itself then a ring does await in Durant’s’ future. With the start the Golden State Warriors have created, it may be sooner than we think. The Warriors behind not only Kevin Durant, but Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and pretty much the entire team have been nothing short of dominant. They easily swept the Portland Trailblazers and they are just one game away from sweeping the Utah Jazz. The way this year’s playoffs have been going, we are on the verge of seeing the tie-breaker match between the Warriors and Cavaliers for a third straight year.

By Allison Williams

Before the start of my sophomore year of high school, I wasn’t worried about classes, making new friends, or annoying teachers. What I was mostly worried about was what sports the city could offer me. I had just moved up from Georgia where I was enjoying the sports life I had, which revolved around softball. Now I had moved to the Big Apple and I didn’t know if I’ll ever see a softball again. You see softball, like football and baseball, is a southern sport that every girl who wasn’t dancing was playing at my school.

During the orientation the Principal said her little speech, which I wasn’t paying much attention to, but after she was done the Athletic Director came up to speak. Once he came up, I was all ears. He listed all the sports they offered which were basketball, soccer, volleyball, track and field, tennis… and lastly, softball!!! I was so excited; I was just going to power through until softball season which is in spring!

He proceeded to invite students that were interested in sports to come to the gym, even if the sport they wanted to play wasn’t in season. That day, sports teams that were in the fall season were supposed to be practicing. Unfortunately, no other team, but the volleyball team was practicing. I didn’t know what the volleyball was like or the skills used to play, but he was showing us the school, so I figured why not take a look? We turned the corner to the main gym and all I saw were girls playing short shorts, and swinging their arms in a bizarre motion.

“Alright, this sport looks weird,” I thought. “I mean come on, why are they trying to kill themselves to get the ball from hitting the ground? They look like semi-trained seals, just flapping on the floor. The only time you’ll see me doing that is when I’m going for those weird low fly balls in the outfield but that’s it.”

“They were just continually falling. Wait, that girl! Ohm, she can jump high!!! How did she do it though? Wait, is the object of the game to get the ball to hit the floor and to prevent it from hitting the floor? This speech is confusing.”

Before I was able to try to comprehend the object of the game, the director asked if anyone wanted to try to play. I’m a very determined person when it comes to understanding a sport and if the only way I could understand was to try, then I was up for the challenge. So, five brave girls including myself mustered up the courage to step in the gym. The coach paired us up with girls that were on the team. He asked who had played volleyball before and mostly all the girls that came in with me raised their hands. I was the loner.

The girl went on to teach me the basic skill of the sport and some technique. After 20 minutes of learning, the coach was looking at me and asked me if I was interested in trying out for the team. I didn’t tell him, no, but I didn’t say yes. The whole time I was there I couldn’t figure out what I was doing, but there was something about volleyball that made it fun and exciting.

Later that day, I looked up volleyball games. From that day forward I fell in love…

According to USA Volleyball, the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of volleyball in the United States and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), volleyball originally was called “Mintonette” and it was invented in 1895 by William G. Morgan, a director of physical education, to provide recreation and relaxation for businessmen at the Holyoke, Massachusetts’ YMCA. It was designed to be a combination of basketball, baseball, tennis, and handball. Since then volleyball has run rapidly throughout the United States and in many countries such as Brazil, China, and Germany.

The basic rules of volleyball are that six players play on each side of the net into two rows, with
When Will Women’s Softball Get Its Recognition?

By Melany Gonzalez

As the years fly by us all, women still have yet been recognized for their skills and leadership in the sport of softball. Softball originated around Thanksgiving Day of 1887 in Chicago, Illinois. It was known as “mush ball” but later got its name softball because of the texture and size of the ball. Men get recognition because of baseball, but these talented young women who have played and competed since they were young should also be recognized.

These women train hard to be the best of the best and yet no major league team has been developed. Usually men who attend and play in college can actually begin their journey to the major league, if they are capable of it, whereas women can also play throughout college but their journey ends there. Yes, there are tournaments and the Olympics but still no major league organization or a national team. The film named “A League of Their Own,” released in July of 1992, was based on women playing in a major league team. The interesting thing about it is that it depicts women playing baseball instead of softball and shows how dominant and strong these female athletes are really are. A major league team should definitely start developing because it can really change the outlook of the sport.

For one, there would be a major crowd interested because of the gender, the pitching and the power of the girls.

Then, there’s the issue of fair pay. A major league should also be formed because these young women should be granted major salaries for their hard work and be showcased where they can inspire young girls to become amazing players. These ladies should face competition just like these men do and show people around society that women can also do it.

“I have been playing softball since I was four and it was the best thing that has ever happened to me,” says QCC student Julie Hernandez. “I wish society would be equal with us women as well and notice we’re just as strong.”

“I think softball should be held to the same respect as baseball,” Queens College student, Kayleen Estevez, agreed. “We live in the 21st century where the definition of an athlete never has to refer to his or her gender […] Giving women the opportunity to showcase their skills in the big leagues like men do in the MLB, does nothing but enhance competition and introduce new admirable sports players.”

The major league organization should definitely make a change because many individuals have yet seen what these women can truly do. Just as Kayleen mentioned, it is their showcase and it can introduce positive changes to the world.

Even some men believe women should get recognized because of aggressive and amazing players such as Jennie Finch, Lisa Fernandez and many others.

“I remember watching a softball game and seeing how great these girls are,” says QCC student, Carlos Guzman. “They are just as talented as men and they can make big history if it became a national league. [...] If I am hoping it does become a major league team because I support the sport one hundred percent.”

Softball is an amazing sport and change definitely has to move into the big leagues to make sure these women stand out to the world.

Why Volleyball?

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the first row closest to the net and also in front of the 10’ft line that divides the court and back row behind the 10’ft line and closest to the rear boundary of court, whose main goal is to pass a served or hit ball to a person up front. Players rotate out clockwise with the player playing in the back corner behind the line of the court. That player serves once without touching the line. The ball must be land within the court for the serve to be good.

A well-played out game combines bumping, passing, setting, and hitting and spiking. A typical rally should consist of three touches, meaning a pass or bump, which is the action of the ball hitting your forearm between elbow and the wrist, to a player in the front, who uses an overhead pass (using your fingertips and shaping your hand to curve the ball) to set up a player in the front row to spike, which is the action of jumping and snapping the ball down to the ground of the other side of the net or off an incomplete three touches from the other team without touching the net.

The ball must hit the ground after the player has hit it to get a direct point.

On a college team, players will play up to five sets against another team and are allowed to win three out of those five sets. The standard amount of points that each team is allowed to get to win is 25 points, unless the teams are tied, in which case, a team must win by two points to take the set. For example, our ever own Queensborough CC volleyball team in the CUNYAC Finals against Borough of Manhattan CC (BMCC) was tied in the first set 23-23 and rally back to win the set 25-23.

Volleyball “is a thinking and action sport,” says Queensborough Coach, Jason Demas. “An average rally/ play are around 10 to 14 seconds. While an individual movement only takes 3 or 4 seconds. A player now has a half of a second to decide what they should do next.”

Volleyball is very flexible and remains fun in any level of play. You could be totally new to it or a child, in a recreation league with another aspiring volleyball player, in a competitively high school or college, professional league, international play, or in Paralympic. At all level, the object of the game never changes, but the only change you will see is in challenges, strategies, intensity of the game, and the speed of the game.

The framework of the game is to have fun, while at the same time working together in reaching the goal of getting the point from the other team. Last fall, during the beginning of QCC volleyball season, like all teams, we weren’t close with each other, because we didn’t know each other. I remember the captain of our team during a game in which we were down by 10 points, told us that it doesn’t matter how we feel about each other off the court. When it comes to volleyball we all love it so we need to drop anything nervousness or stress off before getting on that court. We need to come together and fight together, it’s us against them. Who will win? That night QCC Lady Tigers took home the victory. When someone on the same team becomes ball hungry, the team’s dynamics will slowly go under unless they come together. The minute that happens, the team becomes a confused, chaotic group of cats.

I encourage everyone who is interested in volleyball to seize the moment. Here on campus we have recreation for volleyball in one of the backcourt gyms close to the weight training room on Wednesdays during club hours 12:00 – 2:00 pm, and there are many volleyball class every semester, winter, spring, summer, and fall that you can sign up for a gym credit and to improve your volleyball skill. When you are ready, our QCC is looking for incoming freshmen, freshmem, and sophomores deem them self a champion, powerful, and dedicated in being a volleyball player, August 1st will be tryouts. Come out and show the team what you got!
Homeschooling vs. Traditional Schooling: Which is More Effective?

By Michael DeMarinis

When a child is first old enough to obtain an education the most important thing for the child is to learn skills and knowledge to succeed throughout the course of their life. However, the variable in this whole equation is the source of the education. The two sources are Traditional five days a week, six-hour school days at a school or a more interesting approach called homeschooling, which is provided by parents in the home. Homeschooling first began in the 1970s when a man named John Holt wrote that public schooling was brainwashing children by essentially making them creatures of strict memorization with no skills to think independently. Today in the U.S. approximately 1,770,000 children are homeschooled, which is 3.4% of children receiving an education. The interesting question here is how effective is homeschooling and is it a positive and impactful substitute to traditional schooling.

While the education curriculum might be the same for children being homeschooled and children going to traditional schools, there are certain invaluable lessons and “people skills” children at traditional schools get that homeschooled children do not. When a child goes to a traditional school they get a chance to interact with other children, which is very important for a child’s development. When children get to interact with one another it leads to tremendous social skills, which are needed to succeed in life. A classroom environment not only leads to learning how to develop social relationships at a young age, but it teaches children how to listen to instructions and behave based on what their teacher says. The biggest benefit from a traditional school is the friendships children develop. As I look back into my childhood at elementary school it really hits me that my closest friends who are like family to me where met in my elementary school. If I were home schooled I would have never met my friends that I know today. So while the education is the same between children that are home schooled and children who go to traditional schools, the social benefits that will carry on for a lifetime are much greater.

Home schooling might reap greater benefits compared to traditional schools with regard to content and curriculum. According to the “National Home Education Research Institute” the SAT scores for seniors ready to graduate high school that were home schooled were higher than all other high school seniors. The reason can be relatively simple. A child who is homeschooled will be able to focus strictly on their work with no distractions from classmates and will be able to learn at their own pace so they can grasp the subjects better. In a traditional public school teachers need to make sure they get through the entire curriculum otherwise there can be repercussions on their part, so they have no time to go at each student’s individual pace, nor will they be able to focus all their attention on select students like a parent who home schools their kids can.

Ultimately, we can see there are pros and cons to homeschooling and traditional school. The pros for homeschooling is the better learning environment and the pros for traditional school is the social advantages. The question that needs to be asked is which is more effective and meaningful for a child’s development? Social skills or the education? Education is important but without necessary social skills it is tough to achieve the best possible things in life. However, with traditional schooling unlike homeschooling, children can get the best of both worlds.
The Palestine and Israel Conflict: Can President Trump Help Create Peace?

By Abu Rafat

As Americans are adjusting to having President Donald Trump in office, a given century-old issue is being fear kered under the administration. President Trump has met with the Palestin President Mahmoud Abbas earlier this month, and now talks about peace and reconciliations with the Israeli gov ernment are underway. He hopes that with the United States as a middle-man, a compromise that can benefit both na tions could be achieved.

But what are the causes of this actually working out? Can peace be possible after six decades of conflict and war? When I first started researching this article, I had little idea of the history that instigated the hostility in the Middle East. Sure, we all know from Facebook and other social media outlets that out-breaks amongst radical factions occur frequently, but why? In a nutshell, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust looked to Israel as a utopia to escape from anti-Semitism and have a new start. The British government who controlled Palest ine at that time portioned the country into two segments: Palestine and Israel. This was done in a document titled the Balfour Declaration, and upsetPalestinians, who rejected its authority. Fur thermore, neighboring Arab countries, whose inhabitants are mostly Muslim, looked at the new state of Israel with hostility.

Multiple solutions over the years have been proposed, but none seem enough to tempt the two polar countries to come to a compromise. One solution is known as the "one state solution," which suggests Israel annex the Palestin portion of Israel, and grant full or partial citizenship to those Palestinians. If given full citizenship, opponents fear Palestinians might influence anti-Israeli politics. Granting half citizenship would really mean little to the new citizens since they would not be allowed to vote. The other compromise is known as the "two-state solution." Both countries would get their own territory and be forced into an internationally recog nized country. This would help every one in international and business af fairs, but the two states are reluctant to embrace this. The borders in current day Israel overlap with Palestinian areas and Israeli portions, and making a definitive border that makes everyone happy seems near impossible.

Recently, Israeli communities are being constructed in Palestinian inhabited areas, thus making the hypothetical Palestinian smaller and smaller. Con stant contention and conflict disrupts everyday life as radical Israeli factions encroach on Palestinian territory. According to the New York Times, some of these settlements are backed by Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu.

Another problem is deciding who gets the city of Jerusalem. For Muslims, it is the third most holy sanctuary in the world. For the Jewish follow ers worldwide, it is the site of pilgrimage for millions every year. And for the Christians, it is where Jesus preached, lived and ate the Last Supper before crucifixion. Needless to say, it is the most holy city by all three major religions in the world, and no one is willing to give it up. In recent months, President Donald Trump has said in a press conference that he is "seriously considering" moving the United States Embassy to Jerusalem. This has sparked a series of fresh threats from Palestine and neighboring Arab countries if such a thing were to happen.

But the question remains: Can President Trump help the two countries find peace? "Regardless of your opinion of him as a person, he’s definitely not an experienced politician," explains Queensborough Community College History Professor Tim Keogh. "[People like] Benjamin Netanyahu have a career in politics, and I feel he is going into the hornet’s nest."

Since President Trump’s inauguration, his failure to deliver on campaign promises shows his inadequacy to get things done.

"Part of Trump’s whole persona is ‘fake it till you make it’. You show confidence, but you really don’t know what you’re doing," comments Keogh, "In perspective to the immigration laws, its been struggling in the courts, and it shows that he really doesn’t know what he’s doing.

But what about his cabinet? Surely they must be seasoned politicians?

Hardly. According to the New York Times, the person President Trump has chosen to lead this project is his son-in-law Jared Kushner who has a background in real estate. In terms of experience, he is a rookie compared to shrewd politicians like Israel President Benjamin Netanyahu and Abbas, who have built a career in politics. Politicians like Netanyahu and Abbas have agendas for their respective people that they won’t back down from, and getting the two sides to come to a compromise will be a task that exceeds any complication that Kushner has ever dealt with.

Another thing to keep in mind is when President Trump ran for the election, he knew how to please the American public and how to deal with the domestic politicians. The Middle East, however, is a totally different playground. It is a completely different world that has its own rules. Other wise, peace would already exist and the last 60 years of conflict could've been avoided.

Does that mean that President Trump won’t be successful? I think at the end of the day, it is delusional to think that Trump can do this," Keogh chuckles, “However, I’d love to be wrong, we’d all love to be wrong, but I don’t think he can do this.”

Indeed, President Trump’s recent 100-day mark has shown how incompetent he is as a president, and to think this could be accomplished with such an inexperienced cabinet would be absurd. But hey, who knows? Maybe this is the turning point. Maybe this is where President Trump shows us and the world what a great “negotiator” he is, as he claims to be. Time will only tell.