Interview with Colombian Education Reform Leader

By Sergio Bejarano

Out of a war-ridden country full of violence and repression came a young man named Sergio Fernandez, a student of philosophy and political science. The brave student activist gained popularity after a great debate on “Caracol TV,” an international Colombian television station that also airs in the United States. His debate on live television and his movement’s triumphs caught the attention of activist groups in New York City. A group of Colombian activists invited him to the U.S. so that he could speak about his student movement and share his experiences with students in New York and Boston. The young Rolo with glasses, who seemed quiet and calm, spoke to a group of CUNY students at Baruch College. He spoke about the greatest victory ever achieved by university students in Colombian history. Yet the crowd’s expression seemed like they were trying to understand something about Colombia’s current crisis. Professor Sanders of Baruch College then gave a little lecture about student struggles in Latin America. The lecture was so passionate it electrified the room with solidarity towards the Latino struggle. To our surprise, security guards outside the classroom were trying to listen in on the left-leaning ideologies being discussed. A student quickly snapped a shot of the security guards trying to spy on the lecture. This left Sergio Fernandez surprised at how militarized the New York School system has become. He left having witnessed how the CUNY police at Baruch College tried to intimidate and interfere in student activities.

To those who have some awareness of Colombia’s current conflicts and socioeconomic situation, the student uprising is a shimmer of hope shined into a dark era of current conflicts and socioeconomic situation, the student uprising is a shimmer of hope shined into a dark era of violence and injustice. When President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos presented Congress with the education reform called Law 30, he affirmed that this law would be passed regardless of any protest or opposition against it. This law proposed to raise tuition and privatize most public universities. It wanted to turn education into a market and let multi-national corporations dictate or regulate the funding for a university. One of the minds behind the student uprising is Sergio Fernandez. This well-spoken student from Soacha, Bogota was one of the key debaters against this reform. He enlightened people all over the country with his elegant Castilian Spanish and his statistic-informed rhetoric, which convinced even his opponents. When he came to New York, I had the opportunity to meet with him and conduct an interview. These are some of the questions I asked him.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Explain to me a little about M.A.N.E, the “Mesa Amplia Nacional Estudiantil” which translates to “The national student-wide table,” and their fight against neoliberalism in Colombia?

Sergio Fernandez: M.A.N.E was born last year. It was product of the ratification of the higher education reform called Law 30. The government of Colombia presented a higher education reform that pretended to apply similar negotiations of that in the free trade agreement with the EE.UU. The reform wanted to conduct the privatization of all the public universities. This was a reform that no one had ever dared to try in the past. This is the main reason M.A.N.E was created, and this reform caused the creation of M.A.N.E.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Can you explain or elaborate a little on what (M.A.N.E) is?

Sergio Fernandez: The M.A.N.E is a force in the Minimum Program which constitutes six points that define what our proposal is for a new higher education reform in the country.

We have chapters in many universities in the country. The power of M.A.N.E is through chapter voting and coming to a consensus; the only requirements for each chapter are to accept the six-point demands and contribute to the organization by working hard and collaborating. Any student who understands that education should be a human right forms part of M.A.N.E. It is still a young effort against an old struggle but it is an organization that has resisted right wing President Santos and his politics of imperialistic bestiality and most importantly has now

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Dear Queensborough Communique,

My name is Tai and I am a second-year Architecture student. The semester of 2012 started off normal like any other semester, but something was different. My architecture classes Construction Methods class, which consists mainly of drafting done by hand or by Auto Cad, was being held in a room where there were only computers and no drafting boards. Students who draft by hand are not able to draft during class; instead they have to either sit in on other classes, if there is available seats, or wait until the room is free.

Apparently, the upper management is getting rid of the drafting rooms to make room for remedial classes. I know it is important for everyone to have a proper education but lowering the standards to make room for more students is not the way to go. Has Queensborough become a new high school or something? Why is having to re-teach so many students the basics taken priority over actual freshmen and sophomores classes?

I personally find this to be very disturbing and I believe everyone at Queensborough needs to be aware of what is happening to our school. Every student at Queensborough has a right to have an equal education; there is no reason why high school classes should be given priority over college courses. Something must be done before all of the architecture rooms become the grounds of the new Queensborough High School students.

Thank you,
Tai Lildar

P.S. I currently have a petition circulating with signatures with many of my classmates who feel the same way. Anyone who wants to sign the petition can reach me at tlildar52@tigemail.qcc.edu.

NYPIRG Announces Refunds for Students

Students on this campus voted to support a New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) chapter. Like other clubs and organizations on campus, NYPIRG is funded through the mandatory student activity fee. NYPIRG offers a refund of the portion of the current student activity fee earmarked for NYPIRG to any student who does not wish to contribute.

The New York Public Interest Research Group is New York State’s largest student-directed non-partisan research and advocacy organization. Students involved with NYPIRG’s 20 college campus chapters across New York State become educated and energized participants on campus and in their surrounding communities. NYPIRG students learn event planning, problem solving, debate skills, research, and writing by organizing and engaging in meaningful issue-based campaigns. NYPIRG provides an arena for students to actively engage in civics while learning how to make a difference.

To request a refund or for further information please contact: Makiba Howard Queensborough Community College NYPIRG Chapter Student Union Bldg., Lower Level Mhoward@NYPIRG.org

Refund Amount (Spring 2012): $5 per full-time student; $3 per part-time student.
In October 2008, Communique' published “Down the Drain,” an article rating the overall cleanliness, functionality and availability of toiletries in our restrooms. Editors Catherine Lagoa and Alysson Arikilian conducted a campus-wide inspection of all 12 of the women’s restrooms. They observed that “of the twelve bathrooms inspected on campus only three were adequately stocked and well equipped” the reason being that the three good bathrooms were located near administrative staff. Lagoa and Arikilian reference the other nine restrooms as “abominable,” “atrocious,” and “disturbing,” noting that since majority of the restrooms lacked hand soap “only one out of six people [females] who use the restroom washes their hands” estimating that approximately 19,167 do not! Shocking.

We decided to do our own search and four years later what have we found? Actually of the 12 bathrooms all, yes ALL, have toilet tissue in each functioning stall. However, not every restroom has paper towels and not every soap dispenser dispenses soap. On average only one dispenser works per bathroom. QCC boasts eco-friendly automatic dryers, yet very few of them have power. So the issue of functionality still remains, but the maintenance repairs have not gone unnoticed. In the 2008 issue editors mentioned on that in one of the bathrooms part of the ceiling fixture was missing. We have not noticed the dire need for any such repair but we have seen a general lack in cleanliness. Whose fault is this? Many think it lies within budget allocations, or custodial enthusiasm and this may be true, but as students, the ones who are using the restrooms, we have a responsibility to make sure we keep our bathrooms clean. As females, particularly, there needs to be more effort made to keep things sanitary. Every restroom stall has an individual napkin disposal and, although they may not be secured, there are also trashcans. As a general rule, everyone must clean up after themselves, take pride in your school by taking pride in yourself. This is no longer an issue of long overdue repairs but rather just plain laziness. Then after you have done your part if a particular bathroom lacks supplies there are phone numbers posted on the restrooms doors you may call to report a re-stock.

Always keep in mind that bathrooms are the perfect place to harbor germs and bacteria. According to an article published by Askmen.com on the FOX News website, “The common cold, E. coli and hepatitis A all flourish in public toilets and sinks just waiting to pounce and infect.” However, the likeliness of catching a severe illness is slim to none. We all have had that moment when you walk in to a stall, take one look, cringe at the sight of a foreign substance and slowly retreat, shaking your head in dismay. We’ve all been there. So now, take the QCC challenge and let us collectively change a few faulty habits to better our campus. But first take a look at the improvement of our restrooms four years later.
Award Ceremony for Basic Skills Students

By Melissa Duplan

On Wednesday, April 4, 2012, the Basic Skills Department held its annual ceremony for the students in basic skills courses. The students at the award ceremony participated in a basic skills contest for which they had to write stories. The students later received awards for their achievements. Proud family, friends, and professors were excited to see that the students had won awards and prizes for their accomplishments. Professor Manette Berlinger and Professor David Rothman were the directors of the award ceremony and they also presented the awards.

According to Professor Berlinger, “When people are put in basic skills they believe that they cannot write, but we always discover that our students not only can write but write so well that their words teach and inspire us.” It is true that these students inspire people especially basic skills students who are just starting to learn how to write these stories; they can inspire people to try to learn something and not give up.

According to Professor David Rothman, “I think this event gives us an opportunity to celebrate beautiful pieces of writing. So much of writing today is related to test stories; they can inspire people to try to learn something and not give up.”

At the award ceremony, including student government president Kay Oluwadamisi Atanda. This ceremony was a great experience for the students, their family, and their friends to see.

Many students had participated in the Basic Skills contest. Jennifer Sanchez, Katherine Nevarez, Jesse Gidwill, Barbara Lynch DeLeon, Claire Albrecht, Sungmi Kim, Angela Aquino, Nasibah Ulladassier, Honglin Han, Ying Yang, Guoxin Qiao, Fiza Sami, Mya Sse, Shun Zheng, Jun Hao Zhang, Alyse Weiss, Erik Siguenza, Amanda Lanza, and Valerie Saintile are a few students that were in the contest. These students were also presented with awards. The professors that taught them are Professor Ira Greenfest, Manette Berlinger, Jed Shahar, Susan Hock, Edward Kenny, David Rothman, Rochelle Salms, Weier Ye, Joanne Kiprais, and Kathleen Rowe. The Student Government also attended this ceremony, including student government president Kay Oluwadamisi Atanda.

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achieved a small victory, which was the overthrow of the education reform. Now we are currently working on finding a more democratic approach.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Well, you accomplished the repeal, can you tell us what where some positive strategies or other tactics that resulted in setbacks for your movement?

Sergio Fernandez: Well first we insisted that we must translate the reform into a single language that people can understand. This made it easier to inform the people about the gravity of this reform and the negative consequences for lower income students. Then we hit the auditoriums we went from class to class, college to college, business to business, and from mall to mall. Even in the buses, in the streets explaining, the gravity of the reform. The President did use the media against us saying we were infiltrated by guerrilla terrorists and that we had no argument, trying to discredit the movement as much as possible. What we did against these attacks was mobilize with creativity. We began convocations of marathons, kiss-a-thons, hug-a-thons, free music for the people, concerts, theater shows, classes conducted by students and faculty in the streets. We tried everything in the arts to bring to attention to this important issue. At the end this resulted in the convocation of one of the biggest student mobilization in Colombian history.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Did you guys use any social networking?

Sergio Fernandez: Yes, la M.A.N.E has a commission of communications that has used many social network websites such as Facebook, Twitter and other sites. We created a Facebook account that already has over 54,000 followers. If you compare it to CONFECH in Chile, which is a very popular movement which has 58,000 followers, we already have 54,000. Each university and chapter has its own communication commission that works with all the chapters in collaboration.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Colombia is a country compared to Sudan in terms of inequality and displacement. To make matters worse, the Uribe Administration left the country with the highest unemployment in Latin America. In your interview with Juan Manuel Benitez of NY1 you said that your organization wants to change the politics of the Colombian government. My question is, with a government so corrupt with such a violent record on human rights violations, what will be your strategy to change this neoconservative state, which uses repression through para-politics?

Sergio Fernandez: History has shown us that the rights of the people don’t come from the governments; it’s rarely been like that. Not even the democratic accomplishments have worked this way. Most democratic victories take off in the streets with the uprising of the masses. It has been demonstrated through the labor rights movements, the civil rights movements for the African americans here in the US, and women’s rights movements. These rights and freedoms have all been accomplished through convocations and mobilizations of the people. We can see this throughout the struggles of history. The public universities don’t exist because of President Juan Manuel Santos or Colombia’s previous administrations but because the people of Colombia organized and struggled for this right.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Many student activists and journalists are killed every year Colombia. In fact, it has one of the highest journalist death tolls in Latin America. This repression causes many activists to flee or become silent. Your movement has gained so much momentum and international recognition, it has become a friction against the state mechanism. You have given a face to this movement, as one of the most interviewed students representing the movement. Do you ever fear for your life or feel it is in danger because of your publicity?

Sergio Fernandez: No, we have made it possible for the movement to become massive. To fight against repression you need to unite the masses. All of our members are professional students who practice non-violence civil disobedience. M.A.N.E has united the excluded political ideologies of all the student body and found a common ground. This is our fortress: unity. We are also helped and supported by syndicates and members of political parties and other social organizations who have momentum.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: It came to my understanding that you had the opportunity to meet with Noam Chomsky, the linguistics professor at MIT. What where some of the things you discussed?

Sergio Fernandez: Yeah, it was a wonderful opportunity; we discussed the student movement in Colombia and his opinions about the struggle. I commented to him about the process the organization has been taking. I spoke to him about the overthrow of the law that we repealed. We exchanged opinions about these topics including the current political situation in Colombia and the US. I even had the opportunity to invite him to participate in construction of the alternative higher education reform. So I invited him to the exposition of materials to the alternative reform that we are constructing. He excepted my invitation and said he will be traveling to Colombia in June or October of this year.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Fascinating, what are your plans after you graduate from the University of Colombia?

Sergio Fernandez: Well, I have two years to graduate so I still have time to choose but most probably I will continue my efforts towards a better society. I will most likely be a professor but who knows where my political consciousness will take me.

Sergio Alejandro Bejarano: Very interesting, well thank you very much it was an honor to meet you. To us Colombian New Yorkers, we see this movement as new hope for a new Colombia of social change, to a transformation of consciousness and social justice. Congratulations on your triumphs, we at Students United for a Free CUNY stand in solidarity. Good luck on your future events, thanks again.

Sergio Fernandez: Thank You.

Interview conducted in Spanish and translated by Sergio Alejandro Bejarano.

All photos are by Sergio Alejandro Bejarano.

Non-translated Spanish words:

Rolo: A native from the Colombian capital of Bogota.

Para politics- or “parapolítica” in Spanish (a combination of the words paramilitar and política) refers to the 2006–present Colombian congressional scandal in which several congressmen and other politicians have been indicted for suspicions of colluding with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a paramilitary group which is responsible for killing thousands of Colombian civilians.
Music, what is it really? Well, music can be defined as many things such as a poem set to a melody, a beat, or a rhythm. It is an escape to get away from the problems that people go through. It’s a being told to an audience, it’s a mood, a feeling, and expresses how each of us feel from time to time, deep down inside. Music is a way of getting out everything you feel and writing it on a piece of paper. You can rap to it, sing to it and just talk about all of the personal things that you want to share with others, those who can relate to your situations, feel sympathy for you, or basically just want to listen. Music can also be like a treatment by helping us when we’re in tough and difficult situations and makes us feel better when we are sad or mad about something. It heals us for a little while and can brighten up our day and our mood; music can define who we are.

There are many different types of music that we all listen to such as rap, hip-hop, pop, rock, etc. Depending on what type if music we each like to listen to, our genres and tastes of music varies. However, great artists/singers exist in every genre or style of music, and depending on the style of the music that an artist sings about, some songs would be positive while others would be negative, just like the world and the people living in it. Positive music talks about the great, wonderful, and exciting things in life such as true friendship, genuine love, succeeding in goals, making dreams a reality, and taking chances into going after something you want or truly desire. While the negative music focuses on the negative and had unfair aspects of life such as being cheated out of, broken-hearted, deceived, used or taken for granted. Then we have songs about world problems such as being in poverty, sick or ill, young ones being killed, soldiers dying in war, racism, and prejudice.

Some examples of positive music are “I’ll Never Break Your Heart” by The Backstreet Boys, “Next To You” by Jordin Sparks, “Cry On Your Pillow” by Menudo, and “Only One For Me” by Brian McKnight. Each of these songs focus on love, heartbreak, and friendship. In the songs “I’ll Never Break Your Heart” and “Cry On Your Pillow” both groups talk about the same love concept, about being in love with that one person they deeply care for and want the ones they are in love with to take a chance with them because they deserve a partner who is better fit for them. The first verse of “I’ll Never Break Your Heart” focuses on that when two of the lead singers from the group says “When I asked you out, you said no but I found out darling that you’re being hurt, you felt that you’d never love again, I deserve a try honey just once give me a chance and I’ll prove this all wrong, you walked in you were so quick to judge, but honey he’s nothing like me.” In the song “Cry On Your Pillow”, the chorus says “He’s tearing you apart, the heartbreak don’t stop, come home and cry on your pillow, I got a shoulder you can lean, take it all I’d give you me cause I really wanna be much more than your pillow, more than a best friend, I think it’s evident that I wanna be more than your pillow girl.” The two other song examples, “Next To You” by Jordin Sparks and “Only One For Me” by Brian McKnight talks about that special someone that they want to be so deeply and irrevocably in love with and cherish the times they spend with each other whenever they’re together.

A good example of a song that discusses world problems such as racism, prejudice, and violence is “Where Is The Love?” by The Black Eyed Peas Featuring Justin Timberlake. The song opens up with all kinds of issues by saying “What’s wrong with the world, overseas we try to stop terrorism but we still got terrorists here livin’ in the USA, the big CIA, The Bloods and The Crips and the KKK, if you only got love for your own race then you only leave space to discriminate and to discriminate only generates hate and when you hate then you’re loved to get rate” then he goes on to say “People killin’, people dyin’, children hurt and you hear them cryin’, can you practice what you preach, and would you turn the other cheek.”

Music like this is what I live for and love hearing everyday that makes me feel so great inside and makes me feel like I have positivity. It moves me and motivates me to want to get out there and assist those who are in need and to make a difference in someone’s life. I believe that putting a smile on someone’s face and being a role model to kids especially is one of the most important things that these artists and singers do. But I’ve noticed lately that a lot of the music on the radio is not like it used to be back then, in fact I feel it’s even worse now than before. If you pay attention, you would realize that the music that’s out is mainly about 3 things which are: sex, drugs, and alcoholic beverages. There are many examples of “bad” and/or negative music out there but just to name a few we have songs like “My Humps” by The Black Eyed Peas Featuring Kanye West, Lil Wayne, and Eminem, and “Hit Tha Lights” by Jay Sean Featuring Lil Wayne. The song “My Humps is a perfect example of being an inappropriate song that degrades women, making women a sex symbol to many and are also disrespected. In one of their verses they say “What you gon’ do with all that junk? All that junk inside that trunk? I’ma get, get, get, get you drunk, Get your drunk off this hump, What you gon’ do wit all that breast? All that breast inside that shirt? I’ma make, make, make, make you work.” And another verse says “Let’s spend time not money, I mix your milk wit my cocoa puff, Milky,milky cocoa, Mix your milk with my cocoa puff,milky,milky night.” In “Forever”, Kanye West says in his verse “I stuck my dick inside this life until that bitch came, I went hard all fall like the ball teams just so I can I make it rain all spring.” And in the last song “Hit Tha Lights” he says “They’ve got rate” then he goes on to say “So here’s girls just taking all their clothes off, So take a picture of this moment with your iPhone” and Lil Wayne who is featured in the song says “bitches call me Tunechi Li, all them bitches think I’m fly” and also says “My drink is strong,my hooka sweet.”

I think it’s ridiculous because sex, drugs, and alcohol can only get you so far in life and even though it might feel good for a while at that time, that’s not what life is about or even should be about for that matter. It’s just crazy how this kind of music is what kids are listening to and they shouldn’t be. I don’t know about you but I wouldn’t want my children listening to this type of music, it’s very negative, inappropriate and sends out the wrong messages to the younger generation. That’s why I give props to the artists who continue and only sing and spread positive things to the audiences of a younger age because children shouldn’t be exposed to that kind of music. It fills up their heads with a bunch of nonsense, it should be filled with more of good things than bad. Drugs and alcohol are so destructive and can and will lead you down a road to hell if you let it get out of control and go overboard and causes health problems, making you act stupid and irresponsible and ruin you and those around you, so why do it? Sex is a great thing to experience, that we all have done or would want to do but it shouldn’t be displayed in a negative, nasty, and disrespectful way.

Back then sex used to be about getting closer to the one you loved and doing it with that special someone you like or are in love with instead it’s like a game and just messing with one person after another, all fun and all play and that’s it. There are artists that are more explicit and degrade women in songs, making the female species seem like they’re only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one person after another, all fun and all play and that’s it. There are artists that are more explicit and degrade women in songs, making the female species seem like they’re only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible. It gives off the wrong image and gives us women a bad reputation not only made for one purpose and one purpose only-to please men in any way or form possible.
The Bully: Ethics in our Education System

BY DIANA GARCIA & MICHELLE VIERA

The fact that he was gay. He then committed suicide by jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge to his death. The alleged bullies were arrested and later affirmed in court that they thought it was a funny prank and didn’t imagine he would commit suicide.

We have all witnessed bullying sometime in our lives. After speaking with former QCC student Jessica Vega, age 22 about bullying she mentioned, “I have seen it a couple of times, but one time I saw the whole thing. It was a girl who lived in my block and a group of girls followed her home, at first I thought they all were going the same way, but then I saw one of them put her hair up and started to hit her. I didn’t help her, being that all the girls beating the one girl were in my school and they could’ve started with me next.” This is common; most kids rather not get involved. There are many programs to help children in cases like this to look for help, such as the program B.A. star. B.A. Star is a program were sports icons go to schools and discuss their own experiences with bullying to show kids that they were able to overcome these circumstances and to inspire them to speak up on the subject.

During a discussion on www.NY1.com the president of the American Federation of Teachers, Randi Weingarten, said “this is not the moment to take this movie and say what can we all do to change culture in America,” when speaking of the movie “Bully” recently released in theaters and directed by Lee Hirsch. The movie “Bully” has caused quite a stir because it shows the lives of bullied kids. You can learn more about this film at www.thebullyproject.com.

Bullying begins at home, in school, and our everyday environment, it is clear that it is up to our education system to incorporate ethics studies from the moment children enter kindergarten all throughout the moment students graduate from college. It’s simply a way of reminding people of America that America is made of different, all kinds of different. With greater importance it’s a way to help our children understand the country there in and that they will represent in the future. “United We Stand” is the phrase; how true is that?

What can put an end to bullying in the U.S.? No one seems to know how to control or put an end to this problem. Our education system wants to feed our children as much information as possible to pass tests and reach academic high standards, but what our education lacks is teaching students how to be good human beings. The study of ethics in our education is a key asset to ending violence and bullying in our everyday lives.

Bullying occurs everywhere, whether it’s on school property, social networks such as Facebook or at work, and it may happen to anyone. Statistics show that roughly 62 percent of students during the years 2006-2007 reported being involved with bullying. According to the Department of Justice statistics in a “National crime victimization survey” surveying 6,503 students, proved that the vast majority were involved in crime activities or had deeper issues that made them victims. Sadly bullying doesn’t stop there, a tragic example was the recent shooting of Trayvon Martin who was killed for no apparent reason. Although Trayvon was not bullied his murderer is a perfect example of what our children can turn into. Bullies often target what they feel is different. Had the murderer of Trayvon ever had someone teach him respect towards others, morals, ethics? Probably not, since he saw a young African American and automatically assumed he was up to no good. Bullying is initiated by many reasons such as ethnicity, sexuality, appearance and other factors. Deaths caused by bullying are definitely not a thing of the past. Today with the development of social networking on the rise, bullies don’t realize they are causing so much harm to those they pick on like in the case of college students Tyler Clementi. Tyler was picked on Facebook after a video of him was posted exposing him being intimate with another man, due to

In Lak Ech

You are my other me.

If I do harm to you,
I do harm to myself;
If I love and respect you,
I love and respect myself.

-written by Luis Valdez

According to the Bureau of Justice, 46% of males have been in a fight

Ethics classes can address bullying before it starts.
Meet Your Student: Luke Fallon and Julio Castillo

BY YU (BRIANA) CHENG

Luke Fallon: Julio and I met on my first day of class at QCC 7 years ago (August of 2010), through our mutual friend Adam Debbarh of Basal Gang fame. I was wearing a Velvet Underground shirt, which was the first thing he noticed. A mutual “hey what a cool guy this guy is…etc” went through our heads. It was one of those moments where you realize you instantly click with someone as soon as you meet them. The fact that he recognized the contents of my dumb ass obscure t-shirt proved to me he was a guy with “interests” in “things,” whatever that means. It makes sense if you think about it.

Julio Castillo: I met him around August 2010 at the start of the fall semester of that year. Our mutual friend Adam (of Basal Gang) is an old friend of mine and like Luke said, we met through him. We clicked pretty quickly (I’m a sucker for band t shirts and cynicism) and we basically stuck around each other to make fun of stuff.

What is the story behind this collaboration?

Luke Fallon: Well, there really isn’t much of a story. I suppose it was just a matter of the right time and place. In short, I feel as though I’m now skilled enough to draw the things that he is now skilled enough to write. We’ve both bullshitted the idea of starting a comic or something since we first met but only recently have we been following through on the notion. In fact, I’d go so far as to say that we really only started to seriously work on the damn thing one night last week or so at a party. We were drunk and it all came pouring out of us, no pun intended.

Julio: I had known Luke was an excellent artist and I pretend to be a writer from time to time. I was working on a book and not making any real progress when a comic book came to mind and Luke was the best artist I knew. Plus, we were getting pretty chummy so may as be productive while hanging out.

Growing up, what was your favorite comic story?

Luke: I’ve always just been a fan of art in general, or any form of self-expression really. To me it’s all the same; drawing, painting, dancing, playin the gee-tar, they’re all just an extension of the soul. I guess to answer you’re question as halfheartedly as possible, I simply do not have a favorite comic book or story, however there are certain masters of the craft that I admire greatly, such as R.Crumb, Jean “Moebius” Giraud, who recently passed away, Katsuhiro Otomo, Frank Miller, Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, amongst others. Look up anything by those guys, and that’s “my favorite” at the given moment.

Julio: My favorite comic story…that’s a bit tough. I really like Charles Burns “Black Hole” which is a great narrative and illustration. It really was the first comic book I read which lead me to take graphic novels as a serious way to tell stories. Luke’s more versed with this stuff than I am.

Are there any other projects in the works or on the side?

Luke: I guess this is sort of an extension of my previous answer but I’m always working on several different things at once, they are all independent of each other, yet they are all ultimately linked in some way. To quote Paul Klee, “I cannot be grasped in the here and now, for my dwelling place is as much among the dead as the yet unborn.”

Julio: Well, like I stated before I’m working on a full length novel which is pretty bad so I’ll probably rewrite the whole thing once it’s done. I also write music under the name Plastic Soul when I’ve the free time and ideas. I also write short screenplays as I find it to be an interesting exercise.

Thoughts on the QCC arts program?

Luke: I think QCC should be one big community art school. Same tuition, same students, too. Unfortunately, our society has denigrated art to the point that if an individual proclaims himself an artist, the natural response is to scoff, ‘cause, you know, who ISN’T an artist these days anyway. Granted the world is a bit oversaturated with “artist/creative types” or, as the entire world has taken to calling them, “fucking hipsters” (a lazy, hypocritical, pejorative that in recent years has come to define anyone with aforementioned “interests” in “things”); who through the magic of the Internet, get to share with the world their “talent.” As arrogant as this sounds, I genuinely believe that, the platform provided by the Internet for young “artists” and “musicians” has ultimately just made mediocrity more widely available, making it harder to distinguish between genuine talent and shite.

Julio: It’s honestly great. I took a fantastic art film class two semesters ago that really got me into the idea of screenplay writing.

What are your future plans?

Luke: To plan for the future is to ignore the here and now, which is ultimately all that matters. Sorry for all the really pseudo-mystical bullshit, but it’s how I feel.

Julio: Earn an English degree at some point in the future. Honestly, I just want to write books with or without degrees. I just love writing and hope I can be doing it for a living in a satisfying way.

I know Luke has made pictures for Basal Gang. How do you feel about making art for bands?

Luke: I think making art for bands is a great way to improve our culturally impoverished nation. It stems from a certain mutual appreciation and recognition of talent that great artists of all strides seem to possess.

Julio: I love it. I don’t know how instrumental I’ve been with helping Basal Gang but I’ve contributed t-shirt ideas and the like. Luke is much more illustrative than I, but I would certainly draw out an EP cover if ever asked.

If you had to create an album cover for anyone, who would that dream band be?

Luke: If I had to choose, either The Stones, The Velvet Underground, or the Wu Tang Clan. Sex and drugs and rock and roll is what art is all about, really. Picasso was the Mick Jagger of his time.

Julio: So many choices…right now, I’m listening to this really dark rap group called Death Grips who are terrifying, intense and awesome so I’ll go with them for now though this could easily change at a moment’s notice.

Frozen yogurt or ice cream?

Luke: Frozen yogurt or ice cream?

Julio: Hot sauce, does that answer ya questonssssss?

Luke: So many choices…right now, I’m listening to this really dark rap group called Death Grips who are terrifying, intense and awesome so I’ll go with them for now though this could easily change at a moment’s notice.

Additional words?

Luke Fallon: In writing this comic, we hope to pay homage to our artistic heroes, and just things we like about movies, books, music etc. It takes place in New York and it centers around a characters’ disappearance and how each of the people in her life react. The best way to describe it is if Travis Bickle was 60 and starring in “Pulp Fiction.” That’s really all we can say at this point.

Julio: Yeah, that’s basically it. The comic in itself has a couple of story lines running through it where we hope to play with different art styles and genres.
AM I BISEXUAL?
Dear “Love Gurus,”

I am a woman who has always been sure of herself, and I have never questioned my attraction to men. But lately, I am seeing women in a totally different way. I think I may be interested in them as well. What does this mean? Am I a bisexual? Am I gay? Is this simply a phase?

Signed,

Might be one, might be the other

Dear “Might be one, might be the other,”

Don’t get frustrated. These thoughts are extremely common, especially in such a diverse world. However, the only person who can answer your question is you. If you feel that you may be attracted to a woman, don’t hesitate. If she shares your feelings, go out with her. You’ll never know if you want something until you try it out first. If you still feel attracted to her, then act on it.

To answer your other question, none of this means that you are gay, straight, or even a bisexual. You don’t believe that others obtain the right to place labels on individuals. You are the only one who can place that label on yourself. Once you have experimented a bit, you will be able to determine your likes and dislikes. You should know that the worst thing to do is to bury these feelings. Hiding them will only cause them to come out at a later and more inconvenient time. So face them head on! And lastly, but most importantly, no matter what your sexual orientation winds up being, be proud of it! Good Luck!

I’M GAY, THEREFORE I SHOP – DON’T THINK SO!
Dear “LoveGurus,”

I discovered I was gay when I was 16 years old. Ever since I “came out,” everyone seems to think that just because I am gay, it means that I know everything about fashion, hair, and men! How do I rid myself of this common gay stereotype? How can I make people see me as someone other than a well-dressed man who is now the perfect shopping buddy?!?

Signed,

Gay doesn’t equal girl

Answer#2: Dear “Gay doesn’t equal Girl,”

It’s hard enough to “come out of the closet”, but once you do, many are confronted with the same problem that you are dealing with. I know I’ve always wanted a “gay best friend” for advice and tips on the latest trends. I am just as guilty of going along with this stereotype. If you want people to see you as someone different, then you need to act like someone different. Show your friends that you still enjoy doing things that the average guy enjoys. For example, you may want to consider watching the next big game with them. As far as your clothing goes, dress the way you normally would. If others interpret your attire to mean something other than it actually does, then you can’t control that. And as far as shopping goes, if you simply are not interested in shopping, then don’t shop!

I feel compelled to remind you that the way you perceive yourself is far more important than the way others perceive you. This gay stereotype will always exist, no matter what. But make sure you know who you really are. As long as you have your identity, there is no need to concern yourself with the way others choose to define you. Good Luck!

CLOSET DATING
Dear “LoveGurus,”

How do I deal with dating someone who still hasn’t “come out” to everyone? Should I break it off? Or is it worth it to stick it out until he/she does?

Signed,

Unsure partner

Dear “Unsure partner,”

Try to remember how hard it was for you to “come out.” Were you not filled with anxiety and fear when facing your parents? Were you not terrified to tell your friends? If not, then you are the exception. I can only imagine how difficult it is for someone to be confident enough to announce their sexual orientation to the world. But you know how uncomfortable it can be. Give him/her time. If you are in love and you are happy, then why not wait? If her secrecy is seriously affecting your relationship, then that’s another issue. If you feel that your happiness is being affected, that’s a reason to end it. But if the two of you are able to move forward, despite the fact that his/her gayness is a secret, then don’t bother making a huge deal out of it. If the fact that she hasn’t “come out” yet makes you insecure, then that is something you need to discuss with your partner. Be kind, gentle, reasonable, and rational. This is a very delicate situation. It is your job to be sensitive to your partner’s feelings. That, in and of itself, should be your one and only priority. Good Luck!

*** If any of you need any relationship advice and have questions that you would like us to respond to, please send them to qcccommunique@gmail.com. Make sure to specify that your question is for the advice column by writing “Ask the Love Gurus” in the subject line. You are free to ask these questions anonymously. Thank you very much for your cooperation. We look forward to hearing from you!
It’s not where you start. It’s where you end up.

As a transfer student, the academic institution at which you choose to complete your studies can make all the difference in your future success. The NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies Paul McGhee Division offers transfer students the opportunity to study at a top university, and immerse themselves in a supportive learning environment that promotes personal and professional growth. Seamless credit transfer, curricula that integrates liberal arts and professional studies, academic and career counseling, flexible course schedules, and multiple financial aid options and scholarships make McGhee the ideal choice for you. You can transfer to NYU. Learn more.

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It’s not where you start.
It’s where you end up.
Gay Blood Donors Excluded

BY NATACHA ARBOLEDA

New York can be described as a bold city where individuality is embraced. It is among one of the top five most diverse cities, and home to the highest gay population in America. Many of the estimated 272,493 LGBTQ residents of New York can be found on any of our 23 CUNY campuses. To secure the rights and safety of this community, CUNY created the CUNY Wide LGBTQ Task Force, an organization made up of LGBTQ leaders from all 23 city university of New York. Recently the LGBTQ Task Force has taken on a new challenge after CUNY blood drives made it clear that our universities non-discrimination policy had been overlooked.

Since 1983 the FDA has restricted gay men from being able to donate blood, stating, “all men who have had sex with another man, even once, since 1977, are indefinitely deferred.” This is based on current scientific knowledge and statistical information that shows that men who have had sex with other men are at a greater risk for HIV/AIDS infections than other people.” Last summer, the Department of Health and Human Services decided that there would be no changes made to the FDA’s policy. CUNY LGBTQ communities have seen this as a setback, arguing that the exclusion of gay men in blood drives promotes homophobia and anti-gay sentiment on campus. The LGBTQ task force has made it clear that they do not wish for the banning of blood drives, but instead the relocation of them. The American Red Cross and the American Association of Blood Banks have both agreed that the restricting policy should be changed, being that all blood donations are tested for diseases.

The issue is still up in the air for CUNY universities. On April 14, QCC ended on campus blood drives, but two weeks later the decision was revoked. QCC and CCNY are both working on advertising student donations and relocating blood drives near campus. It is still uncertain whether CUNY will discontinue on campus blood drives, but the LGBTQ Task Force continues to petition against on-campus discrimination.

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Gay Blood Donors Excluded

Gregory Gorgeous

BY Ashly Quichpi

Gregory Gorgeous is makeup guru—a man channeling his inner and outer female—who shares his knowledge of makeup tips with his audience through his channel on YouTube. Physically, he looks like a fabulous lady who is confident in her own body, but he is really a man. He is really proud of what he is and knows what his goals are.

During PRIDE month, I’d like to focus on someone who has suffered discrimination and offensive insults because of what he is. He has made a difference to his world-wide audience not because he is gay or not. Or simply that it’s good to be who you are and can bring to the table.

By being bullied and how he gets called names.

With his personality and outgoing spirit, he has made me be one of his fans and support what he does, which can be considered groundbreaking. In one of his videos, named is “Gay vs Straight!” he discusses how he acts both like a man and a woman. His sense of humor confronts the larger topic of gender stereotypes and how we all have “male” and “female” behaviors; the video has had thousands of views.

Where I come from is sun, sea and sand, warm tropical climate and beautiful beaches. Where I come from is mountain peaks and exotic birds, panoramic views of serenity and splendor. Where I come from is palm trees swaying in the cool breeze Is Portland rains and island terrains Is coconut trees and sea weeds

Where I come from is unique where the music is like the heartbeat of the people, passionate, contagious and thumping, boom-boom-boom. Where I come from is far away from here. Where I come from is “out of many, one people” with a rich heritage, music, history and dance.

Poem:
“Where I Come From”

BY SHANNON BUTLER

Where I come from is mountain peaks and exotic birds, panoramic views of serenity and splendor.

Where I come from is “out of many, one people” with a rich heritage, music, history and dance.

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Where I come from is “out of many, one people” with a rich heritage, music, history and dance.
Poem: “I Am Not Like You”

BY RONIT COHEN

I am not like you, my skin color is foreign to your eyes, so you use that to justify your right to despise. I don’t meet your standards, to you I am full of flaws, and my race and background is the one and only cause. I am not like you, so you mock and degrade, and slowly turn this world into a globe full of hate.

I am not like you, I do not worship the same G-d, so you insist on waging war to prove that I am a fraud. I do not believe what you believe, I do not see things in the same light, but you refuse to lay down your armor, and you continuously fight. I am not like you, so you mock and degrade, and slowly turn this world into a globe full of hate.

I am not like you, I do not live in luxury with treasures galore, my home is a box in a cold neighborhood, with people who choose to ignore. They look at me with disgust, they look at me with disdain, because my clothing is ripped and I am dripping wet from the rain. I am not like you, so you mock and degrade, and slowly turn this world into a globe full of hate.

I am not like you, I love my own kind, so you dismiss my deepest troubles, and to my sorrow you are blind. I do not follow the mainstream, and I behave in a manner deemed “inappropriate” and “disturbed”, so you shut me out of society for something so absurd. I am not like you, so you mock and degrade, and slowly turn this world into a globe full of hate.

I am not like you, I am not cruel to another race, and I do not look down upon those who pray in a separate place. I do not mistreat those who choose to love someone who’s the same, and I do not speak ill of those who have no shelter when it rains. I am not like you, if only you weren’t so ignorant. I am not like you, I do not judge the different.
Maps & Atlases – Beware and Be Grateful

BY YU (BRIANA) CHENG

Maps & Atlases has expanded to innovative sounds since their last album, two years ago. With the Living Decorations EP following their debut LP Perch Patchwork, Maps & Atlases are back with another full length titled Beware and Be Grateful. The official release was on April 17th via Barsuk Records.

Beware and Be Grateful is undeniably an album of experimentation. There is a greater appreciation for electronic devices to support the band’s original folk rhythms. Beginning Beware and Be Grateful with “Old and Gray”, the greeting chorus “the further from the edges/ the further from the trim” brings to mind the slightly auto tuned voice of Sufjan Stevens. An organic breakdown later occurs towards the end of “Old and Gray,” where Davison finally shows off his humble abilities. The next track, “Fever” sounds like something from John Mayer, not just orally but musically with catchy pop arrangements. While Maps & Atlases are categorized as a rock band, the John Mayer reference may not be complimentary. No need to fear though, nothing on the album implies that again.

In “Remote and Dark Years,” Davison starts with a quiet anxious speech and graduates to echoes and cries of, “I don’t want anymore remote and dark years.” Then soulful renditions are carried in “Silver Self” with the support of a choir. “Silver Self” is the longest track on the record and, quite frankly, it is the most spontaneous. Splashes of tropical melodies are thrown into “Silver Self” while tribal drums are found in “Old Ash.” At times, Davison sounds out of place with his wholesome expressions and the band continues to make bustling rhythms at identical paces throughout the album. Lyrically influenced or not, Beware and Be Grateful is a collection of pop music with a positive attitude. Maps & Atlases concludes with an emotional track “Important” and this is where strong feelings are mostly conveyed. Davison’s asks, “Isn’t it important for you to know I was thinking of you?” and entrances you into a deep level of intimacy; he closes with instrumental drones for the last several seconds. You’re at the edge of your seat but only then, Beware and Be Grateful has finished.

2.5/ 5

Much Enthusiasm for Multilingual Poetry Celebration

BY IRLANDA ZEA

On Wednesday, May 2, 2012, from 1-3 pm, Queensborough Community College had a poetry celebration for multi-linguistic poetry, hosted by Sergio Berjano and organized by Professor Jodie Childers. The auditorium was filled with students ready to listen to or read poems. There were many readers who expressed themselves through poems in all different languages like English, Spanish, Chinese, German, and Italian, etc. One of the students sang a song in Chinese which was lovely to hear because, although a part of the audience couldn’t understand the lyrics, just the sound was beautiful, different and passionate. It’s very courageous for someone to go up in stage and present themselves that well. There were poems about courage, humanity, culture, individualism, and, of course, love. It was a true celebration of diversity and expression. The readers gave us a lot of emotion through their poems.

Elijah Hartley recited a poem called “Flowers” by Rudy Francisco; it was a poem that surely seemed to stand out to the audience. Everyone seemed intrigued and even laughed a bit. The poem was about how a flower is like a precious woman and it compares both and how when you see a flower you become mesmerized by its beauty. The reader was really passionate about the poetry and he expressed himself in a way that it really impacted a lot of us.

Another poem, this time in Spanish, called “Pachamama,” recited by Professor Ruiz, expresses how wonderful our mother nature is, all she offers us, and it details each and every aspect that makes our earth so precious. A student recited Langston Hughes’ “I, Too Sing America.” The poem was so inspiring and it definitely encourages people who love poetry to read some of his work. Unfortunately, I couldn’t understand all the beautiful poetry many students speaking other languages recited but I could see how many students enjoyed and became affected by the sounds and different stories behind the poems. Poetry in every language has to be a great way of expression, to bring people closer together and share your thoughts, ideas and feelings. The readers really met that goal and the audience really appreciated it! As a final treat, host Sergio Bejarano and two guests from La Guardia Community College rapped some of their political poetry for the audience, and Professor Childers presented Sergio with a gift for his work: a copy of The People’s History of the United States by Howard Zinn. It was a nice literary end to a great literary event.
Horoscopes

Compiled by LAUREN DIAZ  Artwork by Michele Borg

Aquarius: (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19) Where did the money go? And where will more of it come from? Instead of asking these questions, go on a tithing spree. What's that? Give to those in need. Give to everyone around you. Find ways to give that no one knows about. Know that to those who give, more is given, so you can give some more.

Leo: (July 23 - Aug. 22) Money and some of its vicissitudes may leap at you like a raging tiger. Hold steady in the face of other people's ideas, sense of power, and sad tales of love lost. You may consider the lost loves you've had in the past and realize they served you in ways that led to spiritual insights. Things ease up and you'll be back in your regular sun-filled power seat soon.

Virgo: (Aug. 23 - Sept. 23) It would be good to shift away from the self and focus on partnerships or your intimate other and achieve more cooperation. This helps fulfill your life purpose, actually. And fills in any voids you may feel about your life and yourself. All tensions will have the purpose of lessons to be learned. Beware of any deception or idealization occurring.

Libra: (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23) Your home is here and there for a time. You seek better arrangements for more comfort. Tranquility is most important as is order and organization. As you change you must inform others of your needs and wants. This allows for harmony and cooperation, two qualities that support the core of your work and relationships. Show a little more kindness if you can. The results will exceed your expectations.

Scorpio: (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) You see objects of beauty, artwork, and things you can invest in and your desire becomes great. Be careful; only use money that remains after daily needs are met. You seek pleasure, more than usual, so you can talk more, ask more questions, be sociable. You find love in your environment, more than you realized. Tell others you love them.

Sagittarius: (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21) Are you feeling like home is a place that you both want solitude in but also a place you want to flee from? Is the past upwelling and do you feel somewhat out of control? Is the money situation so difficult you want to bury your head in the warm sand and never emerge again? This will continue and you have the vision and manifesting abilities to gradually make things right again.

Capricorn: (Dec 22 - Jan. 20) You will assist others this month. You will feel compassion and it will flow from your lips. You will communicate with concern and care and will help those who need you with grace, tenderness, kindness and mercy. You will make decisions based on benevolence and forgiveness.

Pisces: (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20) You may not have clear thinking this month, or next. Instead, your inner self has taken itself to a monastery, to places behind the scenes for refreshment. Inspirations come in the form of ideas on how to save the world. Hold off on them for a while. Nothing's realistic at this time only idealistic. Keep your feet warm, write poetry, and replace the mystical with the occult.

Aries: (Mar. 21 - Apr. 20) You've become so Piscean that no one understands you. This won't last but beware of feet hurting, stumbling over everything and everyone, and feeling the pressure of being lost and abandoned for a couple of months. You're not lost or abandoned but things on an inner level pressure you into solitude. It's a saving grace for things to come.

Taurus: (Apr. 21 - May 21) Nothing but the group matters and so you will forge ahead with group plans, group dreams and goals. Know that the goals pursued are not yet able to be manifested but don't allow that to burden you in any way or stop you in your aspirational tracks. The seeding of the seekers has begun.

Gemini: (May 22 - June 21) Amusement may not be available. At least not the type you seek. Your needs may need to be subordinated to another's needs. Careful with sweets and foods you overindulge in. It's a sensitive health time for your digestion and pancreas.

Cancer: (June 22 - July 22) No matter what your daily life is like, all you may think of is being rather adventurous, taking trips to places foreign and exotic, trekking to a wild piece of land and nesting there and doing it all without informing anyone of your plans. This may sound exciting but you'll plop down somewhere and not know where you are. Look at travel brochures instead.

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“The Avengers” which comes out today, May 4th, is the long awaited team up of Marvel’s superheroes. This movie has been hyped at ever since the ending credits of “Iron Man” back in 2008 revealed Nick Fury, played by Samuel L. Jackson, was recruiting a team for the Avenger Initiative. Chris Evans returns in this film as the man out of his own time Steve Rogers, but better known as Captain America. Robert Downey Jr., also returns as Tony Stony/Iron man, and joined by Chris Hemsworth as the Asguardian Thor. Jeremy Renner and Scarlett Johansson reprise their roles as SHIELD agents, Black Widow and Hawkeye. Mark Ruffalo makes his Marvel debut as brilliant Bruce Banner and the giant green rage monster, The Hulk. Tom Hiddleston makes his return as the brother of Thor and super-villain Loki.

Coming together as a team is never a simple task, and coming together as a team of superheroes isn’t any different. This time the heroes have their share of differences but learn to work together for the greater good. The team starts out as reluctant to cooperate with one another, even going so far as to get into a small brawl, but the members end up forming something incredible. After the death of a friend, the team really comes together to avenge the wrongs that have been done to the world. As a team they learn to fight together as if they have been training together for years.

The film itself has an amazing story line. The story revolves around Loki and his army of Chitauri, who are from another dimension. The Chitauri come in constant numbers and never stop coming until the portal to their world is closed. Their dimension holds many secrets, including giant machines and a ship that appears to give them all their power while being ruled by somebody more powerful hidden in the shadows. This movie has everything you could want in a great movie: action, comedy, a little romance and tons of smashing. It is a must see movie if you are looking forward to a fun summer and want to enjoy an epic story of heroism.

“The Avengers” will surprise you in ways you wouldn’t have anticipated. It is much more entertaining than expected and the fight with the Chitauri army will have you sitting on the edge of your seat as the battle unfolds. “The Avengers” is a must see movie for anyone who wants to see how a real team of Avengers assemble and conquer!

Head to our website at http://queenscc.cunycampuswire.com/2012/05/04/the-avengers-is-a-smash/ to see a special video featurette on how the magic to make “The Avengers” came together.

The prequel to this movie, “The Dark Knight,” brought in the largest crowd to ever watch a Batman movie so “The Dark Knight Rises” has a lot to live up to. In the comics Bane defeats Batman by breaking his spine and crippling him. There hasn’t been any word if this is to happen in the movie so we’re just going to have to watch it to find out. With all of these heroic movies coming at us, we might just feel like a superhero by the time this summer comes to an end.

Summer Movie Mania

By Vincent Rosado

2012 is turning out to be one of the best years for watching movies. This summer alone there are tons of incredible movies coming out. The long awaited “Men in Black 3” along with superhero movies such as “Dark Knight Rises” and “The Amazing Spiderman!” Will Smith returns in “Men in Black 3” once again as Agent J while Tommy Lee Jones returns as Agent K. This long await end to the trilogy has been coming since 2002 making this movie 10 years in the waiting.

Along with “Men in Black 3” another movie will enter theaters in the form of “The Amazing Spider-Man!” This reboot of the Spider-Man series stars Andrew Garfield as Peter Parker better known as Spider-Man. Emma Stone stars as Peter’s love interest Gwen Stacy. This movie will feature many elements that the Tobey Maguire Spider-Man trilogy didn’t have. For example in this movie, Spider-Man will have his trademark web-shooters, as opposed to organic webbing. Another element that is included is Gwen Stacy as Peter Parker’s first love as it was in the comic books. This movie has certainly turned heads as a must see movie this summer. “The Amazing Spider-Man” will be in theaters as of July 3rd, just in time for Independence Day.

Last but not least a darker hero will rise in, “The Dark Knight Rises.” Christian Bale will reprise his role Bruce Wayne and his alter ego Batman. Michael Caine returns to play the loyal butler Alfred Pennyworth. Tom Hardy plays the film’s villain, Bane. Anne Hathaway joins the cast as the stealthy thief Catwoman. This is the end of the Batman trilogy so it will definitely bring in a large crowd. With Bane as the film’s villain it is sure to an intense movie to watch with the audience sitting on the edge of their seats watching as the trilogy comes to an end. The prequel to this movie, “The Dark Knight,” brought in the largest crowd to ever watch a Batman movie so “The Dark Knight Rises” has a lot to live up to. In the comics Bane defeats Batman by breaking his spine and crippling him. There hasn’t been any word if this is to happen in the movie so we’re just going to have to watch it to find out. With all of these heroic movies coming at us, we might just feel like a superhero by the time this summer comes to an end.
I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

One heard a voice, melodious and sonorous, speaking as it seemed through the centuries, carrying along with it the wisdom of the prophets. Still, as grand and awesome as the voice was, it seemed paradoxically to be speaking to each of us in the audience, tete-a-tete.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans…

It was not until the voice resounded through the theater that he strolled casually onto the stage with these words:

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

This was just the beginning. On April 4, 2012, Poet Laureate of Queens, New York, artist, actor, and educator, David Mills, introduced us to several of African American, Harlem Renaissance poet, Langston Hughes’s beloved black folk. He selected from his crowded caravan of characters such figures as Jessie B. Semple, Aunt Lucy, Sister Maggie Bradford, Elder Jones, Bulldog Hicks, Luella Bates Washington Jones, Alberta K. Johnson. The reality is that Mills accompanied by only a chair and a jacket that he alternately put on and took off became each and every one of these characters Hughes had known in one shape or another and immortalized in his poems and stories as he travelled down the river of his life.

One of the many highlights of Mills’ reading that kept his audience in stitches was his performance of Hughes’s short story, “Rock, Church,” the story of a crafty preacher who designs a “miracle,” with his accomplice, Bulldog Hicks, in order to get his parishioners to throw more money into the collection box. In the story, the Reverend Elder Jones decides to con his parishioners into believing that he, after being nailed to a cross, will resurrect just like Jesus in the New Testament. However, as Mills told us, “the devil got into Bulldog Hicks,” and he decided to terrorize the Reverend into thinking he really was going to nail him to a cross rather than just fastening him up there.

Hicks placed the first nail between his big toe and the next toe of the left foot and begin to hammer. The foot was well strapped down, so the elder couldn’t move it. The closer the head of the nail got to his toes the harker Hicks struck it. Finally, the hammer collided with Elder Jones’s foot, bum against his big toe.

“Aw-Oh!” He moaned under his breath, “Go easy, man!”

David Mills reading was imbued with the same warmth and humanity with which Langston Hughes invested his characters. It is clear that he felt for all of them the same affection that Hughes himself felt. After the performance, it was obvious that the audience did as well.

I’ve been to several poetry readings during my lifetime, mostly at the 92nd Street Y, but my previous experiences did not prepare me in the least for what I viewed at QCC on April 4th of this year. David Mills did not read Hughes’ poems; he was not accompanied by a host of performers, nor can one say that he “acted” out the roles of all these characters that took on corporal form as they emerged from the poems and stories of Langston Hughes. David Mills became the voice, eyes face and body of each of these characters in such a way that left the audience absolutely spellbound.

At the end of the reading, Mills invited questions from the audience and, then, volunteered some information about how he had gotten to know Langston Hughes and drawn inspiration from him by living in his house for a year. It is a tribute to him that several students came up to him after the performance to shake his hand, tell him how much they had enjoyed the performance, or ask for advice about their futures.

To one and all, Mills replied, “Hold fast to dreams.”

David Mills brought to life the words of Langston Hughes

**“I’ve Known Rivers” by Langston Hughes – A Poetry Recital by David Mills**

BY JOHANNA GILGIN
“Celebrating the Outdoors and Fitness”  
SPECIAL SECTION

May is National Fitness month and we are encouraging everyone to get outdoors and moving! The days are getting warmer, so it is a perfect time to enjoy a picnic of healthy fruits and vegetables, which can be grilled along with lean meats. Natural juices, such as lemonade made from scratch, are an easy and nutritious way to refresh and hydrate during a day of activity.

There are several articles (and even poems), in this month’s Communique, dedicated to the outdoors and fitness; they can be found here in our special outdoor/fitness section. Learn about healthy foods to eat, how to exercise properly, and great outdoor activities to enjoy right in Queens. Enjoy!

Green Coffee Beans for Health and Weight Loss  
BY DAVID COBA

Health benefits found in natural green coffee beans.

Summer is coming real soon and students may not have the time to exercise their body to prevent gaining weight, so there is one of many solutions that may shock students: GREEN COFFEE BEANS.

Green coffee beans could be the newest weight-loss fix for the summer. Researchers found that the bean extract may help people lose weight, which is held as a supplement in the United States. This could be a safe and effective way to lose some pounds.

Joe Vinson, who is a chemist at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania said, “Taking multiple capsules of green coffee extract a day, while eating a low fat, healthful diet and exercising regularly, appears to be a safe, effective, inexpensive way to lose weight.”

Researchers at the American Chemical Society examined 16 overweight adults in their 20s and monitored their diet, exercise regimen, weight, heart rate and blood pressure by giving them up to 1,050 milligrams of green coffee bean extract for 22 weeks. Without changing their diet or exercise, study subjects lost roughly 10.5 percent, which is an average of 17 pounds in overall body weight. There were no harmful side effects noted, according to the study presented at the American Chemical Society national meeting in San Diego.

Freelance Writer from evitamins.com, Marcelina Hardy noted, based on Joe Vinson’s studies, on Thursday, March 29, 2012, that green coffee bean extract has a high concentration of chlorogenic acid, which is a polyphenol important in plant metabolism. The same effect seems to happen to humans. The chlorogenic acid speeds up metabolism by slowing down the release of sugars from the liver into the blood. When glycogenolysis slows down, the body uses fat cells for energy instead of sugar. Fat cells burning can cause weight loss.

Joe Vinson, who operated the studies, said, “the findings should pave the way for more rigorous research on coffee bean extract’s effects. A larger trial involving 60 people is being planned.”

Other Benefits of Green Coffee Bean Extract  by Marcelina Hardy

• **Liver Health:**
  In a study led by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dr. Stephen Harrison at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, researchers found coffee drinkers who consumed two cups of coffee or tea a day were less likely to suffer from liver damage as a result of consuming large amounts of alcohol.

• **Pain Relief:**
  Many migraine medications contain caffeine to increase their effectiveness in reducing pain. Green coffee bean extract has the same caffeine benefits found in these medications and can enhance their effectiveness as well.

• **Blood Sugar:**
  Green coffee bean extract stabilizes blood glucose levels by inhibiting glucose-6-phosphate, an enzyme released from liver stores. By inhibiting this enzyme, the liver slows down the release of sugar into the blood.

Side Effects of Green Coffee Bean Extract—by Marcelina Hardy

Green coffee bean extract has no reported side effects. Women who are pregnant or lactating should consult their doctor before taking green coffee bean extract. People who dislike the stimulant effects of coffee such as jittery or anxiety find green coffee bean extract as a viable alternative to drinking coffee.

Can College Students Make Time to Exercise?  
BY SHANICE PUNNETT

Why should I exercise? I don’t have time to anyway. Do walking and climbing the stairs count? I’m sure many of you have asked yourselves these questions at one time or another. I definitely have. According to a study done by researchers at Ohio State, as many as 52% of college students do not exercise. That’s almost half, which is pretty alarming. As college students, we tend to push physical activity on the back burner because our schedules are so tightly packed with school, work, etc. that we feel there’s no time left for recreation, let alone hitting the gym. Well, sometimes less is more, so don’t be discouraged if your schedule doesn’t allow you to work out three to five times per week. Once per week is a good place to start, especially if you’re sedentary (inactive.) Besides, you don’t have to go to a gym to exercise; any type of cardio is great! For example: running, jogging, swimming, power walking and cycling.

If you don’t particularly like these workout routines or if you really can’t get to the gym, start off with a pedometer (stop counter.) It’s a device that counts the number of steps you take. It’s easy to use, just clip it onto your belt or waist of your pants and go about your day as usual. Try to make at least 10,000 steps per day. I know it seems like a lot, but once you start walking you’ll be surprised how many steps you can make in a short space of time. At the end of the day, check the display screen to see how many steps you’ve made. If it’s less than 10,000 the first time around, that’s fine. Just keep trying to make it to that amount.

How can exercise help me? How can I benefit from it?

There are a number of reasons why exercise is important for us as college students. It can help us in more ways than we imagine, and a lack of it can affect us by having a negative impact on our performance. Not just academically but also our daily lives.

Exercise is a good stress reliever. As college students, studying for exams can be stressful and can increase tension. Sobysimplygoingforawalkorrunningcanrelaxstress.

Exercising not only makes you look good, but also makes you feel good. During exercise, the body releases chemicals called endorphins. Endorphins produce a feeling of well-being. Once you increase your activity level, your body will generate more energy and will allow you to accomplish your daily tasks more efficiently. Also, speaking from personal experience I can say that after I work out, I feel very energized, relaxed and stress free. It’s a really awesome feeling.

Routines such as weight training and stretching strengthen and define the muscles whereas a lack of it over time causes muscles to tighten and stiffen, causing pain and discomfort.

Exercising also makes the brain stronger. This is so because it increases oxygen flow to the brain and helps create neurons; specialized cells that transmit nerve impulses throughout the body and increases their survival period.

Considering how unhealthy we eat during this time of our lives, we need to lower the statistics of physical inactivity and make a conscious effort to be more active. It would also help if we can start making small changes to our diets. It will benefit us greatly, especially in the future. Now is the time to make a change. We need to stop making excuses and put laziness behind us. Not in the next ten years or the next five, but TODAY. Our health status and well-being in the future is determined by the choices we make today.

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Enjoy!
QCC Celebrates Earth Day

By David Coba

Earth Day at Queensborough Community College, held at the Student Union Building, was a resounding success. There were a lot of inspiring groups and clubs that celebrated Earth Day by promoting ideas, accessories, and informative knowledge about going green with a taste of persuasion. The groups included Student Government, CSTEP, Student Health Club, Chemistry Club, The Foreign Language Society, NYPiRG, M.A.L.E.S Program, S.O.U.L, African Student Union, and other active members of Queensborough. They promoted generating a cleaner environment to students and all who attended by providing them with green information to update the daily activities of consumers. There was green chocolate tasting, the NYC Composting Project which is a branch of the Sanitation Department had a presentation, and there were presentations by NYC Beekeeper, Ross Ber.

The Student Government provided tote bags so that people could use fewer plastic bags and adapt to the new habit of utilizing tote bags for shopping. Ziomara, of Banana Republic sales support, said that Banana Republic provides ten percent discounts as a perk to shoppers who buy their tote bags. This is an advantage to go green and save money.

CSTEP strongly encouraged everyone who attended Earth Day to plant trees. This act creates a greater sense of a natural environment which plays a vital role for other aspects in the environment. CSTEP has informed everyone that trees produce fruits and flowers, provide visual barriers, cool the air, reduce crime, prevent soil erosion, and absorb soil water. Trees also shelter animals, birds and insects, they increase property values, and they have the nice touch of removing pollutants and dust from our air.

The Chemistry Club has done a rigorous research project to discuss free radicals and antioxidants that contribute to health issues every day. The Chemistry Club informed everyone that free radicals cause all types of cancer and aging. Free radicals are hard to get rid of once they are in the body. The Chemistry Club believes that instead of trying to be rid of them, it is easier to prevent them from injuring us in the first place. They gave out free tea bags that have antioxidants to help prevent free radical damage. They wanted to give everyone a boost and new start for a healthier lifestyle. Healthier people make a healthier earth.

The Foreign Language Society pledged green by persuading people to sign a petition to help promote greener practices for the environment, such as throwing garbage away, picking up garbage from the floor, and appreciating simple things in nature.

S.O.U.L made their promotion clear by simply giving away free soil and seeds of different plants in a cup. They believe that by giving free soil and seeds away in an inviting way, they could help stimulate others to go green in their homes or elsewhere.

Family Fun Day at Queens Farm

By Eva Carrillo

After getting there at 11 a.m. and signing in at the barn, I witnessed a large tour group walking about the grounds with an employee informing the guests about the animals and distributing some hay for them to give. Wanting to receive the whole experience of Family Fun Day, I moved in step with the other families and began to also feed the sheep and goats as well. When the goats noticed I had nothing left to give them, they turned away and went to another desirable hand with hay. Looking around I saw a young man and a woman and decided to invite them to have an interview with me. Sean Fitzgerald accepted.

Eva: So, how did you hear about the event?
Sean: Uh, a friend told me actually, she was really interested in it and she always wanted to learn about farms and stuff, and uh, I heard about it through her, and she also went to Queensboro Community College. I’m not sure how she heard about it though.
Eva: Did you learn anything new today at the farm?
Sean: Um, one thing I learned today at the farm is that authentic honey, you actually need, um, to age it for like a year and boil it and put the jar inside the boiling water to get it to cool. So I learned that uh, the honey’s that’s sold in stores is corn syrup that’s flavored like honey. Real honey is actually different. I also learned that a sheep can produce two sweaters, per sheep.

Eva: Quite interesting. So, what are you looking forward to today?
Sean: Free lunch.
Eva: So would you ever come back to this place again?
Sean: Yeah, I definitely would.

After thanking Sean for participating in the interview, I continued to proceed along with the group and met the farm’s several other 4-legged creatures, which included alpacas, heritage pigs, geese, goats, Cotswold sheep, dairy cows and Italian honey bees. At the end of the 30-minute tour I went back into the barn to stay out of the rain but was quickly informed by an employee that the hayride was about to start. I stepped out of the barn, hopped on to the large green wagon and enjoyed the shakes and skips that the wagon had made when traveling on the farm grounds. When the jittery drive was complete, I met with one of the QCC students who were working at the front desk in the barn. Her name is Sandra Lufidipe.

Eva: Okay, so is this your first time here at the farm?
Sandra: Yes, this is my first time at the farm. It’s very nice.
Eva: Would you ever come back?
Sandra: Yes, I would, I would actually. When I come back I would walk around the farm and explore it.
Eva: How did the weather impact the event?
Sandra: Well, actually it didn’t impact it all ‘cause people still came out and still enjoyed themselves, feeding, munching, and relaxing, so everything is good.

Eva: So what was your favorite animal and why?
Sandra: Um, my favorite animal was actually- no, not the goat, it was the geese, or is it a duck?
Eva: It was the geese.
Sandra: It was the geese? Okay, mine was the geese, I never actually saw geese up close and it was like “Eee, Eee Eee!” but it was nice.
Eva: Okay, cool. Did you get to enjoy the event as well?
Sandra: Yes, I did actually, I saw some stuff that I didn’t even know about before and like some stuff about carbonization and horses and stuff, so it was really nice.

Wishing not to take too much out of Sandra’s time, I finished the interview and felt really hungry. It was already 1 o’clock, and I hadn’t even eaten my free lunch. The food was served in white paper bags in the education building right across from the barn and after scooping down my tuna sandwich and red apple, it felt time to go back home.

Family Fun Day at Queens County Farm Museum was a lively event and I especially loved it since studying takes away much needed time to enjoy the outdoors. Since June is the National Great Outdoors Month, I wholeheartedly recommend to everyone to take a visit to the farm, or perhaps a park, and relish in the fresh air.
Celebrating Outdoors and Fitness

Poem: “Take a Second”
BY NATACHA ARBOLEDA

Sun Stays Up, Activity Goes Up
BY VINCENT ROSADO

Say No to College Weight Gain
BY DIANA GARCIA

They say the moment you enter college you automatically gain 15 pounds; this is known as the “Freshmen 15”. Why do freshmen gain automatically 15 pounds right after high school? According to the “Journal of American College Health,” about 70 percent of students are shown to gain weight from their freshman year in college to their sophomore year. Many freshmen aren’t used to all the new stress that college brings to them, such as nights without sleep due to balancing exams and papers due and job responsibilities. Other students may develop anxiety because of homesickness (in the case of students that have gone away for college).

During these times, college students tend of have food by their side. This also includes the poor eating choices students make. Since college students are able to purchase their own food and order whatever they please from any fast food restaurants or junk food convenience stores (choices we didn’t have as available in high school), that what they tend to eat the most. Especially on college campuses, there are very few choices of healthy food. Salads that are in the cafeteria aren’t as healthy as you think. Adding dressing and chicken and other things that you love ends up adding fat. Many students just eat a hamburger, which contains a high concentration of fat.

To make matters worse, college students don’t have physical education classes everyday as they did when they were back in high school. This makes them gain weight faster. Having poor eating habits and exercising habits students are having behavior changes. What students don’t realize is that by not exercising, you feel more stress more deeply, which can cause the behavior changes. I asked my friend Kimberly Garcia (20 years of age attending QCC) if she had noticed a lack of food choices and of exercising since entering college? She said, “I hardly do exercise now since high school. I don’t have time to work out with exams, homework, and work. I just have no time to work out. This is kind of sad due to the fact I was in a lot of sport teams in high school. And with food, now that I think about it, I do eat more junk food since its ready fast and right there on my plate.”

Which is important is that all these bad habits can be changed and it’s all putting your part into it. Grab a fruit rather than a bag of chips. Here at Queensborough Community College’s cafeteria, there are a lot of healthy food choice options like fruits (bananas and apples), cereals, fruits salads, salads (remember, don’t add the dressing!), sushi, sandwiches (any options you would like), yogurts and granola parfaits. Now that spring is here go outside for a jog or play a sport with a group of friends. Exercising and healthy food can make a huge difference towards focusing in school and how you look and feel in life. Just remember the bad food and exercising habits can lead to bad health problems in the future before that can happened try to avoid it!

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Exercising Myths

BY DAMIAN JOHNSON

There are many facts as well as myths when it comes to the world of body building. In your search for the secret to losing weight or building muscles you’ve most likely come upon a great deal of books and websites and even people offering their most “helpful” advice. You follow, yet nothing changes. What’s wrong you may wonder? Nothing; you probably fell for another one of those illusory tall tales in bodybuilding and that’s why I’m here to put to rest some of the most infamous myths that have plagued our society.

I do 3 sets of 100 crunches a day but I still don’t see any abs what’s going on?

Well little Tim, abs are the only muscle that I can say are made in the kitchen. What I mean by that is when it comes to abs it’s not all about making them bigger or stronger, it’s mainly about reducing your body fat percentage. Everyone has abs if you didn’t you wouldn’t be able to stand, the reason abs don’t show is because they are covered by layers of fat. If you want to reduce your body fat you’re going to have to change your diet and follow the main rule: your calorie intake should be less than what you burn (calories you burn during the day). For example if you eat 2,000 calories for the day you better be burning 2,100 or more.

You said I should eat fewer calories than what I burn? OK I’ll skip breakfast and dinner!

WRONG! Breakfast means just that: break the fasting you have been doing while you were asleep. In order to effectively keep your metabolism up throughout the day you should eat 6 small meals a day. Breakfast – Snack – Lunch – Snack – Dinner – Snack by doing this you effectively keep your body at a constant state of burning calories. This is why breakfast is so important; it kick starts your metabolism into gear. Also if you think you’re doing yourself a favor by skipping a meal you’re absolutely wrong. If your body doesn’t eat it will go into starvation mode which is when your body uses fewer calories and conserves the fat and sugars in your body because it has no source of food coming. Picture it like this, it is preserving itself like you would with food if you only had a limited amount of food left while being stranded somewhere on a mountain.

I want a big chest like that guy so I’m going to do bench presses every day of the week. CHEA!

Wrong again little Timmy you can’t train one particularly muscle every day because if you do then it will never grow stronger. Basically it’s like this, we tear and destroy our muscles when we work out and while we are resting them they are growing back bigger and stronger than before provided that you are eating right and getting enough sleep of course. Now that’s just not possible if you’re working out the same muscle EVERY SINGLE DAY.

Hey I’ve been doing XXX program for 7 months but I’ve stopped seeing gains.

That’s right and I wouldn’t expect less. I know you absolutely adore that weightlifting program but you should try to change up your fitness plan because if you don’t your muscle tends get used to the same exercise and then it won’t really be an exercise for it anymore, you won’t even get sore anymore from working out. Your muscle needs to be shocked; pretend it’s your significant other and shock them by changing things up every 4 or 5 weeks. Add a different variation of an exercise you have been doing, swap out that exercise completely for another one that works out the same exact same muscle, or you can even switch the days you work on a particularly muscle With weight lifting you have so many options don’t stick with the same boring program mix it up a bit.

So I’m trying to get my girlfriend into weight lifting but she’s afraid of getting muscular like a man. Is this even possible?

No it’s not possible for females to become as big and bulky as a man but they can become toned. This is due to nature of course; females don’t have as much testosterone as men have. Testosterone gives our muscles their mass and their strength while on the other hand women naturally have more fat than guys to assist in child birth. The only way a female can attain the same level of muscular mass as man is to take steroids which acts as artificial testosterone.

Of course these aren’t even close to all of the misconceptions that are out there but hopefully some of the mentioned above will put you guys on the right path to achieving greatness inside and outside of the gym.

Take a Vacation Without Leaving Home

BY JONAHIL GILGIN

George Moore, perhaps the first great Irish novelist, stated in his book, Brook Kerith, “A man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it”. Certainly this aphorism still holds true for us today for as April turns to May, as it says in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales “then longen folk to go on pilgrimages,” often forgetting what is in their own backyards. Certainly, one of the gems we can find here at home is the Alley Pond Environmental Center, conveniently located on Northern Boulevard, just about a mile from QCC. Here you will find something to suit every traveler who prefers to remain close to home.

For those of you with little ones, Alley Pond Environmental Center, has a host of spring and summer programs such as, Timid Turtles, Beautiful Butterflies, Bountiful Bunnies, Animal Care Trainee, Children’s Nature Photographers, Young Discoverers, Adventure Hour – Baby Animals; Wild for Wildflowers, APEC – Safari, Recycled Art, Young Chefs, and many, many more! Some programs are for children as young as 18 months! There are nature clubs for young children starting with Little Nature Cubs (Age 3), Nature Club (pre-K), and Junior Nature Club (K-2). There are also special programs throughout the year that introduce your kids to animals from all over the world, and they don’t even need passports! For those of you who would like to send your children to day camp, Alley Pond Environmental Center has a Lower Campers Program (Ages 4-7), Upper Campers Program (Ages 8-14) and an All Campers Program running through the months of July and August. A calendar of daily events is provided for every parent. Children can expect to enjoy such activities as martial arts, swimming tests, soccer, baseball, track and field, La-Crosse, gymnastics, arts and crafts, and a host of other activities too long to list. The staff is professionally trained and certified. As if all this isn’t enough, Alley Pond Environmental Center has the largest High Ropes Challenge Course in the entire Northeast! Last but not least, why not have your youngster’s next birthday party at Alley Pond? Refreshments and birthday cake included! Moreover, your child is the VIP for the day. Hear her she gets to decide which animals will be showcased and handled, which nature trail to blaze down (nature permitting), and what game to play or craft to make.

However, if you think Alley Pond Environmental Center is just fun for kids, you are very much mistaken! There is also an abundance of activities and programs for adults as well. If you get up at the crack of dawn and are a birder to boot, why not join Alley Pond’s Bird Watcher Club, hosted by expert bird watcher, Larry Plotnick? A late riser? If you are a slug-abed or fascinated by the cosmos why not spend an evening several under the stars? From 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM, come and view the night skies with astronomer, Mark Freilich. He’ll show you the Milky Way, Northern Cross, Hercules’ Cluster, spring and summer constellations and deep space objects as you have never seen them before. Bring your own telescope, or use one of the professional telescopes at the center. If you want to prepare yourself for the sights of the evening beforehand, Astronomer Freilich gives lectures before each viewing.

At Alley Pond there is something for every adult – square dancer, bird watcher, amateur astronomer, painter, poet, cook, knitter, hiker, animal lover, environmentalist, cook, and nature enthusiast regardless of age. There is even a special nature club for the young at heart! So inform your parents and grandparents as well.

Did you ever think you could have such an adventurous summer so close to home? Without any packing, reservations, time tables, or traffic jams, you can still have a great vacation. You deserve it and owe it to your kids. All you have to do is write, call, or email Alley Pond Park Environmental Center at: 228-06 Northern Boulevard Douglaston, NY 11362 (718) 229-4000 or email us228-06 Northern Boulevard Douglaston, NY 11362 (718) 229-4000 or email us

APEC is dedicated to establishing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the environment and to preserving nature in an urban setting. The building is open 7 days a week, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Our nature trails traverse ponds, salt marshes, forests and meadows where visitors will see shore birds, migrating flocks, and a variety of small animals. Or, visitors can attend one of APEC’s many environmentally-informed programs for children and adults. Please explore our website to learn more.
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