

The Paper

Medium For People Of African Descent

Vol. 127 No. 3 April 2009

"So We Stand Here On The Edge Of Hell In Harlem And Look Out On The World And Wonder What We're Gonna Do In The Face Of What We Remember"
-Langston Hughes

Jamil Al-Amin aka H Rap Brown

By Daa'iya L. Sanusi

"Imam Jamil Al-Amin has been behind bars in the Georgia State Prison, in Reidsville, GA. since Mar. 16, 2002, for a crime he insists he did not commit," said Gil Noble last Sunday on WABC-TV's Like It Is, following the airing of a 1968 interview with the young H. Rap Brown (Imam Jamil). "In August of 2007 he was transferred to another solitary cell in the Florence State Prison in Colorado, 1,400 miles away from Georgia, impeding family and friends from regular visits also being isolated from any contact with other inmates, barring him from worship with anyone else," concluded Gil Noble.

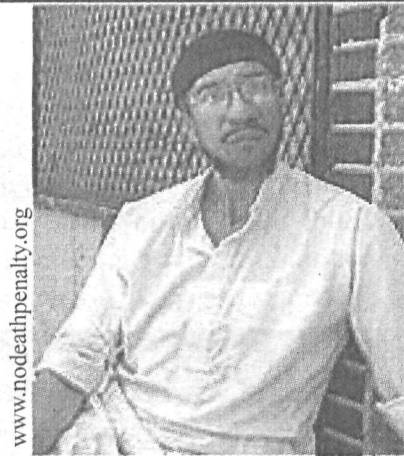
Sister Kareema Al-Amin, the Imam's wife of 40 plus years, has just returned from visiting her husband and in an interview with AmNews she explained that the campaign to address whether or not Imam Jamil was experiencing human rights abuses

in the Supermax facility where he is currently incarcerated, has seen some success. Imam Jamil's holy book, The Holy Qur'an, has been returned to him and his lockdown in Double Solitary may be over in a matter of months.

The case revolves around the fact that in 2000 Imam Jamil was charged with murder, said his wife, who is also an attorney.

"May of 1999 he was stopped while he was driving. His license was in order, but the police said that the car was stolen. In fact, the Imam had papers proving that he owned the car, but he was still charged with driving a stolen vehicle. The day he was to appear in court weather conditions were so bad that some people were advised that they did not need to return to court after lunch. The Imam did not return for the continuance of his court proceeding and in March of 2000 he was issued a warrant for his arrest."

"Very late on the night in question two sheriffs went to the grocery store that the Imam



www.nodeathpenalty.org

Jamil Al-Amin aka H Rap Brown

owned to arrest him for not showing up to respond to the charges around the vehicle. There were several men in the store, shots were fired, the officers testified that they shot the perpetrator. The officers were also shot and one died later. The Imam was not shot, and another person has admitted being the shooter. A deposition has never been sought from this person, who also told the press, at the time of the incident, that the Imam did not shoot anyone," explained Sister Kareema.

Continued on page 9

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letters to the Editors

page 2

New York City's Red Streets

page 3

TheLee Cez:
My Beef with B.E.T.

page 4

"Why Did You Go Natural?"

page 5

Authorized Use
of the N Word!

page 6

Taqiyya Talks Truth

page 8

Why I Don't Hate the
Rotunda!

page 10

The True Identity of the
Muslim Woman

page 11

Cross Cultural Dialogue
The Model Minority and
the Persistence of Racism

page 12

Attack on the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development

By Shannon Ayala

You may have heard that there is a war between the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development (OSLLD) (formerly known as Finley) and the Undergraduate Student Government (USG). People from both offices are great buddies and some people within Student Government are against the change USG is proposing. That change would exclude Student Life from receiving part of the student activities fee.

USG has already succeeded in putting a referendum on the upcoming school ballot that would result in the exclusions. Although students will be able to vote NO, if they don't have the heart to remove the Office of Student Life from the student activity fee, many students that approved the referendum had little

Continued on page 9

"Why I'm Walking Out of Class on April 22nd"

By Conor Tomás Reed

We students are not told of the inspiring radical history of our City College of New York. We are not told that our school was free until 1976, or that it was such an exciting hotbed of political ideas in the 1930s that Black writers such as Richard Wright affectionately called it the "Little Red Schoolhouse."

Most conspicuously, we are not told of the mass 1960s struggles that rocked our campus for the people's basic right to an education, culminating in the historic 1969 CCNY Open Admissions Strike. This action successfully fought the school's previous racist admissions practices, and ultimately forced its doors open to welcome huge numbers of students of color and the creation of ethnic studies departments all

Continued on page 3

Letters to the Editors

When I first heard about the picture *The New York Post* printed, I was very enthusiastic as to what the picture looked like that made the racist comment of our President. At first, I was shocked by the image of cops shooting a monkey. What was shocking about it, was that it looked like the monkey represented the average Black person and, knowing typically that Blacks are often the target of police brutality, it showed a form of racism towards our President, which happens to be Black. However, I never had the opportunity to see the full text of the picture, in order to see what was the frame of reference the picture may have had.

Once I have found the actual image of the picture, and read the text of the picture, the image sort of doesn't look racist. The text of the picture is very important on understanding the picture. Why it is important is that it regarded something Obama's camp did that many of Americans do not like, bailing out mistakes by bankers. If we break down the image, the cops represent the average people as they're civil servants who do not like the bailout idea and would like to kill it, which, in the picture they did. Second, the

monkey doesn't necessarily mean Blacks, as monkeys nor represent the race of the President. Just because the President happens to be Black doesn't necessarily and immediately mean that the monkey is a representation of him (or the typical black person). Remember, President Obama is Black, but when people critique him it's not on his race but his actions as the President. Even today, people are still bitter about the bailout plan as it is money from the tax payers, money that could be used to fund more college tuition assistance programs, health care, transportation, etc... With the money used to help bailout these corporations, it is creating a very upsetting feeling for the people of America. If you were really a supporter for Obama's bailout plan, then you would not hesitate to support the bonuses of the AIG workers. With AIG giving bonuses, don't you sort of feel like the cop in the picture wanting to shoot the monkey, which basically means wanting to kill the government's bailout plan?

Lastly, with Barack Obama as our President, I find it likely that there will not be many jokes of him due to his race. So, it'll be four years of non-president jokes. - *Anonymous*

Response from Editors

It seems that when it comes to media, we are caught on the other side of the information spectrum, remaining solely as viewers, readers, or listeners. It is rare the opportunity arises that allows us to engage with our media outlets; frankly, I have a difficult time being merely the recipient of *anything*, without being able to engage, or discuss, the matter with someone. Yet where do we attempt this conversation? In our March issue, for example, *The Paper* printed an editorial entitled "In a World Without Ethics...What's Left?" by Senior Editor Lindsie Augustin, in response to the controversial political cartoon found in *The New York Post* on February 18, 2009. *The Paper* received a response to Ms. Augustin's article, which we found helpful in opening a dialogue between our readers and writers. On my end of this discourse, I put forth my sentiments regarding the issue, and hope this response keeps us all talking, writing, and most important, critically thinking!

To begin with, it concerns me when, under any circumstance, a person's race or ethnicity "just happens to be Black." Race, as we know it, does not "happen" in an instant, as if someone turns the corner or opens a door and magically becomes Black. Race in America is not only the skin color of a person, but is also a myriad of interactions between others, institutions, and government. President Barack Obama does not, under any condition, "happen to be Black." His experience as a Black man in America should not be trivialized in order to support racist innuendo in the media. When monkeys and watermelons plague the President's media image, it is a race issue, because he *is* Black, not because he "happens to be" Black.

In breaking down the image, you contributed a very interesting point of view: that in fact the picture was not racist, since the average American is represented by the law enforcement agency, and the enemy to the average American is a rageful black primate, which is of course the best possible metaphor for a bail-out plan. The only Americans these statements accurately describe are White Americans, as depicted in the cartoon itself. While I appreciated being reminded that President Obama's actions, not his race, are being

critiqued by the current media, I find it hard to believe that Obama's race, his identity as a Black man, is not under attack as well. Additionally, in reference to the assertion that there will be minimal jokes made about Barack Obama, as he *is* President of the United States, I will quickly point out the Republican National Convention vendor fiasco, the watermelon email, and for something closer to home, the "drunken Negro cookies" in lower Manhattan. These incidents are not isolated, they are infinitely connected to a system that not only engenders racism, but defends it as well, under First Amendment rights.

Arguments aside as to whether *The Post* cartoon is racist or not, I think we want the nightmare to be over. The nightmare that awaits our eyes and ears looks something like this: the senseless deaths of young Black men and women at the hands of police, the rotten food in slums that our grandmothers are forced to buy. The disturbing dream deferred continues, with the difficulty of attending higher education, people looking at you as if you're less than entitled because you're a SEEK student, you bring down the "reputation" of City College, and those non-SEEK students, the ones that seem to glance at you with disdain—they attempt to look down at you, too. And when the media describes your new President, you will find that one anchor willing to describe him as "so well spoken!", and watermelon in his front yard disgusts you, because it makes the White House look like a plantation. Racism plagues our institutions like slow death, and it's painful. Yet has every one of you forgotten that if you ignore the sore, it festers?

The latent and clandestine racism in our system must be undermined and attacked on all fronts, which means that not only do we hold particular people responsible for their actions, but also convict the institutions, the media, and the culture that perpetuates racism. Let us not travel down that well trodden road, believing the hype, that racism has ended, that equality has been achieved. Instead, let's create something new, vibrant, and revolutionary, employing new ideas on race education and mediation. Once again, thanks for your response letter to *The Paper*, keep reading, and write often! - *Mitchell Robinson-Ramirez*

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The Paper

Wants to Hear from YOU!!

Articles and letters to the Editor are welcomed and can be submitted to *The Paper* for consideration. All submissions should be between 300-500 words. We look forward to reading what you have to say!

OUR MISSION

For over thirty years *The Paper* has served as a medium through which students, faculty and members of the local community can communicate. As a publication for people of African descent, *The Paper* focuses on pertinent issues facing the Black and Latino community as well as issues that are of relevance to people of all races and ethnicities. In addition, this publication is a valuable resource for CCNY students and faculty for information on everything from scholarships to job opportunities. With increased membership and support from the student body, *The Paper* will continue to serve CCNY and the surrounding community.

NEW YORK CITY'S RED STREETS

By Gumar Williams

Those blue eyes gleam, while the gun powder is freed from captivity, steel embraces white fingertips, while a bullet thrusts out of a burning hot barrel. The smoke evaporates, revealing the once charcoal colored New York City cement streets, which are now painted red. This is the result of that aggressive disease called police brutality. Many New York City police officers may be afflicted, as an increasing rate of aggressive behavior towards African American communities becomes increasingly apparent.

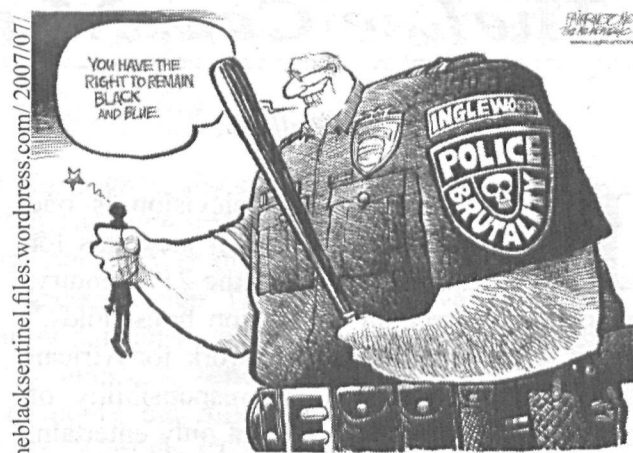
Many officers do not fear being served with a guilty verdict by a jury of their peers, because there is an unspoken pledge that binds police officers together. The simple fact is that many police officers hide behind the *Blue Code of Silence*. The *Blue Code of Silence* is the tradition of police officers refusing to give information that would incriminate a fellow officer, including one accused of using excessive force. This code allows many officers to continue to exercise their aggressive behavior, while consequently the N.Y.P.D. has developed a reputation for abusing its power of authority.

Now let us take a brief look at some cases concerning the N.Y.P.D.'s history of police brutality. In October 1984, 66 year old Eleanor Bumpurs, a mentally challenged woman, was shot and killed by N.Y.P.D. in an attempt to evict her from her apartment. An unarmed Amadou Diallo was fatally shot in February 1999 by

four police officers. As Diallo attempted to show his identification, the officers responded by shooting at him forty-one times, resulting in nineteen bullets riddling his body.

The bloody disease continued to spread in November 2006 when Sean Bell (23), Trent Benefield (23), and Joseph Guzman (31) were leaving a bachelor party. While driving an unmarked car, undercover detectives fired 50 rounds, resulting in the death of Sean Bell, Joseph Guzman having an inoperable leg and a pin in his other leg, and Trent Benefield also ended up with a pin in one of his legs. These few incidents tell us how racially consumed officers are with this bloody disease and it seems they will continue to take the lives of many Black men and women. The badge which sits on the lapel of the N.Y.P.D.'s blue uniforms overflows with the blood of many Black people.

The trumpet blows! In March 2003, a brutal killing of two undercover police detectives took place, while they were undergoing a sting operation on Staten Island, with the objective to purchase illegal hand guns. Instead, they were murdered execution style by Ronell Wilson. He shot the two undercover detectives Rodney J. Andrews and James V. Nemorin in the head. Ronell Wilson, at the age of 26, was found guilty and sentenced to death for the murder of the two undercover police detectives. Although this is not a classic case of police brutality, it reveals the double standard and who is really protected. Ronell Wilson got sentenced to death while many police officers who are guilty of murder, continue to walk the beat. So where is the justice? Is the antidote for this bloody



disease we call police brutality, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?

Police brutality is obviously not an antidote to criminal activities. Police brutality also has a psychological affect on many African American men and women living in the five boroughs. African American men and women are unsure whether to comply with N.Y.P.D. when approached for we fear mental or physical harassment; or that we will be put in a situation needing self defense, by any means necessary.

There have been numerous marches and rallies lead by prominent outspoken African American leaders who are fighting to civilize the exhausted system of injustice across this country. Yet, America's judicial system continues to struggle to develop a cure to overthrow the system of police brutality. New York City police officers must be held to respect the law equal to all American citizens and cease from abusing their power of authority. They cannot be allowed to continue hiding behind the *Blue Code of Silence*.

Continued from front page

"Why I'm Walking Out of Class on April 22nd"

over CUNY. Such victories are not officially discussed because, hey, what happens if the students decide to advocate again for our educational rights?

History does not repeat itself, but rather interacts its past with its present and future in a continuous dynamic process. Right now, we are seeing history being looped and remixed. The disastrous economic crisis has politicians and bankers alike scrambling to find ways to apply band-aids here and there at the terrible expense of students and working people. For CUNY students, a recent state legislature decision in early April to impose \$300 more in tuition fees each semester demonstrates that our lives, our right to an education, are under attack. This tuition increase is not even going towards more investment in our schools; 80% will be funneled directly into the state budget. We are effectively being taxed for wanting to go to college.

That's why CCNY students have organized a **Mass Walk-Out scheduled April 22nd at 2pm** with a clear message: we are walking out today so we don't have to drop out tomorrow. This Walk-Out has been a long time coming... military recruiters are still invited every semester to peddle their education-for-

murder abroad exchange program. Whole departments like Black Studies, Women's Studies, Psychology, and more are being eroded into oblivion. Baskerville Hall, the place where in the past clubs could actively congregate, is a never-ending construction nightmare. Professors and adjuncts are being told to work more for less pay, to endure larger class sizes with fewer resources. CCNY security makes entrance into NAC more and more of an aggressive process... who knows, maybe we'll soon have to take off our shoes and be administered body searches!

We are walking out on April 22nd because we think that The City College of New York can reclaim its original vision, as stated on January 21st, 1849, the day it opened free educational doors to New York City, that "*the experiment is to be tried, whether the children of the people, the children of the whole people, can be educated; and whether an institution of the highest grade, can be successfully controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few.*" **We are walking out on April 22nd** because we are feeling more and more disenfranchised from this "Poor People's Harvard" that should be a haven from the economic crisis, not an extension of its uncertainties. At a time when our city

and state governments should be consciously investing in its future with more educational funding—more scholarships, more resources for students and teachers—we are being told to learn with less.

Join us on April 22nd at 2pm when we will reclaim our radical history of City College by leaving our classes en masse to hold a rally at the NAC plaza and firmly assert that education should be for the people, not for profit. For more information, please contact cocoreed@gmail.com

We Apologize...

In the last Taqiyya Talks Truth entitled, *Why I Hate the Rotunda*, the image which accompanied the op-ed unintentionally offended the individuals in the picture. While we will not apologize for the piece which was written as the writer is entitled to her own opinion, we are apologizing to the ladies in the image. The image was included to illustrate one particular point in the op-ed, it was not meant to represent the piece in its entirety nor were the ladies in the picture. So for the misconception, we here at The Paper apologize.

Signed the Editorial Staff
of The Paper

TheLee Cez: My Beef with B.E.T.

By Jeff Delices

Black Entertainment Television is one of the most well known mediums for African Americans in the 21st Century, reaching “more than 87 million households.” As it is the most popular network for African Americans, B.E.T. has the responsibility of producing content that will not only entertain, but also, educate. The young Black youth are constantly stereotyped as being ignorant, with young men being perceived as thugs or hoodlums and their female counterparts as loud and out-of-control, these stereotypes being portrayed in many mainstream films or TV shows. Although it’s difficult to stop, B.E.T. has the power to produce positive and historical content about African Americans, which can provide viewers with the truth. However, the network chooses to indulge in the stereotype and air programs such as American Gangster, Hell Date, and lackluster movie sequels under their ‘Black Buster’ banner.

On February 21, 2009, the anniversary of Malcolm X’s assassination at Harlem’s Audubon Ballroom, B.E.T. chose to air under its Black Buster banner: “House Party 4,” “State Property 2,” and “New Jack City”, in the Primetime slot. Moreover all three films feature young Black men selling drugs, drinking alcohol or ditching school to party. To make matters worse a day later February 22, B.E.T. aired “Malcolm X,” starring Denzel Washington, with no acknowledgement or interviews with supporters of Minister Malcolm or celebrities whose lives he influenced.

It is not the first time B.E.T. pulled the Black Buster stunt. On October 15, 2008, the final debate between Barack Obama and John McCain took place; the network, instead of airing the debate, chose to air “Paper Soldiers”, while many networks including CBS, which is owned by Viacom (the company that owns B.E.T.), aired the debate live. Clearly, it would not have been an issue to air the debate, as B.E.T. could have received their feed from CBS, since they are owned by the same company.

My beef with B.E.T. does not only

concern their airing of comedies or “urban thrillers” on important dates in African American history. It is also their lack of positive Black programming during Black History Month. I can recall, two years ago, when B.E.T. made the decision to air “American Gangster” during Black History Month. Instead of airing programs, which would teach the Black youth about Fredrick Douglass or Marcus Garvey, the network chooses to teach viewers about Leroy ‘Nicky’ Barnes and ‘Fat Cat’ Nichols—drug dealers and murderers. Not only does B.E.T. not air programming that would teach its viewers about Black History, the network has only dedicated 60 seconds to Black History Month on their most popular program 106 & Park. Moreover the network, spotlighted late-rapper, The Notorious B.I.G., as a person to be remembered during the Black History Month. The Notorious B.I.G. was recently the center of a biographical motion picture which made over 20 million dollars in its first week. Clearly, the late MC is known in the African American community and does not need to be spotlighted. On the other hand, pioneers such as Benjamin Banneker, need to be acknowledged, as Banneker contributed much to the construction of Washington D.C. and has never been properly acknowledged for his work.

The lack of positive Black programming forced B.E.T. to create “Hip Hop vs. America,” a program covering sexism, misogyny, race, et cetera under the umbrella of Hip-Hop and featuring “important” Black people. For the past two years, the special has aired for three consecutive days. The program features rappers, activists, and professors yelling and screaming—back and forth—about how to stop, for example, the exploitation of women in rap music and America. The irony is that three female employees of B.E.T. have appeared on the cover or inside of men’s magazine: Raquel “Rocsi” Roxanne Diaz of 106 & Park, Marie “Free” Antoinette formerly of 106 & Park, and Toccara Jones of B.E.T.’s “The Black Carpet” and “Take the Cake.” What kind of debate can B.E.T. hold, when its female employees are in short skirts or bikinis for a men’s magazine? Moreover, for years B.E.T. aired the program



“B.E.T. Uncut” which had naked and half-naked women in rap videos. Rapper Nelly pointed these facts out, after being ridiculed by another panelist on the program. The special which was created, I guess, to defend rap and hip hop music proved to be meaningless, since the panel never came to a conclusion on any subject and was created by a network, which airs gangster flicks, and soft-core porn music videos. In addition, the network has cancelled programming that would inform the Black community such as: “B.E.T. Tonight with Ed Gordon” and “Teen Summit.”

It is critical for B.E.T. to revise its programming to better educate the Black youth; being that the nation and the world is changing. As taught by Dr. Leonard Jeffries whoever controls the images—controls the self esteem, self respect, and self development. If African Americans continue to see people such as Kenneth ‘Supreme’ McGriff and fictional character Nino Brown instead of Dr. Ivan Van Sertima and Reginald F. Lewis, the Black community will continue to have young Black men die at the hands of police officers. Also baby mamas and every other stereotype are thrown our way. Notice, Black men are consistently the victims of police brutality; the perception of Black people in America is a result of images in the media. If Black networks such as B.E.T. continue airing films that show Black-on-Black violence, nothing will change. It is about time Black Entertainment Television changes its mission to Black Education Television and produce content that will uplift the Black community.

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John Hope Franklin
January 2, 1915 - March 25, 2009

“If the house is to be set in order, one cannot begin with the present; he must begin with the past.”

While life continues death still takes some of us unannounced and when it seems God only has willed. None of us at The Paper have ever met John Hope Franklin and cannot say with honesty we have absorbed

even half the history he leaves in texts, but we honor him nonetheless. We know him as a legend; a man born in the hardest of American times in segregated Oklahoma during 1915. He managed to laugh at life and document some of America’s most important history. His first published book, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans (1947), sold over three million copies, a major feat for any writer but especially facing the racial injustice of the early 20th century. The New York Times (Peter Applebome) named John Hope Franklin a scholar and a witness in a March 28, 2009 article paying tribute. We can only add he was a soldier in the struggle and a renowned griot. To honor him we will continue to learn and share what he taught and promise to never forget or allow others to disregard his efforts. Rest in Peace John Hope Franklin and Thank You.

"Why Did You Go Natural?"

By Nicole Caldwell

Remember in "Coming to America" when Eddie Murphy said he puts juices and berries in his hair; we may have laughed but he was on to something. Natural hair can be easy hair to maintain but many of us are scared to even try to see how this is possible. In this continuing column I will share my thoughts and advice about how to transition, maintain moisture and love our beautiful KinkyCoily hair!

This June will mark 3 years since my 'going natural.' I didn't realize that with the big chop, there would follow a barrage of questions by family, friends, and complete strangers. "Why did you cut off all of your hair?" "Are you a radical now?" "Are you trying to make a point?" "What is your point?" Unwarranted opinions also flooded in.

My family's reactions were the hardest to deal with; everyone's face just had a blank stare. I moved beyond their limited scope, decided to step out of my box, and challenge myself to learn more about my natural beauty. Now don't get me wrong, my initial reason for going natural was solely extreme dislike of having a chemical relaxer placed on my hair, in order to straighten it. But this never happened, because within 10 minutes my scalp was on fire and I was ready to knock my stylist out. We tried everything; not scratching my scalp a week prior to the 'touch-up,' which didn't work, we tried greasing my head down with Vaseline, that didn't work. We even tried milder relaxers and that was no good either, nothing worked! I had it! I couldn't continue to subject my head to this brutality every 6-8 weeks, so I woke up one morning and did the Big Chop.

I didn't tell anyone except my sister, who came along for moral support. The transition to natural hair wasn't easy, I didn't know anyone who was natural, and therefore I did not have a clue about how to maintain, moisturize, or train my hair to become healthier. No one told me that even after cutting off everything but an inch, for a few months the hair that grows will still have the texture of the

relaxed hair, because that is how deep the relaxer penetrates the scalp. No one informed me of the proper oils that were best to moisturize my hair or the harmful ingredients in my shampoo and conditioner that would interfere with my growing healthier hair. Recently, I found a network of "KinkyCoilyQueens" who have videos on YouTube, that give advice on the best hair products, how to protectively style your hair during the harsh winter months, how to protect your ends, what ingredients are harmful and damaging, and why co-washing is our best friend. The best advice from these sistahs is that our hair is not "nappy," but should be labeled as kinky



afgen.com/naturalhair.html

or coily and is always manageable. Now for the most part, these women are ordinary sistahs who decided to go natural for the same reasons I have, but there are also sistahs who believe that naturalness is a totality and that your mind, body and soul must be natural in order to be a natural sistah, but that is too extreme for my taste. I do admit, that while learning about how to best care for my natural hair, it has made me more conscious of products that I use for the rest of my body, but I don't condemn anyone who doesn't do the same. There are many sistahs like me, who would like to join the many other natural sistahs but may need some guidance, so feel free to reach out to other KinkyCoilyQueens with your questions or comments and we can all help one another on the journey.

I would like to hear other stories from KinkyCoilyQueens specifically these questions:

1. What made you decide to go natural? Are there any KinkyCoilyQueens in your family?
2. How has wearing natural hair changed your life?
3. If there was a transition period how long was it?
4. How do you feel the opposite sex responded to you before and after the transition?
5. Are you a fellow PJ (product junkie) or YouTube fanatic when it comes to natural hair? Until next time love, peace and hair grease☺

Tapping into CCONY's School Spirit

By Courtney James

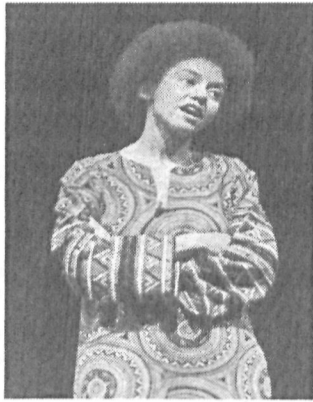
Within the vast community of The City College of New York, tightly knit organizations, friendships, and promises have been created over the years, thanks to a network of communication and cooperation. Whether it involves student to teacher involvement, or student to student friendships, a new way of communication has helped to benefit our school environment, be it through word of mouth, our college radio station WCCR, the multiple newspapers, or from the CCONY homepage. A few weeks ago, the college hosted a two day blood drive, open to all students and faculty members. This is just one example of events that occur on the college campus. There are so many activities that students can include themselves in, but for some reason a lot of students don't seem to realize all of the opportunities in their face.

When I began my freshman year at The City College of New York, all of the possible activities seemed to whirl through my mind like a rush of fresh air. I noticed that the music and theatre departments were always putting on recitals and plays for the public, and that clubs, like the Rock Climbing Club, were always eager to see new faces at their meetings. Yet as the semester progressed, I don't know what really happened. After a while, as I got into the routine of going to school and traveling back home every evening, these various events seemed to slowly fade from my interest. I was no longer interested in joining most of these clubs, and I attended the concerts and recitals solely for reports due in class. For me, it was the constant routine of going to school and coming home in the evening that made me not think about the importance of school spirit anymore. I have come to believe that this same routine sets in for plenty more students who attend the college as well, and even though we bypass many advocates everyday at school, we never completely realize that help is always available on campus, especially for the students who must pay every penny of their (rising) tuition.

Yet it may seem daunting to go through an entire activity calendar searching for this or that, so here's a beginner's suggestion. Why not try the free events first? For starters, there is a free Antigen HIV Testing Center on campus. Beginning on March 31st, the Antigen HIV Testing program began at The City College of New York, taking place in the NAC Ballroom. Confidential twenty minute exams are available to the public between the ages of thirteen and sixty-four. One of the number one diseases terrorizing our world population is the HIV/ AIDS virus; according to statistics taken by www.avert.org, it is stated that "At the end of 2006, the CDC—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—estimated that 448,871 people were living with AIDS in America." With forty four percent being Black Americans and nineteen percent being of our Hispanic community, it is crucial that everyone should be mindful of not only this disease but of their health issues as a whole. This is such an important issue for our respective communities that announcements have been posted on the school website at <http://www1.ccony.cuny.edu/current/events> for a number of weeks. However, it is still the initiative of the students to push themselves to become involved in these helpful school activities.

This article may seem like an advertisement for health events but these are not the only events we should mark on our calendars. Activities, clubs, organizations, and publications are open to our involvement, but we must take the first step. Some suggestions for other campus opportunities include joining a fraternity or sorority if interested, joining a medium like *The Paper*, becoming a part of one of the many sports teams and exercise classes given at the Wellness Center, or learning more about your school community by simply researching the activities on campus. There is always something to do, creatively, socially, or politically, at The City College of New York so this a way of telling you blatantly to use your facilities to the fullest, and get involved!

AUTHORIZED USE OF THE N WORD!



images.photopage.com/nikkigiovanni

By Taqiyya Haden

When looking at the artistic or intellectual use of nigger and its many forms I had overlooked my own gender for an inspiring source. Women writers did not instantly come to mind, and I am not sure if we are using it less often or with less media attention. Nikki Giovanni is an under celebrated literary genius of the 20th century that captures the range in human emotion through her various works. For me, this particular work encapsulates the frustration of a woman that sees her people put themselves on the line for

everyone but self. She was writing in a time that could be seen as being relived today: war, death and imprisonment occupy the lives of many Black people and especially the men she referenced here. The use of *nigger* adds to the intentional harshness.

I am not aiming to send any encouragement to literally kill or murder, but the metaphor powerfully deserves to be printed in our *Authorized Use*. Who am I to deem her writings as authorized anything? I do not aim to be pretentious, I humbly share my opinion on what word use I simply love, in this case, poetry. The entire poem is available and can be found online among her many other works; Nikki Giovanni has also authored books for children, displaying her range in written works.

Nikki Giovanni

BLACK feeling BLACK talk BLACK judgement (1970) - poems by Nikki Giovanni
The True Import of Present Dialogue,
Black vs. Negro
(For Peppe, Who Will
Ultimately Judge Our Efforts)
 (Excerpt)

...
Can you kill the nigger
in you
Can you make your nigger mind
die
Can you kill your nigger mind
And free your black hands to
strangle
Can you kill
Can a nigger kill
Can you shoot straight and
Fire for good measure
Can you splatter their brains in the street
Can you kill them
Can you lure them to
bed to kill them
We kill in Viet Nam
for them
We kill for UN &
NATO & SEATO & US
And everywhere for all
alphabet but
BLACK

images.photopage.com/nikkigiovanni



Events @ City

BFA RECITAL

Mon, April 20

3:00pm

Shepard Hall Room 95

Engaging the Tech Savvy Student

Tues, April 21

12:00pm – 2:00pm

NAC Building 4/220

Ingredients of Effective Course Design

Wed, April 22

12:00pm – 2:00pm

NAC Building 4/220

FACULTY JAZZ RECITAL

Thurs, April 23

12:30pm

Shepard Hall Room 95

Panel Discussion: Listening to CCNY Students

Thurs, April 23

12:00pm – 2:00pm

NAC Building 4/220

CCNY Student Photography

Mon, April 27 – Wed, May 13

5:00pm – 7:00pm

Compton & Goethals Building Rm CG-134

Blood Drive

Wed, April 29 – Thurs, April 30

9:00am – 4:00pm

160 Convent Avenue/ NAC Ballroom

Watchmen Movie: The Final Word

A summary of the summary of the greatest graphic novel ever.

By Dennis Jones

Conversations about giant squid and naked blue men are not my usual forum, but after witnessing the typhoon that was “Watchmen,” a movie and media machine, directed by Zach Snyder, I’m ready for the final word.

For those that don’t know, “Watchmen” is the major motion picture based on the highly acclaimed graphic novel of the same name. Watchmen—the graphic novel—takes place in an alternate 1985, where superheroes are a part of an everyday unregistered law enforcement, wherein President Nixon is reelected and escorts us through the escalating threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, while the streets are filled with grit and chaos. Underneath the turmoil, there is a conspiracy

among the outlawed and disbanded Watchmen when someone is killed by masked heroes.

Although the ending was changed from the original, much of the movie closely represents the source material. Great efforts were made to this effect, because when the movie was picked up by its current director, Snyder, it had been changed to the present day, as opposed to the original time frame of 1985, contorting the entire historical innuendo. “League of Extraordinary Gentleman” (2003 Fox) is another Alan Moore novel turned movie, yet there was absolutely no resonance of the psychologically stirring graphic novel in the film, except for the name. After the 2005 interpretation of Alan Moore’s “V for Vendetta”

(Silver Pictures), Moore condemned all adaptations of his work and had his name removed. Personally, I liked “V for Vendetta” (adapted by the writers of The Matrix) as opposed to the “League of Extraordinary Gentlemen” movie, which is the equivalent of comparing Mary Shelly’s original novel to Frankenberry cereal. And I feel it all has something to do with respect—this matter of recreating the graphic novel in film form; respect for the writer, the artist, and the original graphic novel.

Despite differing tastes in violence, the particular actors, the ending, and how damn long the movie was, something has happened within “Watchmen.” Alan Moore’s Watchmen and V for Vendetta along with Frank Miller’s Sin City and 300 represent a revolution

www.latimes.com/entertainment

in modern graphic novels, in that their work is not only intended to entertain, but most importantly to make people think. With Watchmen, Alan Moore forced us to face his belief that all of the greed, all of the senseless wars and violence, are our human nature and can never change. Moore explains that we can only be at peace when we are united to fight something stronger than ourselves and all of humanity; always at war, but at least not with each other. You may not agree, but “Watchmen” the movie represents a popular medium that finally treats us with enough respect to encourage thinking critically about its message...much like those *regular* books. That’s the final word.





s.mccollum.com

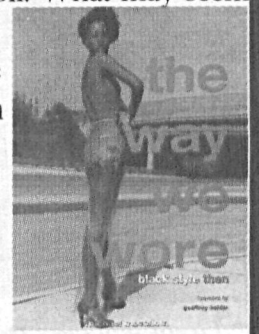
Books On Our Mind

Graceland: A Novel, written by Chris Abani.

As Chris Abani writes, "corruption meets youthful hope for better life," and Elvis Oke is caught in an underground battle for power in these dangerous Nigerian streets. Set in a sprawling lush yet hazardous ghetto of Lagos, Nigeria, this novel follows the coming of age of Elvis Oke, named after the famed American entertainer. The story travels through slum street lights and violence, to the heart of a young Nigerian brother's road to redemption among all of the turmoil. What may seem to be a straight and narrow narrative quickly turns into a dialogue on Americanization's influence within Nigeria, the costs of national "developments" and military, and the strains that it places among the displaced youth of the 1970s and 80s in Lagos. This book is a great compliment to any study on postcolonial Nigeria and America's influence on its popular culture.

The Way We Wore: Black Style Then, written by Michael McCollum with others.

So maybe it's the legwarmers or, a great pair of vintage bangles, or perhaps the limited edition throwback Nike, but don't we all have our "classic" piece that is the pride and joy of a clothing collection? I must say, I have several of these pieces, such as the vintage Yves St. Laurent slingbacks I found at a thrift store, and I can't stay away from a great conversation about vintage or "old school" style. It's due to the fact that fashion has always been an integral part of the Black experience in America, and I love its history, the way its developed, and its progression into the 21st century. But when you need a reference book on the matter, turn to *The Way We Wore: Black Style Then*, written by Michael McCollum, for a great pictorial history of our people breaking their style down. You may see some of yourself, or someone else in your life—say auntie or cousin—in the photos staring back at you.



www.bookfinder.com

-By Mitchell Robinson-Ramirez

Continued from back page

Cross Cultural Dialogue

the Civil Rights movement and ushered in the "New" Black politics, one that exalts the ideals of American Democracy with Black politicians who are not so much Black as they are American, in a color blind sense. Indeed, his "audacity of hope" is in stark contrast to the real despair that has been a permanent feature of life for many people of color, most especially for the growing majority who live below the poverty level, who are also the force behind the Civil Rights struggle and other Black liberation movements.

The kind of figure President Obama cuts in the minds of most Whites is one who has transcended race, who is "different" than other Blacks, a Black populace who, despite talk of the end of racism that supposedly is signaled by Obama's election, are still considered by many Whites as problematic. Obama, in other words, is not really "Black" in this scheme. He is an exception to the rule, having passed a stringent battery of tests. He is thus a "model minority," a term that has most commonly been attributed to Asian Americans, supposedly due to an Asian work ethic that is apparently American to the core, enabling them to climb the ladder of meritocracy into elite educational institutions and upper middle class high tech jobs. This overarching view is held despite evidence that a greater majority of Asian Americans work in low wage underground economies. The model minority tag functions to mask this and, when needed, used as a benchmark against which the underclass Asians and other people of color are measured. Barack Obama's story fulfills this tale of hard work and pulling oneself up by the bootstraps. Whites might be asking at this point, why can't or don't all those other Black people do this? Within this inquiry, it becomes evident that the color blindness that allowed Whites to feel good about supporting Obama is of a different order than the judgment assigned to other Blacks. In other words, color blindness is a strategy of claiming that a level playing field exists while disengaging a structural

socioeconomic analysis that is necessary to understand how and why this is not so.

I've brought in this concept of color blindness to highlight how this ideology is deployed against anti-racists, by closet White racists who claim Obama as the heir to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of equality in America. Dr. King famously invoked the image that the Civil Rights struggle would result in a humanity in which people would be judged by "the content of their character" and not "the color of their skin." Yet, consciously omitted from this equation on part of the color blindists, is that Dr. King also demanded a restructuring of society! In order to follow through with this restructuring, the color blindists would have to confront the institutional racism that is a key factor in stabilizing white supremacy at the core of the country's racial hierarchy, a system from which White privilege flows, consciously or not, with little impunity.

During the 1980's the model minority tag was coined by right wing Republicans, including former President Ronald Reagan, who described Asian Americans as "our exemplars of hope and inspiration." Affirmative action in higher education became a point of contention due to the academic achievements of Asian Americans. The argument was essentially that Asian people are hard working and don't need the help of the state, while Black people are lazy and seeking handouts. Model minority Asians were used as a weapon against government intervention on the part of individuals and groups seeking redress due to institutional racism. The ensuing argument became that affirmative action hurt Asians who, it is said, subscribe to the American dream of meritocracy: work hard and you'll go far, earning lots of dollars on the way. On the other hand, it was argued that Blacks wanted preferential treatment at the cost of other minorities (specifically Asians). The hard work Asians offered to get a fair share would be lost in the shuffle of big government welfare. In the interests of equity, affirmative action was argued to be discriminatory.

However, this idea of the model minority and the merits of a level playing field end there in the public domain. Once in the private sector Asian Americans once again are assigned the status of "colored," merits achieved disregarded, and ultimately, we receive the appropriate unequal dues. In law and medicine, for instance, a recent study found that Asians earn 44 percent less than Whites with equal qualifications. When needed, Asians become coded White in order to suppress Black achievement. In all other cases, the White privilege is rescinded, and back to outsider "colored" status we go.

And so the stage is set for the color blindists who claim racism has ended. Enter Barack Obama, studiously avoiding upsetting the racial (dis)order, whose claims of "Change" and "Hope" within a neoliberal agenda are vague enough to satisfy those who are outraged by the actions of the Bush presidency but who are still in denial about White supremacy. He is *the* model minority, the exception to the rule that is no danger to the rule itself. Whites have always been in denial about the immoral and irrational imperatives that drive such argumentations obscuring the truth of their racism. At every point in American history White people have grossly misunderstood the racial biases that enable their privileges. With few exceptions, they have consistently shown an inability to see what is plainly obvious to those who are subject to the instruments of racial oppression on a daily level. The "enlightened" White perspective, having "advanced", to being color blind, is still in the throes of being just plain blind. President Obama expresses that his is a post-racial politics and in deference to a sensitive, color blind white constituency, talking about race is just too "divisive." The dangers of a post-racial politics in an increasingly racialized world cannot be underestimated. Refusal to interact with one another on this level of race awareness, is to engender quiet racism to a new generation, quickly becoming engulfed in the color blind theory of "if I don't see it, then it must not exist," and that is dangerous indeed.

Taqiyya Talks Truth on Teaching and Why You Shouldn't Do It!



Great teachers transcend ideology.

-Suzanne Fields

We all have talks and serious rants about professors and adjuncts working in City College, it is a conversation had by all students at all levels around the world. There are moments when we like professors so much that we tell our peers, "You HAVE to take my professor next time." Many times it is because they grade fairly or better than fairly; for me, it is usually a professor that covers material I am hungry for, and covers it in a way I know will maintain the interest of the peer I direct towards them.

The other conversation, that is had more often, is about what professor is most difficult to get an A with, and who is boring or cannot be understood by anyone in the class, either because of strong accents, mumbling, the monotone voice or complicated ways of explaining. However, there are unaddressed issues that we have at The City College, even after extensive conversations among students; these are issues of racial, cultural and gender sensitivity. When I questioned my own desire to speak out against these issues, I was reminded by a student advocate that as students, we often forget we are the consumers.

Students are hesitant to speak out about professors and teachers, forgetting that at the end of the day our tuition pays their salary; if anyone can advocate for faculty and staff to receive fair pay it would be us, students. So, who else can hold them accountable and question the responsibilities of teachers and professors? I say they are responsible for teaching us the subject at hand, and since this *is* higher learning, there needs to be a level of critical thinking encouraged by professors— with or without titles. Respect must be given to students, as it is expected to come from the students. Again, think consumer: what business shows blatant disrespect for consumers and gets away with it?

With this in mind, I offer you my personal example. I registered for a class that labeled the instructor with the ominous TBA (To Be Announced). I was expecting the professor I had already learned made the topic fun, was cheerful, and the only rough spot was that she worked at a fast pace; sounded great to me. I did not get her, but stayed in the class expecting the best results because of my independent interest in the topic. As a teacher your body language gives away more than you probably care to know. This particular

TBA found no reason to stand or even write on the board for at least three weeks and had formed the habit of reading our assigned readings to us. I agree with the adage "repetition is the mother of skill," but if I am supposed to read it at home, why read it to me in our once a week class? Isn't the classroom for gaining clarity?

Respectfully I voiced some of what other students had been grumbling about every morning when we reached the classroom. First, I offered to broach the topic requesting someone else jump in; classmates agreed but fell silent when I mentioned a desire for something more than being read to.

After leaving class, I sent an email voicing concerns about my inability to fully comprehend the material and it was responded to promptly. I appreciated being acknowledged, but the result was disastrous as the teacher showed up the following class with material that was inappropriate to say the least. During class, while a short story written by Junot Diaz, entitled *Alma*, was read aloud by a young man, I walked out. When I left I was upset and had no idea what to do; I went through all kinds of emotions. My eyes felt assaulted by the page and I felt too embarrassed to stay in the room. Was I being prudish? Was I overreacting? Did she bring that piece in thinking I was 'into' that? Did any of my peers feel uncomfortable but afraid to speak up or walk out? Most importantly perhaps, did I have the right and power to influence what was happening in this classroom?

After I cleared my thoughts and got some sound advice, I shared with the department, my advisor and the teacher, that I had walked out because I could not participate in what was being read aloud, especially when the course would not allow for a political or social response to what was on the page. Any other material could have fit the bill for this particular class. The teacher informed me the class had unanimously decided this would be the type of material used and told me (as if I didn't know) that Junot Diaz was well published; I reiterated that for personal and religious reasons I would not be able to participate. She never offered any type of apology, and in fact did not respond at all. A most disheartening aspect of this experience is that I was the only student to actually confront what was happening. The department heard me out and tried to work with me but in the end being offended cost me emotionally, scholastically, and financially.

Please be aware that the next two paragraphs contain very illicit language, I would say rated NC-17. This should have been stated before it was given to me, but was not.

My senior editor and I hesitated, and ultimately opted not to print all of *Alma*, despite a teacher presenting it in the class room. Freedom of the press aside, this student paper feels more trepidations than our own teachers! If she thought I was 'into'—or even comfortable with words like *ass*, *nigger* and *pussy* or phrases like *Dominican ass*, *pussy was hot*, *wipes her gummy fingers*, *says terrible white-girl things while you fuck*, and *curried pussy* being recklessly presented—she was WRONG WRONG WRONG! Clearly she made

an assumption about what I find interesting and appropriate. Surely I can not speak for all young African American women, but I am confident that I speak for some when I say, "UGH UGH UGH! Waaay too much, and before 10:00AM?!" I am fully aware that Junot Diaz is admired and taught in many classrooms. He visits the Harlem community as a welcome guest, a most recent visit was to the Schomburg and my beef is not with him, but with his work being irresponsibly introduced.

Another faculty member compared my reaction to *Alma*—specifically the word *nigger*—to Jewish students reading *Mein Kampf*. WRONG WRONG WRONG! This was without having read *Alma* in its entirety, still, cliché comparisons between Jewish oppression and the oppression of African Americans are redundant. Beyond that, Jewish students and others who read materials related to the Jewish Holocaust do so with intention and in prepared environments. Junot Diaz was not on the syllabus, nor was this a Caribbean literature, modern fiction, contemporary Dominican writers, or pop erotica class. This faculty member flinched only after I shared the explicit sexual language of the piece, specifically, "...come on her tits or her face," apparently the use of *nigger* wasn't enough to alarm her.

Students on this campus are predominately non-White, so why are we being taught by so many people that are racially uneducated? Why are we sending more racially uneducated, miseducated, and insensitive individuals out into the world? How this lack of race, culture and gender ignorance and insensitivity affects all of us can be found in other examples, I hope to publish in the near future.

A broader view reveals students offering more than our share of surveys on "bad" teachers, yet to no avail the following semester your friend says, "I'm in her class! OH NO! Damn TBA!" From now on TBA will be known to me as The Best Available and Too Bad A\$\$hole!! Dollar signs because we paid for whoever we got.

At the other end of this teaching spectrum, we don't see the professors we rate as the best jumping around with bonuses, or celebrating moves to a window office. The professors found to be among top choice have a vast knowledge and the ability to share information with their students in an environment encouraging independent thought. They are at least sensitive to our daily struggles as minorities out in the world and have the keen sense to look at us as unique individuals. These are the types of professors that notice our individual challenges and strengths, and then interact with us in ways that make us want to do well.

"No man is my friend, no man is my foe but every man is my teacher" —Anonymous. We find teachers everywhere in life and this article is designed to sound a reminder that the individuals who stand in front of us for hours a week are being paid with our money and so yes, they owe us something. You all have your fair share of awful and wonderful experiences within these walls, so please let us hear them.

Continued from front page

Jamil Al-Amin aka H Rap Brown

Sister Kareema says there are numerous discrepancies in the case against Imam Jamil so they have filed a habeas lawsuit to begin to expose them and prove the Imam's innocence. "We're still fighting it," said his wife.

Other lawsuits have been filed to stop the opening of legal mail and other human rights violations.

There are also lawsuits being constructed to address the type of prison that Imam Jamil has been transferred to. Florence, CO. prison is a Supermax facility and is known as a behavior modification environment where a number of political prisoners such as members of the Black Liberation Army, leading gang members are incarcerated there, as well as drug cartel convicted prisoners, and Muslims from numerous countries.

"There is no contact whatsoever, even for attorneys. It is called a no touch prison.

The guards are trained to say no more than four words to an inmate. And it is said that if someone finally comes out of a Supermax prison they will be in either a catatonic state or in a state of rage. You have to work your way out of a prison like this, and Imam Jamil will never work his way out [by violating his constitutional rights]," says Sister Kareema.

"The campaign to end the harshest punishments against the Imam has made some difference, and Imam Jamil has been placed in the Z unit, and wears an orange jumpsuit similar to the detainees on Guantanamo Bay. He said that he had been approached and asked to end the calls to the warden. Some of his belongings have been restored and at least he has a bed, now," describes his wife.

"I am interested in seeing what changes are going to be made now that we have a new administration, regarding those who have

been targeted over the years," expresses Sister Kareema.

"He is where he is today because of a lot of factors that we are not even aware of and are not fully aware of now (due to the Cointelpro operation against Black leaders since the '60's and beyond)." "They admitted that they had 44,000 pages of surveillance information on Imam Jamil. Based on trips overseas and all of the conversations here in the US, the surveillance has been continuous since 1967," reports Sister Kareema. To continue the vigil of monitoring the human rights of Imam Jamil Al-Amin contact The Justice Fund P.O. Box 115363 Atlanta, GA. 30310 or email thejusticefund@aol.com.

Originally published in the *Amsterdam News*
March 24, 2009

Continued from front page

Attack on the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development

knowledge about what they were approving when signing. This student fee that comes out of tuition pays for student services, including Student Life, New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), and Student Government.

Some members of USG want the funds currently going to OSLLD to go straight to the clubs, and add that clubs would not have to raise money for themselves. Also, Undergraduate student government would take over Student Life's responsibilities to the school. Interestingly, the *clubs* are full of the students that are more likely to know what OSLLD is more so than USG. Being a member of NYPIRG, *The Campus Paper* (and a contributing writer for *The Paper*), and at one time WCCR Radio, I have become much more acquainted with OSLLD than the average City College student, even before they employed me at CCNY Central. However, I have formed less of a relationship with USG.

Let us address what the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development does and why students are fighting for its very existence. "Our goal is to empower students by providing opportunities for leadership and service to others," reads the brochure of OSLLD. The lead staff members have taken part in CCNY Green and led its Student Engagement Committee. Engaging students, Student Life has organized weekly meetings with students that have passions to save the world from climate change and industrialization. Groups of students were able to attend one of the most historic conferences in the history of environmentalism and youth movements: Powershift. In two weeks, I personally attended the Powershift Conference, and The Real Food Summit that took place in Amherst, Massachusetts. In the wake of the conference and summit, my fellow humanitarian friends and I have been able to act on the inspiration and knowledge that was obtained all thanks to the Office of Student Life. The leading

faculty members OSLLD have not only treated us as adults and mutual partners, but have been dedicating their energy and the little time they have to helping us manifest our idealistic goals.

Earth Week, the week following Spring Break, which includes Earth Day on April 23rd will show more of what the Office of Student Life does. City College of New York Earth Day Festival is only two years old, and has been manifested through Student Life's persistent enthusiasm. This year is more ambitious than last, with efforts to bring organic food from local farmers on campus, to give out tote bags (last year there were t-shirts saying "Plastic Bags Blow"), direct environmental education activities, and have all clubs promote environmentalism on Earth Day. It turns out that the Office of Student Life is not just my employer, but is my gateway to optimism. This is just a prime example of "providing opportunities for... service to others." With so many campuses around the country engaging in student movements, I can't imagine how City College could have gotten involved without OSLLD.

You probably want to know about money going "straight to clubs" and before you vote, inquire whether it *would*, or would it instead go to student government, in order to purchase a new online organizing system. That system *might* work as opposed to having professional people organize the clubs events. If we get rid of OSLLD now, we are only experimenting as we don't know what it would be like.

I interviewed Avi Shraibman, vice president of the Undergraduate Student Government, and he said that he is *pretty sure* the Office of Student Life will be paid for by the administration or *another source*. The OSLLD says that this assertion is false, and they will indeed vanish from the campus if students vote YES on the upcoming ballot. I doubt the administration will pay for the OSLLD costs,

considering the cuts to CUNY right now. If anything, this is not the time to take such a risk.

If you signed a clipboard to put the referendum on the ballot, your mind might have changed by now. You can still vote NO on "reallocating funds" or removing Office of Student Life and Leadership Development from the student activity fee. Regardless, you will still pay the full student activity fee. Perhaps this will come up next semester and if you are subject to a guilty conscious, perhaps it is better to hold off on the more drastic vote, which is voting YES and reallocating *people* from their jobs—not just me, but older staff that play a significant role in the school.

Feel free to stop by USG NAC 1/111 or OSLLD NAC 1/210 to ask questions. Remember there are two offices for USG and depending on which one you inquire with, you will get a different opinion on the matter. Also remember that USG offers services to students that you may not be utilizing yet. Voting on Undergraduate Student Government elections and referendums will be held Tuesday April 28-Thursday April 30, from 10:00AM-9:00 PM in the NAC Rotunda. No matter how you decide to vote, remember, stay informed and exercise your right to vote!

Student Government Elections

Tuesday April 28-
Thursday April 30

10:00AM-9:00 pm
NAC Rotunda

Commentaries:

Why I Don't Hate the Rotunda!

It's never good being scowled upon or grimaced at, with the look of shame on the beholder's face. That's why the beholder must sit, observe, and appreciate beauty before they are able to identify it. Allow me to introduce the whole and entire being which I live as. I am a rotunda dweller known as "Flash" or "Spidey" at times, but my real name is Evard Obermuller III. I am rebutting on behalf of my rotunda dwellers and I, who swim in the arctic ocean of cold acrimony. The best kind of argument is an organized argument in anger, which indeed brings to fruition this article. I will organize my arguments into components that compliment the previous "Why I Hate the Rotunda!" article, written in the March issue of *The Paper*.

The Auction: It is a known fact slaves were auctioned off after they would look in to their family's eyes, and feel the burning of the sun through their shackles. Tear tears like none before and bled blood like never before. To only be branded as the property of a slave owner. That is a fact yes. But it has also been argued that each and every people of the world has been enslaved at least twice. The auction was not to promote ethnic pride but to promote money for very helpful causes. For one to draw a slavery aura from the date auctioning of diversely built women for the cause of raising money to enhance their club/fraternity/sorority is an obvious sign of Willie Lynch's mental slavery technique. If that may be the case, then the afflicted person would not like diamonds for they were retrieved with acts of slavery, would not like gold teeth because they were used to identify slaves, and most definitely would not cut his hair because a wild, feral looking slave was not attractive to slave buyers. To call out on the faults of one ethnicity is highly partisan and biased, with a sliver of bigotry depending on your tone of voice. "Do people forget the raping and pillaging the Spanish did?" I quote this from the previous article to amend that all ethnicity has raped and pillaged! I am an African American and I am not proud of the raping and pillaging that goes on within African nations, nor am I comfortable with the raping and pillaging Americans are doing within the United States. Therefore, singling out the "Spanish" to group them with Hispanic people seems highly racist and chauvinist.

Code of conduct: The rotunda has no rules except to be safe, and if activities are done within the line of safety, who are we to say what is wrong from right? Although I agree that there should be a degree of discretion to what you do in public, just like the article that I am rebutting, people have their right to do or say as they please. The writer of "Why I Hate the Rotunda" has exercised this right with the publication of that profound and clearly one-sided argument concerning the disdain for a place which s/he don't spend time in.

Segregation (?): A herculean part of

the college experience is when people from different areas, backgrounds, concepts, and ideas come together. Also since this is a university which makes it an accredited college with much more prestige, people, and diversity it is a known fact that people retrograde and gravitate around people that they can identify with. To go to a college and find out someone lives near you, or likes the same TV show, or has anything in common is such a beautiful thing. For example, where do you think the diversity part comes from in a HBC/U? Diversity does not mean people of different colors, it means different people and we are all not the same. With a little more observation, I promise that you would find out that as rotunda dwellers, we are way more diverse than one can imagine. Just because we sit with people who we can identify with does not mean we have to bring out our network just to sit and lounge. Also I would like to know, with all due respect to the article, what does an African American dress like?! There is no such thing as an African American way of dressing and that statement was absolutely intolerable especially for one of African American descent. I am not even going to graze the fact you talked about poor countries in a grotesque and grim manner.

Report card: First off associating bad grades with the way someone dresses, or by what they say does not bring light to the fact that they are not here for an education. Even if they weren't here for an education, it shouldn't make the judgment of people so conclusive. I dress like I'm going to a club if I please, and I can tell you more than you want to know about cognition and my personal theories on life itself. I do agree with the abuse of the term "nigga." I also agree to the horrible style of pants below the cheeks of one's butt, but that does not convict people who are guilty of these social crimes. My eccentric clothes and porta-potty mouth do not define who I am, I define who I am and I am a man quenching intellect stimulation. By the way, this is 2009—intellectual stimulation can come out of a conversation and other methods. I spend countless hours with a plethora of my friends in the rotunda, but that does not stop us from being the knowledge hungry, above adequate students we still are.

Sound off: The article about the rotunda was not a bad article and did possess a lot of key points, although the tone and choice of topics were exceedingly biased. As students of this university, we come from homes that may be miles away, dysfunctional, cramped, empty, or just uncomfortable and for someone to list what is appropriate for the rotunda and what is not, seems to be purely a crisis of authority. As a student I know for a fact the rotunda can be our lounging spot, our dining area, and break room. With that in mind, it's overtly clear that some students are in dire need of some rotunda time. Therefore, judging people and "groups" with

the aid your marbled eyes will only let you see color and lines, and you can't see segregation and racism if you meet people with your eyes closed. Blind bliss. *-Flash*

"Nothing is so good that somebody, somewhere will not hate it" -Pohl's Law

Hate is indeed a strong word, so why use it? Especially in efforts to describe something so petty and easily avoidable. One may feel indifference, or dislike at most, but is it really that much of an issue to make such a big deal of it? Almost everyone in this school is guilty of stopping and chatting with a friend in the rotunda; the decision to sit and have prolonged conversations is an individual's personal business. Anyone who needs to study in Cohen Library does not by any means have to sit in the main floor. That's the very reason why there are as many floors in the library. People who actually want to study use the private rooms or find a quiet space to do so. Point blank.

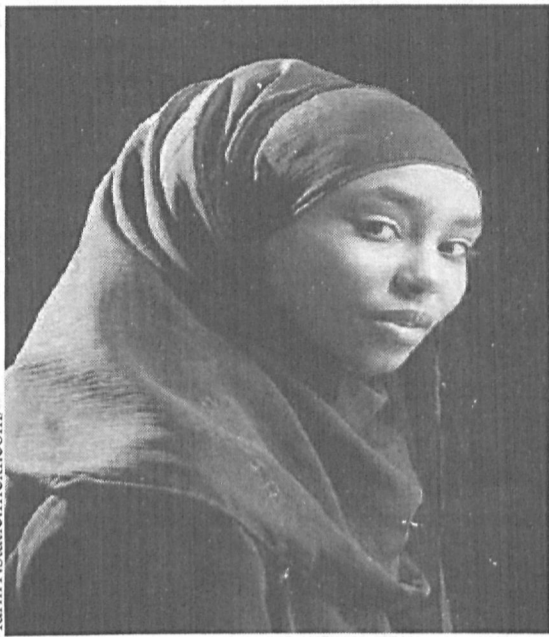
In regards to the issue of the auction, I totally understand the negative historic reference to "being sold." Yet no one was forced to participate in the event. In fact, everyone who participated willingly signed up for it. It wasn't meant to offend or exploit anyone, but merely to raise money for a good cause. The auction ultimately raised around \$700 and caught the attention of people who would otherwise walk past a "social gathering" such as this one. WCCR [which I am an active member of] also had a couple auctions last semester just to raise money, in efforts to stray from the food/candy selling trend because lets be real...who doesn't do that?

I strongly disagree with the viewpoints expressed in the article about "segregation" between cliques in the rotunda. Everyone sits where they feel comfortable. I feel as though those people sit with others who share common interest, and it has nothing to do with race, or ethnicity. You mean to tell me that if a White person sat in the apparent "Black kids" section, it would be wrong? I feel that the statement made about the groups in the rotunda is totally biased. If one were to actually sit and take time to know 'those people,' they would find that all of said "Blacks" belong to very diverse ethnic backgrounds, and some of them are actually doing things with their lives.

And just to let it be known know that I am not against every point in the article, I do agree with a one thing that was mentioned. The people that stay in the rotunda all damn day, despite their nationalities, definitely open grounds for negative comments. I must admit I am guilty of sitting in the rotunda for a few minutes (or an hour) but I am never one of the people that are there all night.

--Safiya Lilley

The True Identity of the Muslim Woman



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By Sarah Oxford

The true identity of a Muslim woman has many unique qualities to be proud of. She is a friend, student, teacher, wife, mother, employee, employer and role model. She holds her roles in life to a very high degree while maintaining modesty, dignity and respect at all times. Still, Western society tends to misunderstand the distinction and stature of women in Islam due to inconsequential differences in cultural and religious beliefs. This article targets the identity of Muslim women and our places in life.

Hijab: Hijab means to veil or conceal. The correct hijab is a head scarf that covers the hair and modest clothing that conceals the shape of a woman's most beautiful body parts i.e. neck, bosom, waist, hips, thighs and legs. Additionally, a woman who wears hijab should take care not to attract men, this means not adorning herself with heavy makeup, strong perfumes or other fineries. The hijab is a controversial topic not only in Western non-Muslim circles but also in African, Asian, Middle Eastern, South East Asian and Western Muslim circles. Hijab should not be looked at as burden but rather as a relief for women. The hijab protects a woman by making her character distinct, keeping her away from unnecessary harassment and avoiding the constant temptations of immorality and error. In Saudi Arabia, I was forced, by law, to wear the hijab and never truly experienced the hardships women face when *not* wearing hijab. Upon arrival in America, and making the conscious choice to not wear the hijab, I was quickly awakened by the glares, comments and bold approaches of men. I am still struggling with the wearing of the hijab full time; however, when wearing a head scarf/wrap and dressing modestly no man dares to disrespect me and I am treated with the utmost respect and courtesy. In Islam, a woman's beauty is reserved for her husband's eyes only.

Marriage in Islam: Marriage is a contract between a man and a woman; they are committed to each other emotionally, physically and mentally. A man and woman in Islam unite on the basis of love, understanding, trust and

cooperation. The wife has an important role in marriage as the cornerstone and foundation of the family. She is the central pillar to building a family with good character and behavior. The Muslim woman is the foundation to ensuring all members of her family are productive in society. Additionally, she is the greatest joy and center of her husband's universe.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: "This world is just temporary conveniences, and the best comfort in this world is a righteous woman." (Muslim)

Contrary to popular belief, Muslim women cannot be forced into marriage. Islam strictly emphasizes that no woman should be burdened by being forced into a marriage she does not approve of. A woman's pride and humanity is protected at all times and she has the right to choose a good husband for herself.

When choosing a husband, a Muslim woman does not only focus on looks and status; she also focuses on a man's religious devotion, attitude and behavior. She is entitled to ask for a divorce when she feels she is not compatible or happy with her husband.

In order for a marriage to be successful, both husband and wife should always practice respect, obedience, trust and support, provided no sin is involved. In Islam, men cannot disrespect, mistreat or own a woman.

"O ye who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, ...live with them on a footing of kindness and equity if ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good." (Qur'an 4:19)

Women and Education: One of the greatest Arab poets of pre-Islamic times, Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma said: *"A man's tongue is half of him and the other half is his heart; what is left is nothing more than the image of flesh and blood."* His words reiterate that what we think is what we eventually say; thus, pursuing valuable information and gaining knowledge is of the utmost importance to every Muslim. A Muslim woman is free to pursue academic growth and specialize in any field she chooses, so long as it is in line with pleasing Allah and void of sinful acts.

A Hasan Hadith narrated by Ibn Maajah "Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim."

In Islam, a woman, like a man, is required to seek knowledge on an Islamic level as well as on a secular level. A woman is the cornerstone of the household, therefore, must be intelligent and able to educate her family on all levels. As a Muslim, she should ensure she has a sound grasp of the basic principles of Islam. As a wife and mother, she should encompass social intelligence, a strong personality and pure heart. As a member of society, she should develop her mind academically in order to remain a constructive and productive member of that society.

There are many examples of prominent

educated Muslim women. Asma bint Yazeed was an Ansari woman who is noted for being a Muslim scholar, respected by both Muslim men and women. Her efforts were directed at gaining Islamic knowledge. Rufia bint Saad Al-Aslami is the founder of the first Islamic Nursing School and clinic, and she is known for laying down the first code of nursing rules and ethics, 12 centuries before Florence Nightingale.

The role of Muslim women in today's life is more than what this article can begin to explain. However, this concise explanation allows a glimpse into the daily life of a woman who is nurturing, wholesome, productive, vigilant, educated and refined. Her devotion to Islam allows for the revival of her Ummah (community) and development of the society she lives in. As the saying goes, women are the backbone of every home. If she holds herself in high regards, supports her husband in all aspects of life in accordance with Islam, and raises her children in an upright manner, then the nation will emerge successful and prosperous.

For further information on the roles of women in Islam, please refer to The Ideal Muslimah by Dr. Muhammad 'Ali al-Hashimi. You may also opt to take a course on Islam, taught most often by the Anthropology department's own Professor Samad-Matias.

UPCOMING GAMES

(All Dates and Times are Subject to Change)

Men's Tennis

4/14 Brooklyn College 3:30pm
4/16 St. Joseph's (LI) 4:00pm
4/17 York College 3:30pm
4/18 Ramapo College 1:00pm
4/21 Mount St. Vincent 4:00pm

Women's Tennis

4/18 Ramapo College 1:00pm

Men's Track Outdoor

4/18 New York Relays @ Icahn Stadium TBA
4/23 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/24 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/25 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/26 Yale Invitational @ Yale University TBA
5/2 USMMA Invitational TBA

Women's Track Outdoor

4/18 New York Relays @ Icahn Stadium TBA
4/23 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/24 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/25 Penn Relays @ University of Pennsylvania TBA
4/26 Yale Invitational @ Yale University TBA

Men's Baseball

4/10 Lehman College 12:00pm
4/16 Purchase College 4:00pm
4/18 CSI 12:00pm
4/19 CSI 12:00pm
4/21 SUNY Maritime 4:00pm
4/23 Drew University 4:00pm
4/25 John Jay College 2:00pm
4/25 John Jay College 4:00pm
4/26 John Jay College 12:00pm

The Model Minority and the Persistence of Racism

By, Peter Lew

(Tai Chi teacher to underprivileged youth in Brooklyn)

"The problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the **color line**." -W.E.B. Dubois

"The problem of the 21st Century... is the problem of the **color blind**." - Vijay Prashad

On November 5, 2008, after Barack Obama was declared the winner of the Presidential election, *The New York Times* front page headline read "Racial Barriers Fall." Given the national and worldwide euphoria over the outcome and the long road traveled over the previous 18 months, this might have struck some as a mighty beast having been excised from the collective consciousness. Racial barriers, indeed, have dominated the social consciousness of America since its founding. The campaign trail had many obstacles that Barack Obama had to negotiate in pursuit of the nation's highest office; chief among them was the question "Is America ready for a Black president?" Apparently, the electorate answered with a resounding yes. As Chris Rock pointed out, George W. Bush had made it difficult for a White man to be president, especially for one who had been aligned with him.

Many had noted the significant disparity in resumes between the two candidates. Ivy League educated, the first Black president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review, stunning victories in the trenches of the Illinois political machine, and grassroots community organizing were among the achievements of Mr. Obama in his short political career. For further consideration his rhetorical gifts and his capacity to keep cool under fire, both of which he used to great effect during his campaign and in debates. Senator McCain, by contrast, appearing craggy and defeated from the start, boasted primarily having

been a decorated war veteran and POW during the Vietnam war, 20 plus years in the Senate and very little else. As many progressive activists suggested, switch the resumes with a black face on McCain's and vice versa and the racial bias in how White people assessed the candidates becomes glaring. The baggage of being a Bush redux relentlessly dogged McCain, an issue that was never adequately addressed by him. Polls,

the issue of his Blackness suggests a different view of how racism has taken a new path.

Do exceptions to the rule change the rule? I ask this because by most accounts Obama is an exceptional man, notwithstanding his race. Indeed, his exceptionalism has been taken to be the way in which Whites can now say: "There! We do like Blacks! All that nasty history of racial oppression is behind us and we can proceed in a color blind democracy the way the founding fathers set it up to be." I argue that this is nothing more than white delusion spinning new tales, updated with the emperor in new clothes.

To anyone following the campaign it should have been obvious that Obama had to go to great lengths to allay white fears of his Blackness. Many White people, both supporters and opponents, expressed that they thought that he was "well spoken," "articulate," qualities one can assume are coded *White*, and a contrast to how Black people are characterized. Barack Obama's characteristic "coolness," his equanimity, his hyper rationality, was his calling card. In his dealing with the major controversy of his campaign, Obama had to take a staunch retreat from his former pastor Reverend Jeremiah Wright, who certainly qualified as "an angry Black man," the kind who absolutely terrifies the majority of Whites, if only because he spoke the uncomfortable truth of some the tragedies that White America is responsible for in its short history. Obama, responding in his speech on race, renders these truths to be of the past and not the present, surely against what he knows. His distancing from Reverend Wright showed a certain detachment from Civil Rights legacies, the historical background that many have said made it possible for an "Obama" to exist at all. Rather, it closed the door on Black politics of

Continued on page 7



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appearing almost daily, continually showed Mr. Obama maintained a solid lead but this did not alleviate the anxieties of his supporters around the question of whether America was ready for a Black president. The growing national and international economic crisis and the revelation of widespread corporate corruption at the close of the Bush presidency eventually sealed the victory for Obama.

The selling of Barack Obama as being fit for the presidency revolved primarily not around whether he was a better statesman than McCain, nor around specific ideology, but rather could White America elect a Black man for president. Black people were more than ready and polls showed Asian people overwhelmingly supported Obama. His victory was hailed as an end to the source of race and the beginning of a new era of unity of black and white, brown, red and yellow. A look at the way in which Obama negotiated

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