Teacher Evaluation: Necessity or Burden?

By Leticia Rodriguez

At the end of every academic semester, Queensborough Community College students fill out professor evaluation forms. These forms are distributed by the school in order to grasp a sense of how teachers are performing in the classrooms.

The question is when students fill out these surveys, do they answer them accurately or do they try to get it over with as quickly as possible? If students were informed that their responses on those surveys would have an impact on their professor, would that affect their attitudes in completing the forms?

Vice President of Student Affairs Karen Steele explained that the questions asked in teacher evaluation forms were created by faculty themselves in order to evaluate students’ instructors. The forms are used to determine whether to reappoint or promote faculty, or to help them get tenure. (Tenure provides job security for teachers after completing a probationary period.) When asked where evaluations forms go after the students fill them out, Vice President Steele responded, “All evaluation forms go to the head of the department, where they are carefully read.” Every department chair receives them and reads them before professors can review them. “Professors only get to review them once grades are in,” Vice President Steele explained.

These surveys are intended to report the honest opinion of students in correlation to their professors. The evaluation forms are anonymous, thus granting the student body a sense of safety. A student can speak his/her mind without repercussions.

Creditless Classes: Setback or a Motivator

By Sanghoon Lee

CUNY students who are not eligible to take regular courses and fell into Basic Education courses spend more money and more time to graduate than students who take regular courses. While state universities, and private universities provide at least some credits for the Basic Education students, CUNY students earn no credit for these courses, though CUNY colleges still collect the same amount of money for these courses as they do for regular classes.

Basic Education is a program for the students who did not qualify for the ACT exam. Students taking Basic Education courses must pay the same amount of tuition as they do for regular classes, but not a single credit is obtained.

Graduation is a challenging goal for every college student. Some spend four to five years to graduate from four-year universities, but this generally happens only when students are full-time students. By contrast, students who have to work to support themselves spend an average of five to six years in school.

Mary Beth Marklein, in USA Today, reports that, “Nationally, four-year colleges graduated an average of just 53% of entering students within six years, and rates below 50%, 40% and even 30% are distressingly easy to find,” according to a report by the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

Those students who are enrolled for Basic Education courses will very likely spend even more than five to six years to graduate.

Basic Education courses provide English courses to ELL (English Language Learners) students, as well as mathematic courses to those who scored low on the SAT’s. Students who take Basic Education courses may not be able to take regular courses due to restrictions from the registrar. In order to take full regular courses, they usually must complete Basic Education courses and pass the ACT test for both math and English.

How does CUNY’s policy of Basic Education differ from other college institutions? SUNY and a number of other private universities actually provide some credits for those classes categorized as Basic Education courses in contrast to CUNY, although those classes in other institutions only contribute one credit per course.

Basic Education exists to help students to enroll and contribute to better comprehension for their future regular classes. But the opinion of some students enrolled in these classes is that Basic Education courses are not fulfilling this purpose.

Twenty-two year-old Borough of Manhattan Community College student Jay Shin who has taken a few Basic Education courses says, “I think I will be graduating here maybe two years later [after having spent three semesters at BMCC already]. I had to take a few classes to be qualified for the ACT exam, and that took almost three semesters. I have a few friends in the state universities and private colleges, but they said ESL or Basic Education courses actually are helpful [in earning credit] in their institution. I really do not understand it.”

Students who graduated from CUNY after having taken Basic Education courses continued on page 5

The Knockout Game

By Coreena Owens

If you have been keeping with the news, you have probably heard about a violent trend called “The Knockout Game.” The Knockout Game is when a person punches another person, to the point where they pass out. This trend has gone back as far as the early 1990’s. The first reference to a knockout game occurred in 1992, when the Boston Globe reported on a case in East Cambridge, Massachusetts. Several young men fatally stabbed an MIT student after playing “Knockout.” These Knockout Games are becoming even more prevalent here in New York City.

The Knockout Game amplifies violent behavior. The authorities are not clear as to why the perpetrators are really doing this. The attacks are random and bring no benefit to the perpetrator. What makes The Knockout Game different from other violent attacks is that the perpetrators (predominately young black men) are just attacking people for fun or out of boredom. Clint Van Zandt, a former FBI profiler stated “It appears these are just random acts of violence…there’s no robbery, there’s no rhyme or reason; it’s just simply youths making a decision.”
**High Life: How Millennials View Recreational Marijuana & Legalization**

By Alena Khaimchayeva and Farah Lewis

You smell it around campus and wonder where it’s coming from. You wonder who’s smoking it, and you may even have a little smirk on your face while you ponder. While alcohol remains the most widely used and abused drug in the nation, according to the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug among college students.

The number of people using marijuana nationally has increased in recent years, with college-aged young adults (mostly students) making up the majority of the 58% of people who support marijuana legalization. Support for marijuana legalization has reached a new high, and college kids are fanning the flames.

A Gallup poll released over the summer of 2013 revealed that a majority of adults back cannabis legalization for the first time since Gallup asked the question in 1969. Amidst the 58% of respondents who supported the idea, the number shot up to 67% amongst 18- to 29-year-olds.

There’s a strong correlation between marijuana use and “discontinuous enrollment,” said study author Dr. Amelia Arria, director of the Center on Young Adult Health and Development at the University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Persistent use of this drug may lead to “amotivational syndrome.” Amotivation syndrome develops as chronic or heavy cannabis use impairs motivation and social performance, making users extremely unmotivated in their achievement of academic, career and personal goals. There is clinical evidence that suggests a link between marijuana and the development of this syndrome, yet it is still unclear whether the development of this syndrome is an effect of consistent use of marijuana.

However, not all college students are bowled over by health claims.

Karilla Dyer, a junior at Queens College, says she meets very few people who haven’t tried the drug. “Smoking should be considered a lifestyle choice, she says. “If someone wants to smoke marijuana occasionally in a social setting or just to relax, it should not be more illegal than having a glass of wine. Pot isn’t something that ruins lives” the 20-year-old says.

A sophomore at Hunter College, Samantha Mendel concludes, “People can smoke and relax but the problem is when they start to rely on the drug to relax and when you start replacing daily routines.”
College students have a tendency to argue that the cost of their tuition is too high. Although most students support this statement and believe that it is indeed a fact, there is an important question that hovers over it all: Do students utilize the resources they pay for?

QCC tuition varies depending on whether the student is going full-time (12-18 credits) or part-time (less than 12 credits). One fee that every student is required to cover, regardless, is the technology fee. For full-time students enrolled in the spring and fall semester, a one-hundred dollar nonrefundable tech fee is required. Part-time students attending during the spring and fall semester are required to pay half of the nonrefundable fee. The fee covers the costs of the Academic Computing Center (located on the first floor of the library) and the maintenance costs of copy machines and printers (colored ink is extra). Students can also borrow laptops and battery pack chargers for their cellphones from the Student Reserve Desk (on the second floor of the library) but must bring them back at a certain time. A swipe/scan of a student’s Queensborough ID card is all that is required to use these resources.

Students also don’t take into consideration that they also have non-material resources readily available to them. Tutoring, whether it be in the Math Center (Science building room 216) or the Student Learning Center (on the first floor of the library), the ability to improve your comprehension of class material can easily be reached. These tutoring sessions are free and all it takes is the swipe/scan of your QCC ID card.

Tutoring sessions at the Math Center can be the difference between passing and failing for a weak math student. Spending time at the Writing Center (on the first floor of the library) can be the difference between a mediocre essay and a stellar one. One student, Morad El Afandy, who has used this resource, observed, “The Writing Center helps me organize the ideas in my essays. It also helps me get my point across with more clarity.”

Some QCC students support the evaluation forms Vice President Steele replied, “The amount of time a teacher had in a school should not be a major difference in how they are affected. I can understand a minor sense of leeway, but if a professor starts off well and begins to show a major decline for a long period consecutively, after any amount of time, the same measures should be taken.”

Another QCC student, Mirella, said, “Our opinions should be taken in to consideration since we are the ones learning and taking this knowledge into our futures.” Professors all get treated equally when it comes to the evaluation forms, even if a professor just started teaching or has tenure, these forms get reviewed equally by the department chair. What happens when a professor receives a negative review? Vice President Steele explains, “The professor will get mentored by the department chair or others in the department.” They will express what improvements need to be done to help those negative reviews become positive ones. The department follows up on instructors who receive comments related to organization skills or being disrespectful in the classrooms to make sure those behaviors are changed. An element of the teacher evaluation forms is that they are beneficial to both instructors and students; if these forms are answered honestly both parties will have good results.

At the end of this semester when students sit down to complete these evaluation forms, the weight of a unanimous opinion should be felt, and students should take into consideration that their opinion is valued and complete these surveys with the intent to give praise where it is due and to expose what needs to be reformed.
Internship Opportunities For Your Consideration

By Nalam Kim

Are internships beneficial for your future career? Internships can provide valuable experiences for students. Some students may already know what field of work they want to pursue and search for internships to help them reach their goals. For students that don’t know which career to pursue, an internship can help guide them on their path to success.

Most students are unsure of what they want to pursue but want to be successful and find a lucrative career. In this economy, it’s difficult to find a job. An internship can provide a valuable experience for the students because they can experience firsthand the career they want to pursue in the future.

Internships can be paid or unpaid. Most of the internship programs are unpaid; however, students can often receive academic credits for it.

Internships are hard to come by. Aside from finding one that pertains to your interest, an internship can interfere with one’s work schedule and other obligations. This is when a student needs to take initiative and search for an internship that first into their schedule.

I also hesitated and my friend recommended that I go visit the Career Service office. The Career Service office helps students who are unsure about their majors figure out which field they are interested in, and they give information about internships, and job opportunities. The Career Service office is located in Library Room 429. In order to see an adviser, first you need to register online.

To register with Career Service is easy. First, go to the QCC official website and click Student life. Scroll to the bottom and click Career Service. Then you’ll see the list of the categories on the right side. For example:

- Register for our services/create your resume and more
- Career building advice and resume/cover letter formats
- Video on demand/a quick glance at exciting careers
- Find a job/internship post your resume
- Gain experience through internship and Cooperative education
- Choose the right major and Career path
- Research Occupations
- Tell us about your job/internship
- Click “Choose the Right Major and Career Path.” Then, click “Create New Account” and start your self-assessments, which are called Focus-2. This will take approximately 45 minutes and you can spend additional time researching different occupational choices.

To see the internship openings and events you can click find a job/internship post your resume and out of three categories for example, student, alumni and employers you click student, and bottom list will show you all the openings and upcoming events.

Internships require an unofficial transcript and resume.

Internships are a great opportunity for prospective employees to gain experience in a particular field or industry. Internships are a proven way to gain skills, knowledge, experiences and all the sources are necessary for you to reach your goals. It’s never too late to find one!

Mandatory Attendance: Do We Really Have To Be Here?”

By Genesis Feliz

A highly debated subject within colleges is mandatory attendance. The attendance policy has always been a major concern for New York state. Younger grades have stricter attendance policies due to trying to instill good behavior, as well the state paying for students’ education in public schools.

But as adults, should college students be able to make more of their own choices when they are paying for school out of their own pocket?

College students tend to feel as if they should have the authority and control over whether they attend class or not. Some argue, if we are paying six hundred dollars per class a semester why can’t we have a say? Is it right they are only allowed 4 absent per semester, which are 4-5 months long? Life happens, as they say, including emergencies and other unfortunate events in which one may have to miss a day or two of class. QCC, as well as other schools, have professors who are extremely strict when it comes to lateness and absence and will not hesitate to fail a student despite the student performing well when present. They expect you to use your 4 absences throughout the semester “wisely.”

One History professor at QCC stated that he doesn’t care for attendance, but would rather not take attendance at all because if a student is truly interested, he or she will come because they want to and not because they are scared of failing: “It’s easier for me, and less work I have to do. I have a class about 40 students. I teach 5 classes – too many names to remember “. That has become a common factor for history teachers in QCC; unlike the other departments they don’t take attendance. They feel like the students are old enough to be accountable for themselves and if they want to pass they will study on their own.

One argument against a looser policy would be that it’s unfair for a student who is rarely in the class to take up the spot of someone who would’ve attended all of the sessions. Teachers believe that if students don’t receive the amount of hours required for the class they will not have substantial information to actually pass the class with a high grade. The lack of dedication will not let them achieve their future goals and college is their first step through the door. On the QCC homepage there is a section about attendance that states “Absence from class can seriously reduce the student’s chances of completing a course successfully. Generally, absences beyond 15 percent of course hours may result for failure for a course.”

We should be responsible for our education, and if being in class does not suit your lifestyle, there’s always the option of taking online classes. By being absent a student is only hurting themselves and is the only one to blame. QCC offers help if you are troubled with attendance, and offer the service of being able to talk to a counselor. Colleges are treating students as adults and expecting them to behave as such.
Limited Options: Nutrition at QCC

By Maninder Singh

Do you know what your school cafeteria is feeding you? The majority of students at QCC don’t know what they are eating when they’re buying food from the cafeteria. A few students who I interviewed said, “we did not have time to eat at home. We just get breakfast from here.” When I asked if they knew what they were eating their response was negative. I then told them what they were eating: eggs with yolk which causes cholesterol, bacon full of fatty oils, and processed wheat buns.

Metropolitan Foods is the premium supplier and caterer of cafeteria food for QCC and a few other colleges around the city. The company’s website says “Metropolitan Food Service Inc. is dedicated to offering our clients the highest standard possible in food quality, service and value.” But they do not exactly say what brand of products they distribute or what is used when preparing meals.

Many students around QCC seem to have to travel a moderate distance to get good, healthy food. The reason for this is that there are no healthy food spots in or around school. The type of food around campus or on campus is unhealthy. There is not much variety of food, either.

Creditless Classes: Setback or a Motivator

This college, along with many others, is regulated by the city government. The city knows the rate of obesity in America, and in city run colleges and schools, is very high. If the government regulated and paid close attention and started serving healthy food at Colleges and schools, they could make more money and the students would be satisfied with the food.

Private colleges like Saint John’s University have a big cafeteria with a variety of food such as Subway, Freshens, and Bistro’s. Some food options are unhealthy such as Burger King and Taco Bell but the majority of the food served is healthy. Eating at a cafeteria like this makes it easy to choose from a variety of healthy food options.

The type of food around campus is Mcdonalds, Chinese food which contains large amounts of MSG, a Waffles and Dinges truck, and the Halal Cart. Then there’s the school cafeteria, which doesn’t serve much healthy food. They serve bacon, eggs, sausage, and sugar filled muffins. The cafeteria has a few healthy food options but they don’t get attention because it’s usually too late to buy them. Other students have already bought them.

Advising The Knockout Game

continued from cover page

they’re going to punch somebody out — sometimes as simple as $5 bet between themselves.”

According to the New York Police Department, there have been about nine attacks in the city that are linked to the knockout game, in which suspects have pummelled unsuspecting victims, hoping to make them unconscious with one punch.

The latest victim of the knockout game was Yvonne Small, a 76-year-old, in East New York. The attack happened shortly after activists held a rally about another knockout game. These are real people whose lives are not only being put in jeopardy but in many cases destroyed.

The Knockout Game is not a new trend. It is not known why the Knockout Game has experienced a resurgence. However, it seems that the perpetrators are just attacking out of boredom so they can brag to their friends. There are no other clear factors, say police investigators, as to why these incidents are on the rise, though one theory is that youth are watching Knockouts on YouTube and then reenacting their own versions. Instating this bill, it is hoped, would help reduce these violent attacks.

Another recent knockout game case occurred on November 22. Police charged one man for punching a 24-year-old Jewish man. In response to that attack in Brooklyn, David Greenfield, a New York City Councilman, told ABC station TV in New York, that officials should send a message of “zero tolerance,” for these assaults.

Police have seen similar attacks in Brooklyn and they believe the motive might be related to anti-Semitism. The NYPD hate crime task force is investigating the cases.

Jim Tedisco, a Republican state Assemblyman, has proposed a bill that would classify the knockout attacks as gang assaults, and would try as adults youths who participate in these attacks. Perpetrators would then face up to 25 years in prison.

Tedisco stated, “These twisted and cowardly thugs are preying on innocent bystanders and they don’t care if the victims are young, old, a man or woman,” “Life isn’t a video game. These are real people whose lives are not only being put in jeopardy but in many cases destroyed.”

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Advising The Knockout Game

continued from cover page

Voice of victim

Creditless Classes: Setback or a Motivator

continued from cover page

had similar thoughts. Twenty-nine year-old Baruch graduate Lauro Mendez said, “I think I spent about six and half years to graduate. I know it is a little over the average time to graduate from college but I had no choice because those Basic Education programs significantly delayed my graduation date. The crucial fact is, those classes from Basic Education program didn’t help that much. It almost forced me to leave school for a semester because of financial reasons. [CUNY] charges the same amount of money or more but there’s no benefit with that. I felt a huge discouragement because the time was running out and my money for tuition ran out rapidly.”

Though the value of Basic Education may be debated, the one thing for certain is that they delay students who plan to attend graduate school, and cost the same amount of money as regular classes. The students who are enrolling question its stated purpose to assist students.

The diversity of students in college has been seen to be a foundation of college education. There might be some students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds or who have poor math skills. It appears that the majority of the students who have these disadvantages have a deep sigh of frustration regarding CUNY’s Basic Education policies.
Empowering Girls In NYC

By Alejandra Velasquez

We’re all known to have our own sense of insecurities, either by not being happy with our personal appearance or not having accomplished what we’ve wanted to – and this is thought to be especially true for young girls.

In response, the streets of NYC are sporting a new ad campaign geared towards young girls between the ages of 7 to 12. The $330,000 campaign, launched September 30th and created by Samantha Levine, was sponsored by Mayor Bloomberg and has received mixed reviews.

Some say “we needed this,” while others think the message to girls remains the same. The ad features twenty-one girls of different ages and races, some even including the daughters of city workers, and is meant to fuel empowerment amongst young girls. Being the first citywide campaign to tackle body insecurities, either by not being happy with our personal appearance or not having accomplished what we’ve wanted to – and this is thought to be especially true for young girls.

In order to test the efficacy of the message, a focus group was created before the campaign was officially released. When young girls were asked to respond to how they felt when they saw the posters, one little girl expressed that the campaign made her feel as though it was okay to be dirty, not dress up all the time, not wear makeup and go out and have fun.

Although this may seem to resonate well with younger girls, some grown women still feel the campaign a bit contradictory. One woman, Kat Stoelfeffi, in a letter to the editor in The New York Times, expressed that there’s something slightly problematic about the NYC girls project message saying “Don’t worry about how you look. You look beautiful.” She points out, “It doesn’t feel quite right. We would never put up posters that say, “I’M A BOY: I’m handsome the way I am.”

There are good things that have come from the campaign, however, others report. Little girls who have seen the campaign are genuinely feeling better about themselves and taking notice. In another letter to the Times, Ann Shalof reports that when she was aboard the 1 train in the Bronx, she saw a little girl about the age of 6 or 7 who had spotted one of the posters. After reading the message the little girl exclaimed to her mother “that’s me!” The mother looked stunned but happy with the response she got from her daughter, saying “it worked.”

The campaign may have caused controversy, but it’s nonetheless a small step to help out the younger generation and the young girls that will slowly grow into young women.

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The City

Tobacco Age Raised to 21

By Alyssa Siano

New York City’s Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, has recently signed legislation banning the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21. Although for years the legal age to purchase tobacco was 18 years old, Bloomberg hoped that this law would help prevent young people from experimenting with it. City health officials say that 80 percent of smokers start before the age of 21.

Due to the tremendous growth of technology, studies have shown that tobacco is known to be the leading cause of lung cancer. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking causes 90% of lung cancers. Students at QCC express mixed feelings about the new legislation. Most students were aware of the change, but some were just hearing about it for the first time. The new law could have a big impact on college students who smoke, particularly at community colleges, since most students are between the ages of 17 and 20 years old.

A 20 year-old student at QCC and a non-smoker, Josephine Phillips, had no idea about this new law. But she does think that it was a good idea to try and help prevent others from becoming addicted at a young age.

Although the age has been raised to 21 to purchase tobacco, it does not put a permanent end to smoking for those under the age. Teenagers are still allowed to have tobacco legally in their possession. Bloomberg’s hope is to reduce the amount of young peoples experimenting at an age when they are most likely to become addicted.

Nick Pisacano, another student at QCC, has been a smoker for many years and is now over the age of 21. Although this new law change does not currently affect Nick, he can relate to it from personal experience. Nick admits that he believes that this change is “messed up”, but also stated that he has been buying cigarettes since he was 14. “If people want it,” he reasons, “they will find a way to get it.”

Many people are confused because although the law has changed for tobacco, retailers are still able to sell their wares to those who are at least 18 years of age. Some delis don’t seem to follow the law and still sell to minors. Even if they don’t sell them a whole pack, they will sell them “loosies” which is a single cigarette.

Daniela Davi, a 19 year old student, is a stress-only smoker, but does not feel like the new law is going to change anything.

New York is the first major city to make 21 the minimum age to buy tobacco products. Although the bill has already been signed, the new law does not go into effect until 6 months afterwards. Next spring is when we will start to see some changes in the stores of New York. Only time will tell how big of an impact it will have on the people of New York City, especially those who are under the age of 21.

Fare Hike 2015

By Abraham Islam

After a big fare hike earlier this year, beware MTA riders! “It’s going to happen” said then MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota of fare hikes back in 2012. It’s now the end of 2013 and current MTA Chairmen Thomas Prendergast is delivering.

According to the chairman, fares will rise 4% in 2015, and then rise again in 2017. (The original plan was to raise the fare a full 7.5%,) In 2017 the fare for a single ride will cost $2.75.

Anthony Davi a resident of Queens who uses both the subway and bus daily had this to say: “I stopped driving to school and work because it was getting too expensive. Soon I’m going to be walking.”

The MTA is seeing increased tax revenues and they are aggressively using cost cutting strategies. Both factor into why they are able to afford a lower fare hike than originally planned. The MTA is an old system, much of it over 100 years old, and is very expensive to maintain. Costs go to new subway cars, station rehabilitations and big projects such as the Second Avenue Subway. The MTA spends about $16 billion a year to operate, maintain, and improve its system.

Addressing the fare hike and plan, Chairman Prendergast explained, “Our customers want value, which is quality and quantity of service, and that service has to be reliable and safe. Through this financial plan, that’s what we work to provide.”

Some improvements planned include:
-Extending the M from Myrtle Ave to Delancey St - Essex St on weekends
-Adding Q77 service on Sundays
-Restoring Q31 on weekends
-Expanding LIRR service to Greenpoint
-Restructuring Staten Island express bus service via the Lincoln Tunnel to Midtown

The MTA will give its riders the chance to speak and voice their opinions at public hearings before the increase goes into effect in 2015.
Teen Pregnancy Campaign Raises Controversy

By Sabrina Jackson

All through the city of New York there have been posters placed of children with sad phrases like “I’m twice as likely not to graduate high school because you had me as a teen,” or “Honestly Mom ... chances are he won’t stay with you. What happens to me?” The implication is that these children are at higher risk of living in poverty due to teen pregnancy. Our current mayor, Michael Bloomberg decided to run this campaign called “The Real Cost of Teen Pregnancy” during his last few months in office with hopes of lowering the number of teen pregnancies and educating young people about having children at young ages.

Along with these posters there is a text number that sends out facts about teen pregnancy. This text number also includes a game that includes two teen parent characters, Anaya and Louise, facing the struggles that come along with teen pregnancy by having friends and family humiliate them using harsh words. While trying to prevent teen pregnancy and lower the rate of poverty, Mayor Bloomberg is also raising controversy by running this campaign. Many moms who are already teen parents feel as though they are being attacked with these posters. Many people feel that he is not only trying to prevent teen pregnancy and educate with these signs, but he is also targeting a group of women who are teen moms.

The Mayor’s office has responded to the criticism this campaign has received by stating that “teen pregnancy has consequences — and those consequences are extremely negative, life-altering and most often disproportionately borne by young women.”

Bronx Councilwomen Annabel Palma who became a mother at the age of 17 feels as though teen parents are being targeted by this campaign. “Bloomberg administration is using fear tactics to stigmatize young parents who really need resources and guidance,” she argues. “Its dismissive tone perpetuates hurtful stereotypes about teen parents and their children.”

Mayor Bloomberg has already issued different ways to prevent teen pregnancy by mandating sex education classes in public high schools and making sure that high school nurses can provide student with different forms of birth control and other contraceptives. According to the New York Times, the teen pregnancy rate in the city has declined by 27 percent over the past ten years but Mayor Bloomberg and his administration aim to make the teen pregnancy rate decline even more with this campaign.

Sports

SAY IT AIN’T SO, CANO!

By Denise Camacho

Major League Baseball free agents are finding new homes and new uniforms on their backs during this offseason. Die-hard fans prepare to overcome anxiety as trade rumors erupt and spread like wildfire. Many fans are left heartbroken with the future absence of their favorite player from their beloved team. On the other hand, many fans also celebrate when big named players seal the deal and are officially added to next year’s roster.

On December 6, 2013, multiple sources reported that Yankee second baseman Robinson Cano had agreed to terms on a 10-year, $240 million contract to play for the Seattle Mariners, $65 million and three years more than Yankees have offered. Yankees had offered a 7-year, $175 million contract, which Robinson Cano declined. Cano reportedly asked the Yankees for $235 million to stay but Yankees counter-offer was to only increase from $170 to $175 million.

Born and bred a Yankee, Cano is one of the team’s most beloved players. Cano has helped the team gain their 27th ring in the 2009 World Series Championship versus the Philadelphia Phillies. Cano is a five time All-Star (2006, 2010-2013), five-time Silver Slugger Award winner (2006, 2010-2013), Home Run Derby Champion (2011), and two time Gold Glove Award winner (2010, 2012).

Cano is loved by Yankee fans for his work in garnering many of the team’s victories. His contributions have led them to the playoffs every year, (excluding the 2008 and 2013 seasons in which Yankees were denied a postseason for the second time in 19 years). During the 2013 season, Cano batted .314 with 190 hits, 27 home runs, and 107 RBI in 160 games played. On October 31, 2013, his contract with New York expired and he became a free agent.

Yankees universe had gone haywire from the loss of their homegrown superstar and favorite second baseman. Many fans believed his marketability and talent could not be matched either inside or outside any other organization. Many fans feel he is irreplaceable, though others feel the Yankees organization did the right thing by not raising the offer and letting him go.

Robinson Cano’s new agent, rapper mogul Jay-Z was the man behind the whole set up. Cano’s situation represents a solid victory for Jay-Z’s Roc Nation Sports. The rapper signed Cano as the first client for his sports agency in April 2013. Despite reports of Jay-Z putting the deal in jeopardy, the entertainer came out on top with the Cano deal.

Robinson Cano is officially a Seattle Mariner, and as he ends an era of being a Yankee, many fans are still in shock and in despair. Many would have believed he would become a Yankee legend and hold a similar type of legacy that former Yankee treasures such as Don Mattingly or Bernie Williams had.

Yankees are looking forward to a brighter future despite losing an important key player. The organization is currently trying to rebuild a potential playoff team and has done so by signing free agents such as C Brian McCann, OF Jacoby Ellsbury and Carlos Beltran, IF Kelly Johnson and also re-signing P Hiroki Kuroda. Although these additions boosted their roster, Yankees are still in the works of reconstructing a team that must see October. The next few months will determine if the Yankees are on the right path to a 28th title.
Sluggers & Swimmers Gear up for the Winter Season

By Melissa Romeo

Queensborough Community College is the only community college in CUNY to offer a women’s softball team. And now that the colder months have come swimming season is in session.

The women’s softball team play against SUNY’s including Suffolk, and Nassau, CUNY York, and as far as Prince George in Maryland. The 2014 season starts by playing two doubleheaders in Maryland in April.

One team player, Soribel, said the eight-hour drive to Maryland creates bonding time between the players, a great way to kick start the vigorous season.

In the season from January to May there are twenty-one games composed of mostly scrimmages. These help improve the players’ skills for the doubleheaders or as Soribel calls it, “the real game.”

During 2008-2009, the team won the Northern regionals, and although they did not win regionals from 2011-2013, they did win most of their scrimmages.

Since the team is off season they are in the process of training. A few trainings are pitching and catching led by assistant coaches, Alicia Sanchez & Sabrinna Moore, hitting and conditioning led by QCC Baseball Coach, Roger Mischel, and conditioning led by QCC Assistant Track Coach, Aziwoh Ayafor.

Women’s Softball Coach Pete Marchitello has one goal he hopes to achieve this season: “to achieve a winning record and advance to the regional tournament at Westchester CC”.

For most people the winter season is the time to stay toasty indoors, but for the swim team competition begins.

The swimming teams compete with other Junior Colleges in the region. The only teams in the area are Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), and Suffolk Community College. There are many teams located in upstate New York, and the team competes against them at the District Championships held in mid-February.

The Men’s and Women’s swimming team train and practice together, and the meets are held at the same time, but they compete separately. For every race women’s event is followed by men’s event.

The swim team’s captain Vlada says they have invitational meets, duel meets, championship meets known as CUNY Championship, and the regional and national championships. “Our first meet this year, the women took second place out of six teams and men took third out of six teams”. She also said “A few of our swimmers already qualify for nationals from just the first meet.”

The workout routine for the swim team consists of four to five two-hour practices a week. The practice consists of stroke technique and training and conditioning sets. The swimmers will swim between 3,000 to 5,000 yards during these practices.

Despite different agendas, one idea that is shared between the coaches is dedication and motivation.

Kevin Quinn, coach of the swimming team stated, “As a coach my main challenge is to keep the swimmers motivated to work hard”.

Along the same lines, Softball Coach Pete Marchitello stated, “Study, be dedicated, make sacrifices, practice hard, work together and learn quickly.”
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What will you do with your LIU degree?
Have you ever walked into the Holocaust Museum on our campus? If you haven’t, you really should. Not only can QCC campus students walk in and learn what the Holocaust was about, but we can also encounter many feelings and face the question of how people can be so cruel and do harm to innocent people.

When you enter the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center And Archives toward the back right, there is a large wall where there are some paintings of women that caught my eye. The entire wall here is devoted to these paintings. When I first walked in, my eye was caught by captions and quotes such as, “I died without an apology.”

I met the executive director of the Kupferberg Center, Dr. Author Flug, who was very kind and without any hesitation, answered any questions that I had. He began by telling me the story of the exhibits found in the museum.

From 1928 to the end of World War II, many labor brokers went around offering jobs in Japan. Many women from Korea, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and The Philippines were approached, but the majority were Korean. An example: a family or a daughter of a poor peasant was offered a job and these women had to offer to work in order to survive, and were told that it was to help in the war effort. They were lied to about work; they were told they would be employed as a helper, an assistant, a nurse, a kitchen worker, a laundry worker, or something similar. Instead, these women became soldiers’ sex slaves, also known as “comfort women.”

Under this system, comfort women were coerced into being soldiers’ sex slaves and were tortured or sold into slavery to the Japanese military. Many Asian women died because of the abuse and mistreatment they received. Many of them are old now and the government has been waiting until they all die to keep this history secret. They have suffered in silence for many years.

Several women’s movement organizations such as comfort-women.org were organized to support these women that have suffered in silence for so long and have led to the exposure of their victimization. The price that these women paid has been ignored. It is with courage that the only few left have spoken about their pain and the price paid for talking could not be any worse than the price they have paid for being silent. People must be informed about what happened and spread the word.

Not only does our QCC campus have a museum, but it also offers internship programs about comfort women. Last year in July, a few Korean comfort women survivors joined us from South Korea to speak for themselves about what happened. These comfort women were interviewed and shared their stories.

The museum includes portraits of some of the comfort women interviewed. The artist spoke to the comfort women and painted them as if they were much younger by imagining how they looked at the time they were abducted.

Our QCC campus has hung them up as part of the museum because they would like to inform something many of us don’t know. Most of us don’t know that many comfort women have died without receiving an apology. Since our campus is so fortunate to have this exhibit, visit the Holocaust Museum, located in the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives, or join the internship program at QCC so you can be part of spreading the word.
African Cultures Unites With QCC

By L.C.

“Little Miss Sunshine”: The Musical

By Jasmine Allen

When I first approached our campus Art Exhibit for our QCC newspaper, I was expecting to see just a few small rooms with art pieces like paintings, sculptures, or even a few artifacts. I am very pleased to say that was not the case at all. This art gallery was not only spacious, but well thought out and organized in all its details, and the best part was that it really looks like a place that people would pay money to get into but admission is free. Cool or what? The artwork that most caught my attention was included in the upcoming African exhibit called Recent Acquisitions from the Stewart J. Warkow Collection, which opens December 14th.

I had read: “African art, is not “ethnographic” art but is “Art.” It is not craft (though it can display great craftsmanship) but it expresses a time and a culture and an individual’s interpretation of that reality. If it is to be effective, it must adhere to communal traditions. It must encompass mythology, magic, religion, history, and local references. Yet it can express deep emotions and beauty through its volumes, shapes, line, planes, proportions, details, surfaces, and internal relationships or architectonics – these qualities of art are understood and practiced by the master carvers but generally not discussed or written about in Africa.”

We can see that through this collection, which includes African weapons, masks, dolls, spears, and hats. Each piece is designed to have meaning deeper than meets the eyes. The weapons, which are made of iron, were used for fighting. The mask was used for traditional ceremonial purposes, but one in the exhibit was actually used for fighting. The mask was used for traditional performing, and the hats were used and worn by the African medicine man.

One of the dolls is a mossi doll, which is used by girls as playthings and women as an aid to conception. When a woman moves in with her husband, the bride takes the doll with her. One of the masks is under the Dogon people. The mask is called the Sirigue, which is used for funeral purpose or mourning. The Collection of Spears is under the same deity, named Shango, who is the god of thunder and lightning.

These are but a few details as to the traditions and meanings behind each piece of artwork in this collection. Now that I have been there I can’t wait to go on the finished tour and see the full effect!

“Little Miss Sunshine”: The Musical

By L.C.

The minute I heard the musical adaptation of “Little Miss Sunshine” was going into Second Stage Theatre and starring one of my favorite theatre actresses, Stephanie J. Block, I hoped they would have something like rush tickets one hour before the show for $23 (They sell one ticket per person but check the box office). If you like the movie, you are sure to like the show!

The show was cute—a great way to have a nice hour and forty five minute show. Their version did well. I thought it was creative to have moving chairs that represented the seats of their car, motel beds, etc. By the end, the audience was clapping and laughing in a scene that makes everyone want to get up and dance by the end. The cast portrayed a portrait of the family that is dysfunctional in a good way. Will Swenson (soon to be Javert in the Les Mz revival) did well in portraying a father trying to hold his family together. Stephanie J. Block (a Tony Nominee from The Mystery of Edwin Drood) delivers a sweet performance that tightens heartstrings, shown especially in her song “Something Better Better Happen.”. Rory O’Malley (a Tony nominee from The Book of Mormon) as suicidal Uncle Frank, Sheryl’s brother, gets his moment in “How Have I Been?” to when he sees his ex-lover (played by Wesley Taylor (of “The Addams Family” and “Smash”) at a pit stop and has great bonding moments with Dwayne. David Rasche as the R-rated Grandpa tries to put his spin into the role through his crazy dialogue. Hannah Nordberg as Olive is as cute can be. I enjoyed her performance, especially a portion of the competition that many audiences will know from the movie. Little Miss Sunshine is currently running at Second Stage Theatre (Second Stage’s Tony Kiser Theatre, 305 W. 43rd St.) through December 15 2013. You can also try for rush tickets one hour before the show for $23 (They sell one ticket per person but check the box office). If you like the movie, you are sure to like the show!
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Music Is Great For the Soul

By Shonte McKenzie

I LOVE MUSIC; it is transforming, and music has a way of taking people away from the stress of their daily lives into a realm of complete bliss. When listening to music I sometimes get lost in all the pitches, vibrations and rhythm of the song. Sometimes I can’t help but to sing along. However, I was unaware of some deeper benefits of listening and singing music until I interviewed Dr. Steven Dahlke, a professor in QCC’s music department.

Dr. Dahlke realized his passion for music during his senior year of high school. Dr. Dahlke states that the benefits of listening to music are: stress relief, a feeling of not being alone and an understanding of your own feelings. He also explained that singing is a stress reliever; it regulates and calms breathing, lessens anxiety and utilizes all areas of the brain at once. Dr. Dahlke also says that vocal exercises relieve neck and jaw tension, help to align posture, deepen and slow breathing, regulates heart rate, and builds core abdominal strength.

According to the article “Singing Changes Your Brain,” “singing is like an infusion of the perfect tranquilizer, the kind that both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirit.” The elation may come from endorphins, a hormone released by singing, which is associated with feeling of pleasure. The article mentioned that singing also releases the hormone oxytocin, which has been found to alleviate anxiety and stress. Oxytocin enhances feelings of trust and bonding, which may explain why more studies have found that singing lessens feelings of depression and loneliness.

Dr. Dahlke recommends singing and listening to music on a regular basis because singing is therapeutic. He explained that music helps us to understand communication. Humans communicate with physical gestures and sounds - high, low, loud, soft, fast, slow, and the combinations of tones. Understanding these elements helps us to communicate better and to understand others better.

Everyone should try to engage in some sort of musical activity everyday whether it be singing in the shower or listening to music on the car ride home. To relieve stress and tension, use music.

Upcoming campus concerts are include:

- Holiday Choral Gala celebrate the season with the Queensborough Chorus, QCC Pop Choir, singers from QCC voice classes, and outstanding QCC vocal soloists. Saturday, December 7th 7:00 PM QPAC $5
- Queens Symphonic Band “An International Holiday”. Sunday, December 8th 2:00 PM QPAC $8/$5
- New York Voices vocal jazz concert Wednesday, December 11th 12:15 PM Student Union Lounge FREE.

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5 Pointz: The Institute of Higher Burning

By Nick Piscano

There is no doubt that New York City is at the epicenter of the world’s graffiti community. Artists from all over the world come to New York to display their art whether in a legal or illegal way. Whether legal or not, it is hard to deny the skill or that graffiti is an actual form of art.

New York has several different locations artists can go to display their artwork legally. But none is better known than 5 Pointz which is located in Long Island City, Queens. 5Pointz is an outdoor art exhibition space that is considered to be the world’s premiere graffiti mecca. It is a 200,000 square foot building which walls are covered from top to bottom with aerosol art. It is impossible to miss when you travel on the seven train as it is on your right hand side as soon as you pull out of Queensborough Plaza heading into Manhattan.

Most graffiti artists, whether they are from New York or not, when asked about where they like to paint most say 5 Pointz. According to the 5 Pointz website, the building attracts writers from Canada, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Japan, Brazil, and all over the United States, as well as well known and respected artists from New York.

The building doesn’t only attract graffiti artists but musicians, actors and photographers as well. Some include Doug E Fresh, Kurtis Blow, Grabdmaster Kaz, Mobb Deep, Rahzel, and DJ JS-1. The building was even featured in the final scene of motion picture “Now You See Me.”

But recently a Brooklyn Federal Judge refused to block the demolition of the Graffiti mecca despite his sympathy for the artists who have used it as a urban canvas since the 90’s. The building was then painted over in solid white by the owner of the building. He claimed it was better to have the building white washed than for artists to watch their art be ripped down over the next month. He compared it to a band-aid and how it is better to rip it off quickly.

The land was sold and is to be the new home of luxury condos.

On a facebook page created to help spread the word on 5 Pointz in attempt to prevent the demolition, a follower posted a comment reading “R.I.P 5 Pointz” as many others did. The curator of the building for over ten years responded by stating, “5 Pointz was more than a building. It represented art in more than one form and art can never DIE”.

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Book Review: Life After College

By Nazik Farrag

When it comes to college, graduates might think they learned nearly everything they could, and could navigate with the tools they learned in the “real world.” What happens after the day you’ve been waiting for, when you walk the stage and get the paper proving that you’ve achieved yet another goal in your life? “We Never Learned This in Class!” By Stefana M. Albu offers a guide to surviving after college, assisting recent graduates in choosing the right path to better handle themselves in their future career.

Stephana M. Albu a graduate of Brown University tells us first-hand from her experience what can happen after college. She gives us a glimpse of how she surpassed the struggles that she went through that others may experience in their future. Graduating college makes you feel good, but you have only just entered the “real world.” You have unanswered questions, and may start to feel smothered. Sometimes one can feel cornered, and have negative thoughts about the future. Albu gives advice on how to combat negativity, find one’s self, and not rush things.

Being hired is the next step right after college. Our future bosses are looking at what we can provide for his or her company. Remember, this isn’t college anymore, and they’re not giving you grades.

Albu gives readers an outlook of the many hard phases that college graduates go through, but says that, first, you have to know the truth: “You’re not special. This awakening, rather than presenting a blow to your ego, should allow you to soar towards your true potential.” We’ve spent years being told by our relatives/ friends that we are special but in the real world it’s “every man for themselves’ and that’s the harsh truth.

This book is great in that it screams out “You’re not alone!” showing us that a majority of college graduates just struggle with trying to pay bills, not having the freedom we used to, having the need to get approved by people above us–and possibly having an emotional breakdown. Reading this book makes you feel like you’re having a personal conversation with Albu herself, almost like she takes you under her wing and teaches you. It’s up to you to do something with the advice that has just been given to you.

“We Never Learned This in College” By Stephana M. Albu reminds us that this isn’t the end of the world and provides one with solutions. She shows us that what we go through is normal and it won’t kill us because we’re all in this together. It may seem like we’re heading no were but we’ll reach our goals eventually. Today’s economic environment may seem like a total dead end but Albu encourages readers with the sense that “you’ve come this far, you can’t give up yet!’
Is Our Society Obsessed With Celebrities?

By Alessandra Oppedisano

Celebrities play a huge role in our society. At this time of year especially, everywhere you turn, you see a celebrity advertised product. One of the most popular celebrity products is perfume. We constantly see commercials of perfumes by “Beyoncé”, “Britney Spears”, “Taylor Swift”, and “Justin Bieber,” just to name a few. These perfumes sell out like crazy, especially during the holiday season. So why is our society really buying these perfumes? Is it because they like the smell? Or is because it involves their favorite celeb?

The same goes for clothing. Almost every celeb has a clothing line out. One of the most popular clothing lines out right now comes from one of the most popular families in reality TV, “The Kardashians”. “The Kardashian Kollection,” (notice the clever marketing) is sold at Sears, along with bed comforters and numerous other products. So why do millions of people really buy the clothes? Is it because they really like the clothing? Or is it because it’s a Kardashian product?

The advertising industry makes millions of dollars on celeb advertisements and products. Advertisers know how to sell. Basically you can put a huge star next to a product and chances are it will sell. Heidi Klum and Sarah Jessica Parker are just a few celebs chosen to represent hair products in commercials, for example. Stylists know how to market their products and who with.

Artists also make millions of dollars selling their own tour merchandise and any other product that has their image on it. Do we really need “Metallica” glow in the dark glow sticks? Or a “Justin Beiber” singing toothbrush? It seems like there is no limit to what people “fans” will buy.

GlobalGrind.com listed a few of the “weirdest celebrity merchandise” out right now. From “One Direction” UGG boots, to “Justin Beiber” shower curtains. This is a great example of how people will almost buy anything, as long as their favorite celebrity is on it.

Some people believe that if they buy products such as clothes from their favorite celeb, they are not only supporting them, but they can be “like” them, by “dressing” like them.

According to CBSNEWS.com, Eric Hollander, M.D., professor of psychiatry and direction of the Compulsive, Impulsive and Anxiety Disorders program at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City says, “there are increasing number of us for whom the fascination with celebrities is a substitution for real life— with the focus on a celebrity replacing the focus that should be on our own lives.

Abby Aronowitz, Ph.D., psychologist from Long Island, explains, “information about the celebrity, or any little thing from their life, is like a fix the worshipper must have—they are almost compelled to learn more, read more, know more. And it’s nonending”. Psychologists believe that there is more to celebrity obsession than just being a “fan”. Sometimes people confuse reality with non reality. They shift the focus from their own lives onto someone else. They are avoiding the real issue, which is, why do they need to focus on a particular celebrity to make their lives happier?

It seems that many people in society are easily influenced by the fame and glam that goes along with being a “celebrity”. People look up to these public figures. People will continue to buy, and advertisers will continue to sell their products, as long as it’s represented by the “right celebrity”.

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Holiday Health Tips

By Mickel Necsuta & Anthony Freyta

It’s that time of year again when people are getting ready for the holiday season. Which means here comes the delicious food. It also means there goes our health.

Thanksgiving is one of the biggest national holidays in the USA. It is the time to get together with the family and become lazy. People tend to put on all the weight that they have lost during the year—and sometimes more. Their workout and healthy eating habits take a backseat to everything else. Students usually follow a routine before the holidays: some work, go to school, or some stay in shape by working out, but typically have a different approach once the holidays arrive.

Usually, people don’t eat anything the day before Thanksgiving and Christmas so they could have a good appetite. They know that when dinner time comes, they are going to be bombarded with a massive splurge of goodies, so what do they do? They starve themselves for the entire day, so that they will have plenty of room to store all that wonderful stuff as FAT.

According to Matt Weik at Bodybuilding.com, the average American will consume more than 4,500 calories on Thanksgiving Day and the average person consumes 6,000 calories on Christmas day.

People forget about their meal plans that they have made before Thanksgiving and Christmas came around the corner and they overlook the fact of how many calories, protein, and carbohydrates they need for their body.

The foods that students are eating now are the ones that we usually eat once a year, like turkey, stuffing, pies, pumpkin bread, cranberry sauce, Christmas cake, gingerbread cookies, candy canes, eggnog and banana bread. Students start to become lethargic. The minute the holidays come, we tend to not stay as physical anymore and don’t realize we have wasted money on a gym membership.

The reality is people follow this pattern every single year, however there are ways to overcome this trend.

A Thanksgiving meal is actually quite a healthy one in certain ways. Turkey is known for its health benefits, it’s a lean meat and very heart healthy. Anyone on a diet or on a workout plan consumes turkey on a regular basis as a protein source. It’s the stuffing, cranberry sauce, and desserts that ruin the nutrition part of this holiday, but luckily there are ways around that.

Sugar-free is the key word. Sugar-free cranberry sauce, pumpkin and apple pie. Stuffing on the other hand is just a limited product. What I mean by that is that stuffing is composed entirely of carbohydrates, but your body needs carbs as much as protein and vitamins. So one limited serving of stuffing with your turkey is the best way to go. A good amount of nutrition for your body, not enough to harm your diet, and still satisfying your holiday appetite.

Unfortunately, these ‘go around’ tricks cannot be granted to Christmas and New Years. With the sweets at Christmas, and alcohol at New Years eventually everything turns into sugar in your blood. Then after the New Year, your resolution of working out is challenged by the comfort you’ve learned over the holidays.

Unless you are disciplined enough to cancel all of that out completely, there is a way to enjoy those treats and still live up to your diet and fitness routine.

Andrew Del Rosario, a former nutritionist and current trainer at Bally Total Fitness, found a solution where you can enjoy all these holiday treats, and still keep up with your fitness goal. “It’s a long term effort, but it works like a charm.”

“If first off, join a gym or start working out as soon as you can, make the effort to go as much as you can, everyday if possible. Your body and mind adapts to it, it becomes a habit, and after the New Year, it won’t be difficult to workout.”

Andrew also advises, “Everyone with a workout plan or routine has a cheat day. Being that during the holiday your body craves more, your ‘holiday feasts’ always ends up to be huge. So do this, consider the exact day of the holiday a cheat day. That way you can feast on all of your favorite holiday goodies, on the proposed day. Although, this will only work if you keep a steady diet and a good workout routine during the rest of the month.”

Diet and workout all of December, feast on Christmas, then go back to a diet until the next Holiday.

It sounds unconventional, but it works. Exercise on the regular days, spoil yourself on the Holiday. Maybe then your New Years resolution wont be “I will lose the 10lbs I’ve gained” and it’ll be “I will continue to gain muscle, like I have been.”
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An American Martyr

BY RICHARD CAITS

You may or may not know who Bradley Manning is. His courage is gargantuan and his story is colossal. He is a hero of epic proportions.

Bradley Manning was born December 17, 1987 in Crescent, Oklahoma. He is a 26 year old Army Private who was wrongly convicted of espionage and releasing thousands of classified files to WikiLeaks, which was founded by Julian Assange who is himself a target of the U.S. government.

Bradley Manning spent over 1,100 days (or 3 years) in jail before his trial which is unconstitutional. The illegality of what was done to him is shameful. He revealed things like torture in Guantanamo Bay and he was the one who leaked the infamous July 12, 2007 video that was titled “Collateral Murder.” In this video, a group of unarmed Reuters employees were fired upon by Apache helicopter pilots. Manning also released the Afghan War logs which consist of thousands of pages of information on the Afghanistan War. He revealed hundreds of thousands of diplomatic cables that stretch back to the 1960’s.

The cables consist of human rights violations in many overseas countries as well as terrorist activity and even contain American leaders’ impressions and attitudes towards foreign leaders. The diplomatic cables reveal the conversations between American leaders and almost every European leader. They reveal massive human rights violations in countries like Russia and Georgia and Bulgaria.

The cables also show that the leader of Azerbaijan runs the country like his personal piggy bank. The cable reveals corrupt dealings between Italy, France and Russia and arms deals between Russia and Iran. The cables are a treasure trove of interesting reading but by no means did Bradley Manning harm the country by releasing them. Being corrupt, not exposing corruption, is supposed to be illegal, it is the largest leak of information in history and every single piece of information was released for the public’s benefit. The charges against Manning were trumped up in order to allow for the maximum sentence. The information he released did not help the enemy but the politicians say this with the goal of rallying public support against Bradley Manning. This strategy has failed because many people have seen through the lies concerning Bradley Manning’s supposed guilt. If there was any shred of justice the courts could have at least counted his three years in jail as time already served but they did not do that.

What was done to Manning was similar to the case of Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali resisted the draft in 1967 so the government stripped him of his heavyweight title and threw him in prison for four years. It was a spiteful move and the same kind of spitefulness was inflicted on Bradley Manning. They slaughtered Bradley Manning on the altar like a sacrificial lamb. Manning was checked on by guards every five minutes while awaiting trial. His cell was a 6 by 12 foot dungeon with no window and he was allowed not even one moment of privacy. He was detained in Kuwait and desert winters can get extremely cold so Bradley Manning was freezing most of the time. Even in the summer, the desert gets deathly cold at night so we can imagine how Manning must have felt most of the time. He had most of his clothes taken from him.

Obama, a President, who campaigned endlessly on a promise of openness and transparency, has shown himself to be a mere continuation of Bush era policies. Remember waterboarding and drone attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan? The President has not stopped them for a second. The President in all fairness is not entirely to blame. The heads of the CIA, FBI, NSA, as well as all the branches of the Department of Defense have shamelessly supported such McCarthy-like tactics. Manning’s imprisonment brings to mind Hugh Thompson, a helicopter pilot who attempted to stop the Mai Lai massacre – the killing of hundreds of peasant farmers in 1968 during the Vietnam War, in which men, women, and children were indiscriminately murdered and their houses were set on fire – who was called a traitor by some people in Washington D.C. The only person who ever received any discipline, Second Lieutenant William Calley Jr., was sentenced to three and a half years of house arrest for his role in the My Lai massacre. His sentence was originally life imprisonment but it was commuted to house arrest by the biggest thug in American history, Richard “I am not a crook” Nixon.

If Bradley Manning had pulled a My Lai massacre he probably would have gotten off squeaky clean.

Blackwater security contractors have a history of unprovoked killings in Iraq and Afghanistan and not only do they serve no jail time, their names are not even released because the government wants to protect their identity. Since Blackwater is an American private military company operating under the protection of the U.S. government but outside of the same regulations that apply to regular troops, Blackwater practically has free reign in Iraq and Afghanistan. Numerous infractions and outright crimes have been committed by U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and Bradley Manning got thirty five years in Fort Leavenworth for exposing things that in a just world would lead to the perpetrators going to jail, not the exosers of the perpetrators. This is like a guy calling the cops because he witnesses his neighbor kill his wife and then the police throw him in jail for exposing his neighbor’s crime.

The treatment of Bradley Manning makes it a little hard to believe in “If you see something, say something” Manning’s treatment is injustice of the highest magnitude and in a just world would not be imprisoned, but would be given a Nobel Peace Prize.
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