



THE MESSENGER

AN INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER VOL. 2 NO. 5 MAY 2000 UNIVERSITY OF HARLEM
 2000 WINNER, BEST CAMPUS ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION, CAJP AWARDS

We Watch Channel Zero?

Corporate TV Channel to Sabotage Student-Run WCCR and SAME-TV

by Hank Williams

CTN Media Group, parent company of the College Television Network, bills itself as the "nation's number one media gateway for reaching young adults," and prides itself on its "significant revenue growth as a direct result of the Network's expanding [advertising] client list."

CTN is now negotiating to install televisions in prime areas in City College and deliver their brand of commercial-laced broadcasting to us. What's worse is that to ensure maximum exposure for its broadcasts, CTN demands exclusive rights to prime areas—presumably the NAC lobby, cafeteria, student lounge, and game room in our case. Such a move would essentially kill off WCCR and SAME-TV, the student-run radio and TV stations that provide commercial-free programming to these areas.

CTN offers what seems like a good deal on the surface, offering to wire prime areas of the campus and install televisions free of charge. The catch is that it locks colleges into their programming, which, aside from the ads, is far from educational or informative. They offer a slurry of music videos, CNN news, and sports.

Worse is that they block competing broadcasting, which would effectively kill off the student run and produced programming that currently airs in NAC. WCCR radio has already had plans to increase its broadcast range blocked.

WCCR station manager Rashidah White points out that a grant from the Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation (AEC—the college's allocating body for special projects) has already been approved for the approximately \$13,000 cost of buying a new transmitter that would allow them to broadcast campus-wide. "Students would be able to pick up our signal on Walkmans," she said.

WCCR currently broadcasts only in part of the first floor and the NAC lobby. WCCR has also applied for a grant for the approximately \$13,000 additional cost of installing wiring and speakers in other portions of the first and second floors of NAC, but the emphasis now is to just get the transmitter, as they already have the money for it.

According to Ms. White, this could be done without the need for a license

from the Federal Communications Commission. WHCR radio is also located in City College and has the license from the FCC necessary to broadcast beyond the reaches of the college. While two classes in the communications department offer students some access to WHCR facilities, it has its own station manager and is a separate entity. WCCR is student-run and offers programming produced by students.

WCCR's grant for the transmitter runs out on June 30th of this year, so the foot-dragging of the college—intentional or not—might kill

its plans to increase its broadcast range and service to students. Ms. White reports that she has had trouble meeting with representatives from the Office of Student Affairs to discuss the situation, but has been told that they will discuss a compromise with the proposed new service. Sayfullah Hafizah El of WCCR was even more emphatic, stating that "We're not compromising."

One has to wonder

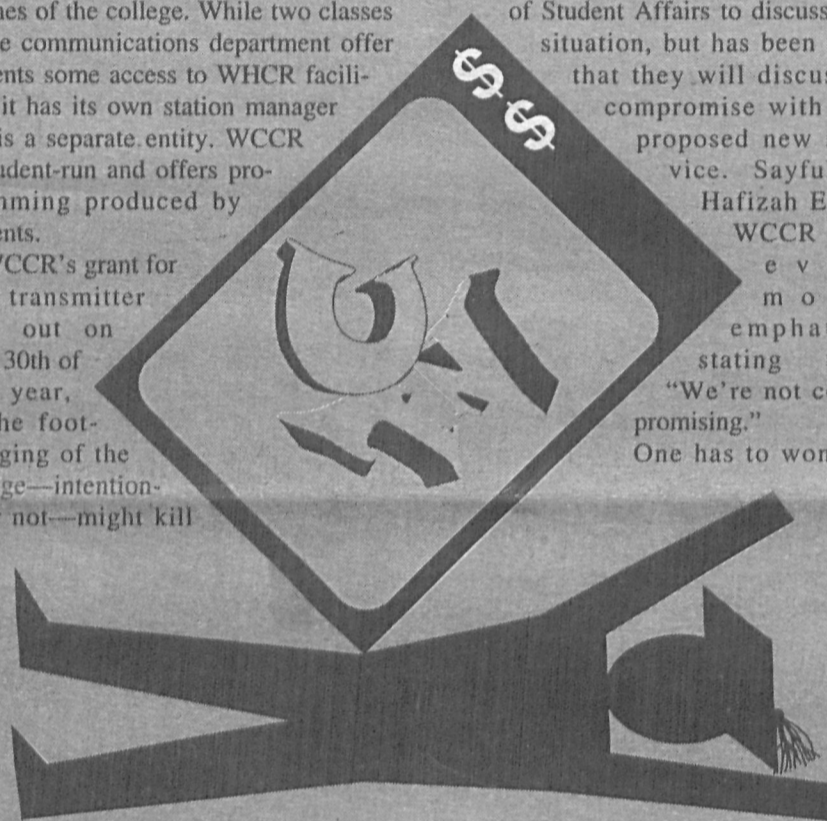
what type of compromise could be offered, as a CTN representative, while unwilling to discuss details of specific locations, reported that the usual deal is exclusive rights for CTN—at least in the most highly trafficked areas of a campus. Ironically, WCCR's advisor is Dean Paul Bobb, who is part the Student Affairs office. Presumably Student Affairs would support student initiatives and an advisor would advocate in the best interests of a student organization over corporate interests, but that's not the case here.

Instead of supporting efforts that provide unique programming and give experience to students, the administration seems to be willing to sell off valuable space to corporate interests.

It turns out that we may be sold cheap at that. The catch with CTN is that they don't pay for space, but sell air time to advertisers at a good profit: enough to take in \$31.5 million in revenues in 1999 and pay CEO Jason Elkin over \$400,000 per year.

So, cash-poor City College and its students get nothing in return for being sold to advertisers, except the loss of an

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The Messenger Wins Big!

by John Olafson

The winners of the fourth annual Campus Alternative Journalism Awards have been announced, and CCNY's *The Messenger* figures prominently amongst the winners. The awards are given out every year by the Center for Campus Organizing based in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Messenger won Best Campus Alternative Publication of the Year (budget under \$10,000)—one of the two top awards in the competition. The awards committee had the following to say about the publication:

Proclaiming itself the newspaper of the "University of Harlem" in its front banner, *The Messenger's* grounding in real, local social justice struggles which blur the division between the campus and its surrounding community, won marks for excellence all around. "*The Messenger* is at the center of a struggle to halt the dismantling of true access to public higher education in New York," wrote Abby Scher. "*The Messenger* covers that struggle well, and connects it with other community struggles in NYC."

The Messenger also won an honorable mention in the category of Best Overall Reporting.

Rob Wallace, a member of *The Messenger* staff, says of the award: "*The Messenger* exemplifies the power of the people, to the shame of the CCNY administration, which shut down *The Messenger* and denied it funding, computers, a room, and supplies. We've been able to put out a nationally recognized publication, and we've done so because of the help provided by our

campus and community. The award shows that with few material resources people can successfully organize in the face of repression."

The Campus Alternative Journalism Awards were created to encourage alternative journalism on campus and recognize the contribution of student journalists to free thought in their campuses and communities. Each contestant has an explicit commitment to political and economic democracy, gender equality, anti-racism and multiculturalism, and the environment. Each publication is published by students, for a student or youth community.

The judges included John Anner of the Independent Press Association, Jeff Chang of *ColorLines* magazine and 360HipHop.com, former Campus Alternative Journalism Project director Sonya Huber, Cathy Madison of the *Ume Reader*, and Abby Scher of *Dollars and Sense* magazine.

Awards are given for Best Campus Alternative Publication of the Year in Category A (budget over \$10,000) and Category B (under \$10,000), as well as for Reporting, Sense of Humor, Anti-Racist Reporting, Anti-Sexist Reporting, Opinion Writing, Hellraising, and Design. In addition, this year the awards recognized papers that had done an extraordinary of covering the historic anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle. Prizes for all winning papers will be provided by Common Courage Press and the Independent Press Association.

"This just goes to show that the best journalism comes from committed journalists," notes Larry Hanley, *The Messenger's* faculty advisor. "Publishing the facts is related to the political desire to know the truth." M

Investor's Alert: New Opportunities at CUNY!

As a free preview of my new "Inside Tips" finance newsletter, I'd like to tell you about exciting new investment opportunities at CUNY.

Sure, CUNY is a public university, but get this:

On April 24, the CUNY trustees adopted a resolution inviting private firms to bid for the takeover of some of CUNY's remedial instruction. CUNY's own faculty has a national reputation for excellence in the field, but reputations alone won't deter these forward-looking, free-enterprise trustees! Stay tuned to learn who wins the remediation contract.

At CUNY's April 13 Manhattan Borough Hearing, McDonalds was enthusias-

tic about its initial CUNY venture, which enables ESL students at BMCC to learn valuable English language skills while earning money as fast-food employees. Looks like more profits ahead for this ever-expanding blue-chip.

At the same hearing, ACT, the company that won the contract to create CUNY's new placement exams, announced its desire to expand its ties to the university! Word has it that ACT has already demonstrated admirable cost-efficiency tactics by delivering off-the-shelf tests instead of the custom-made exams CUNY anticipated.

Heard enough?

—Bill Crain

Memo to Pres. Roman

For the past two years the CCNY administration has treated *The Messenger* as an enemy to be suppressed by any means necessary. The paper, which started out as the *CCNY Messenger*, a graduate student newspaper, was first attacked by the administration in the spring of '98—the same semester it was founded. The paper ran extensive coverage of the candidates in the student government elections, the Moses administration decided it was unacceptably "biased," and they used it as an excuse to nullify the GSC elections and defund the paper. A First Amendment lawsuit is proceeding against CCNY as a result of that episode.

Subsequently, the administration has repeatedly denied us funding for no defensible reason, despite the fact that we publish more regularly and with more column inches than any other newspaper on campus (and we believe, by the way, that the *Campus* and the *Paper* are woefully underfunded and undersupported as well).

Since the departure of Yolanda Moses and some of her hacks and the appointment of Stanford Roman as the new interim president, we have been hoping that our relationship with the new administration would begin to improve and that the politically motivated and unconstitutional refusal to fund *The Messenger* would cease. In some ways it seems like things might be improving—we haven't lately discovered any hidden surveillance cameras, enemies lists or similar creative means of silencing the voices of the students like we've seen in the past. And in fact, as we noted on this page in the last issue, the Media Board has actually granted us funding which would at least cover our printing costs. . . in theory.

Yet that theory hasn't yet become reali-

ty: not a cent of the funding has appeared. The bill from the printer for the last issue (ironically, the very issue which won the national award announced on the front page of this issue) sits unpaid, and as we go to press, it is unclear where the money to pay for this issue will come from. We fear we will have to go out of pocket once again, as we have been doing since the *CCNY Messenger* was first defunded. It's profoundly ironic and unjust that CCNY students—already struggling to survive and stay in school—are forced to further impoverish ourselves by a handful of well-compensated bureaucrats.

According to the Business Office, the SSC's Finance Committee refuses to honor the (student-directed) Media Board's funding request for *The Messenger*.

We would like to know whether Interim President Roman is fully aware of all these machinations and supports them, or whether they're being hidden from him like we saw in the CUNYCard scandal (see the December '99 issue). We would rather cover more productive topics than the maneuverings against us by petty-minded administrators with a little bit of power and a lot of power hunger.

A last note: Because of *The Messenger's* uncertain finances we had to cut this issue's size from 12 to 8 pages, sacrificing "fun" stuff. The Office of Student Affairs might be pleased at that, which would be characteristically perverse of them.

Correction

Last issue's editorial was improperly attributed to Prof. Bill Crain. It should have been credited to the CCNY chapter of the Professional Staff Congress.

Rudy's Get Well Card

Some of the more surprising recent developments are the revelations that Mayor Giuliani a) has prostate cancer, and, b): is getting divorced from his wife. The news was apparently quite a shock to the mayor's wife, who seemed much more upset at the declaration than Rudy did. While it would be easy to say he is getting what he deserves, I'll say that I don't wish cancer on anyone, even as evil and heartless a bastard as Giuliani.

It does bring to mind something that I heard my mother say quite a few times while growing up: "God don't like ugly." The point is, if you don't treat folks right, you might find yourself in trouble. My mom's a small, outspoken, devoutly religious Jamaican woman and practices pretty much what she preaches.

I'm not religious and never thought that God dealt in Sopranos-style eye-for-an-eye vengeance, but there's an interesting point here. Rudy's done his best to attack the poor and vulnerable in this city and done so with a particularly smug, sneering gusto.

The mayor was lucky also, having had the advantage of a test that detects cancer in the very earliest stages—way before a

standard prostate exam would have, and early enough to give him a good chance at a full recovery. He's lucky—and lucky to have good health coverage. He's also lucky to have the very good female friend with whom he's reportedly spent a good deal of time lately. I'm not quite sure that soon to be ex-wife Donna Hanover and his son are quite so fortunate.

So I wish Rudy the best. I hope he gets the same quality medical care any of us ordinary uninsured New Yorkers would after strolling into Bellevue (or any of the other few remaining public hospitals). I wish him the same condolences he offered to Iris Baez, Mrs. Diallo, and Mrs. Dorismond, after their sons' brutal murders at the hands of his own stormtroopers. I wish him the same compassion he's offered to cabbies, street vendors, squeegee men, and CUNY students.

If Rudy's the devout Catholic he claims to be, he might want to think about some of the things he's done and said; maybe make peace with the powers that be. As he goes for treatment, he might do well to remember the words of my mom: "God don't like ugly."

—Hank Williams

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THE MESSENGER

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The Messenger is an independent student newspaper at the City College of New York. It is produced periodically by an editorial collective. *The Messenger* aims to serve CCNY students, other CUNY students, and the Harlem community. We seek to do this by reporting on student activities for empowerment, enjoyment, and survival and by exposing the misdeeds of those in power. We seek to help build a powerful student movement at CUNY to win improvements in our lives and changes to societal injustices.

The articles in *The Messenger* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors of *The Messenger* or anybody other than the individual writers.

Thanks to the Media Board for trying to provide funding for *The Messenger*.

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USG sweep!

After Split, City 2000 Slate Wins All Eight Executive Positions and Ombuds Position

by Shumon Alam and Rob Wallace

From April 11 through 13, small minorities of CCNY undergraduate and graduate students voted to elect their student governments for the 2000-2001 school year. Undergraduate students chose the "City 2000" slate over its rival "Unity". With Jason Compton at the top of its ticket, "City 2000" won all positions on the Executive Board. Only 1037 undergraduate students, or about 10% of the undergraduate body, participated in the election.

Compton beat out current USG president Rafael Dominguez by 183 votes, 543-360. Other electees include Hanna Seifu-Teferra as Executive Vice President, Elvin Christian as Treasurer, Daphney Leveille as VP for Campus Affairs, Nichele Nivens for VP of Academic Affairs, Romanos Eleny for VP of University Affairs, Rudy Diaz for VP of Community Affairs, and Kilsis Saint-Hilaire for VP of Evening Affairs. Sayfullah El won the Ombudsperson position.

On the night of April 13, the Student Election Review Committee (SERC) announced the results in the NAC Rotunda. Members of the "City 2000" slate were jubilant. For a complete vote breakdown, see the nearby chart.

For the Graduate Student Council, the graduate student government, "Building Bridges" pocketed victory without any opposition—now that's democracy! An even lower proportion of the graduate student body bothered to vote for the incumbent slate, a marker of their inability or lack of desire to energize their constituents. Only about 90 out of 2000 grad students voted. That's 4.5% of the total grad student body.

A Split in the USG

Compton and many other members of "City 2000" were elected last year as members of the Y2K slate, which had Rafael Dominguez as its president. But during the year, a split developed between Dominguez and his fellow Executive Board members.

This semester USG Senate members challenged Dominguez for what they considered was undemocratic decision-making on his part. Dominguez was accused of partiality in allotting funding to student groups, obstructing other executive members from performing their duties, and imposing office rules without the consent of the Senate. A few months ago, VP of Campus Affairs Mohammad Saif Islam sent a memo banning all member organizations of the Media Board from using USG's xerox machine for mass copies. Sayfullah El, a USG senator elected Ombudsperson, wrote in *The Campus* that the manipulative Dominguez, who she dubbed "Rafael Giuliani," ordered Islam to write this memo.

Dominguez denied the charges, telling *The Messenger* that the USG xerox machine had been way "overused." Moreover, Dominguez continued, the Media Board, with a huge, unspent budget surplus, can more than afford a xerox machine of its own.

Compton told *The Messenger* the reason for convening a slate against Dominguez was the lack of communica-

tion and coordinated activity by current officials. There were only two Senate meetings this past semester. There are supposed to be two each month. Only one E-Board meeting was called during this spring semester.

Many members feel that the student government did not operate openly in such a way that everyone could participate. According to Compton, at one time a good friend of Dominguez, "The president tried to control all the decisions and many decisions were made without consulting any members of the government."

A member of the "City 2000" slate told *The Messenger* that the stipend for one executive officer was withheld without much discussion. Current VP for Community Affairs Christina Cocheo told *The Messenger* that her stipend was withheld because she failed to turn in her report on her work to the Executive Vice President. She was not aware of the split until the student slates were formed for the election.

The particulars in the split seem less interesting than the context. Sometimes splits develop because factions are genuinely repulsed by the leadership or there is a true division in political view. Sometimes disputes over stipends and office supplies

New Caucus stuns in PSC election

by Hank Williams

Queens College English Professor Barbara Bowen has defeated incumbent Richard Boris in a stunning victory for the presidency of the Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents CUNY faculty and teaching assistants. In unofficial results, Bowen captured 58% of the vote to Boris' 39%.

Following on Bowen's coattails, Steven London, associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College, was voted first vice president; Cecelia McCall, associate professor of English at Baruch, was voted Secretary; and John Hyland, professor of sociology at LaGuardia, was elected Treasurer. All are members of the New Caucus.

New Caucus candidate Eric Marshall was elected as vice president of part time personnel. Marshall has also been active in Adjuncts Unite!, an organization fighting for the rights of part-time teaching personnel (adjuncts).

New Caucus candidates also won all seats for both university and senior college at-large officers.

Unity Slate candidates (the old-guard incumbents) won both seats for cross campus at-large officers and the cross campus vice presidency. The new officers will assume their posts May 18th.

The election comes at a critical time for many reasons. One is that the PSC contract comes up for renewal this year. The latest issue of the *PSC Clarion* reported that current president Richard Boris indicated that pay increases to make CUNY salaries more competitive and guarantees of no further layoffs of full time faculty would be priorities. Chancellor Goldstein reportedly was not opposed, but replied that CUNY would seek productivity improvements in return.



Sayfullah El is the new Student Ombudsperson. She will be responsible for advocating for students with complaints and pursuing student rights at CCNY.

manifest the divisions that are necessary to launch electoral challenges to a leadership. Sometimes splits arise because group members have failed to address or feel powerless against a common enemy, which in this case would be the campus administration, CUNY Central, and/or Giuliani, Pataki, et al. In other words, groups that feel powerless become cannibalistic. Sometimes it's a melange of causes.

The Future

Compton thinks the members of the newly elected government worked well as a team during the past year and during the elections and that they will continue on that path. It is necessary to point out, however, that the dissidents, even with their problems with Dominguez, were the majority on the E-Board, yet failed to involve the

student body in college affairs. The numbers of votes cast speaks to the students' lack of involvement. Did the USG do to all students what the dissident faction alleged Dominguez did to them?

Admitting this failure, Compton asserted that he and the newly elected government would try its best to get students involved. "Because City is a commuter college, it is harder to organize," Compton told the *Messenger*. "We have to work harder. I want to work with all groups within City College and within CUNY," he continued.

Dominguez, who told *The Messenger* he had no hard feelings for the victorious slate, warned that the next student government would have to contend with a series of bad plans the administration had in the pipeline.

The Messenger wishes the next USG good luck. **M**

Such "improvements" will likely be on the order of the ones already implemented at City that force professors to teach more classes; thereby increasing their workloads and reducing the time they can spend with students.

The New Caucus candidates ran on a slate emphasizing greater involvement of the union membership in union affairs, fighting for increases in full time faculty lines, better pay and benefits for adjuncts, and salary increases for all faculty. According to the PSC, CUNY faculty had two years without salary increases in the last contract, while the city and state have ended the decade with record surpluses.

CUNY has also cut full-time positions by 60% since 1974, while increasing adjuncts by 40%. As a result, adjunct faculty now teach nearly 60% of the classes in CUNY. Adjuncts are paid proportionately less money to teach than full-timers and have meager benefits packages and little job security. They are also not paid to hold office hours and usually are not assigned offices or phone lines, making it

difficult for students to contact them for help and making it difficult for them to teach effectively.

The New Caucus has also taken active steps to defend CUNY against the attacks of the Giuliani and Pataki administrations and the Board of Trustees, including taking a strong stand in favor of preserving remedial classes.

The New Caucus sweep isn't entirely surprising: New Caucus candidates ran unopposed at CCNY in the last chapter election and now control several campuses. City College English Professor (and *Messenger* advisor) Larry Hanley calls the New Caucus victory "the first real change in leadership within the PSC since its beginnings. What it really vindicates to me is how out of touch the PSC leadership has been with its constituents. . . less than a month ago at the Delegate Assembly Unity Slate delegates were booing Barbara Bowen, venting a lot of hostility, and basically trying to laugh her and the rest of the New Caucus off. The PSC is really going to change now."

Prof. Elizabeth Starcevic, who is the acting Chair of the PSC at City College also feels that "The union membership decided to vote for change."

The big challenge for the New Caucus and the PSC now that a new direction has been chosen is to carry through on what they've promised. There is now an opportunity to build alliances with other unions and student groups to fight for an end to attacks on CUNY and on unions and the working class in general. It is only a few months since Mayor Giuliani viciously and illegally broke the resolve of the transit workers' efforts to organize for better pay and working conditions with threats of severe penalties.

Now that the PSC membership has voted for change, the test will be whether or not they can deliver on that promise. **M**



Barbara Bowen, new PSC president, at PSC debate at City College in March.

Feds to monitor CUNY admissions

City Psychology Professor Bill Crain reports that the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will thoroughly monitor the racial impact of CUNY's new admissions policy, which bars students who need any remediation from CUNY's bachelor's degree programs. In August, 1999, a group of CUNY faculty, prospective students, and parents of prospective students filed a complaint with the OCR charging that the new policy will disproportionately exclude students of color, and do so on the basis of inappropriate and invalid tests. CUNY will be required to report wide-ranging data through 2002.

During recent months, the complaint has been joined by four civil rights groups: the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the American Jewish Congress, and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Many people have assisted with the complaint, including CUNY faculty members Gary Benenson, Susan DiRaimo, Sandi Cooper, Henry Lesnick, Barbara Gleason, David Lavin, Cecelia McCall, and our own Bill Crain.

Remedial Classes... But Not Here.

The CUNY board has announced that CUNY will seek proposals from outside firms, both profit and non-profit, to offer remediation to students scoring low on placement tests. Because CUNY is nationally recognized for its excellence in remedial instruction, the CUNY action makes no sense—unless, of course, its goal is simply to give private firms a chance to

make money off our students.

Lights, Camera...

Filmmaker Ellie Bernstein has developed a nine-minute pilot of a documentary on Open Admissions to be narrated by Ossie Davis. Bernstein is seeking funding to turn it into a longer work.

The More Things Change...

Despite NYPIRG's rosy report on the NY State budget process (see the current issue of *The Paper*), initial reports on next year's state budget for CUNY indicate that many of Governor Pataki's cuts still stand, including a veto on requested funds for more full time faculty. While TAP grants were spared, next year's budget still might include cuts to the SEEK and College Discovery programs for financially disadvantaged students and cuts in child-care services. It also includes no money for new full-time faculty, even though CUNY's loss of full-time faculty has been enormous. The big winner (if there is one) appears to be the middle class. The maximum family income eligibility for TAP (tuition assistance) awards will be raised from \$50,000 to \$80,000. Will this increase for the middle class soon mean less for the working class? Stay tuned...

The More They Stay the Same.

An important report was issued by the NY State Senate's committee on financial aid. The committee recommends that TAP cover full tuition for students in need,

rather than the present 90%, and that it cover all 4 years, rather than dropping off after 2 years, as it now does. The committee's emphasis differs sharply from the widely publicized financial aid initiatives prevalent today by addressing the needs of poor and working class students rather than those in the middle class.

Checkmate

A recent Associated Press news feature centered on City College grad Maurice Ashley, the world's first—and only—Black grandmaster of chess. Through the Harlem Chess Center he opened at the Police Athletic League community center in central Harlem, Ashley is helping to bring the strategic game played predominantly by whites to minority kids.

Ashley has become part of a select group: Only 500 others hold the rank of grandmaster—the game's highest title—around the world, including Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer.

As a result, Ashley has become a celebrity of sorts in chess circles. "I have people calling from all over wanting him to come to their schools," Barbara DeMaro of the United States Chess Federation told AP. "Kids look up to him. There's a feeling, if he can do it, we can do it."

"One of the most depressing things about growing up in the inner city—and I did—is that there's handball, basketball, football, all kinds of sports things, but very little in the way that is intellectually stimulating," Ashley said.

Studies show that young chess players raise their reading scores and concentrate better. The game teaches strategy and consequences and instills confidence.

Administrators in, Administrators out...

In the latest swing of the CUNY revolving-door personnel situation, the CUNY Board of Trustees has appointed presidents to fill vacancies at Baruch College and LaGuardia, Kingsborough, and Queensborough Community Colleges. Former New York State Comptroller Edward Regan is the new president at Baruch, Gail Mellow will head LaGuardia, Byron McClenney takes office at Kingsborough, and Eduardo Martí becomes head honcho at Queensborough. The decision is not without controversy, however, as CUNY trustee John Morning criticized the board for not hiring more African-American candidates or candidates from within the CUNY system. Martí is a Cuban emigre; the rest of the appointees are white. Morning said that CUNY should have "a leadership that is more reflective of the student body" (which is 32% Black).

Simply hiring minority candidates does not automatically guarantee progressive policies, however. Former CCNY president Yolanda Moses, who is Black, played a key role in squashing student protest against, and implementing, budget cuts that have seriously hurt the college. Queens College president Allen Sessoms has resigned, citing "personal problems." Sessoms, who is Black, was a staunch supporter of the decision of the CUNY board to end remediation and enact stricter "standards." Sessoms drew a lot of heat last year for allegedly saying, "Shit in, shit out. If you take in shit and you

turn out shit that is slightly more literate, you're still let with shit." The remarks referred to the current CUNY admissions process.

Sessoms denied using the s-word, maintaining that his statements were taken out of context. A letter issued by Queens College Assistant VP Jane Deckenshon did not specifically deny the statements but said that Sessoms used a "salty" term to refer to the "academically unprepared." That is to say, those who, unlike Sessoms, cannot afford to go to Yale. The only sure thing is that Sessoms is now the one who's out.

Censorship at CSI Challenged in Court

Ten College of Staten Island students sued CUNY and CSI officials for First Amendment violations in 1997 after CSI President Marlene Springer canceled the Spring 1997 CSI student government election because President Springer concluded that a special election issue of a CSI student newspaper was a "thinly veiled... piece of campaign literature" that "compromised" the fairness of the electoral process. The students claimed that President Springer's decision violated a 1995 U.S. Supreme Court decision that prohibits censorship of viewpoints in student publications at public colleges.

The students are asking for \$1 plus \$1 in punitive damages.

At a hearing on March 29, a three-judge panel of the federal Second Circuit Court of Appeals denied a request for a preliminary injunction against CSI. The student plaintiffs had asked the court to issue the injunction to prevent the possibility of CSI officials canceling the spring 2000 student elections or taking any other reprisals in response to endorsements and opinions they planned to publish in the spring 2000 election issue of the CSI *College Voice*.

The judges stated that they were denying the injunction because the New York State Attorney General stated in court that CSI President Springer promised that she will never again cancel a student election because of material published in a student newspaper as long as she serves as president of the College of Staten Island. [But did she have her fingers crossed?]

Presiding Judge Leval said that by denying the injunction the Court was taking no position on the merits of the students' main claim that their constitutional rights were violated by the action of President Springer in 1997.

This case potentially has a direct bearing on City College, as the CCNY administration took very similar reprisals in 1998 as a result of the election coverage *The Messenger* ran that spring. The administration voided the elections and defunded the paper, forcing it to seek funding elsewhere. A separate lawsuit around this incident is proceeding against the CCNY administration, and a favorable decision in the CSI suit could have a positive impact on this suit as well.

A motion for summary judgment is presently pending before District Judge Nina Gershon based on the students' main claim that President Springer's cancellation of the 1997 student election was an unconstitutional viewpoint-based restriction on speech in a limited public forum. Stay tuned.

M

University Skills Immersion Program

The University Skills Immersion Program is offered to continuing students with less than 30 credits. Students have the opportunity to take classes free and save on their tuition. This program offers tuition-free classes and books to all that participate. The program offers a number of different courses in English and Math, both remedial and credit-bearing courses. These courses will go on your transcript, with non-credit courses having a pass (P) or fail (NC) grade, and credit courses with a letter grade. The sessions and courses offered are as followed:

Session 1: June 5 to June 30

The following courses are Supplemental Courses, to help students change failing grades to passes.

Writing

USIP 2.5/English 2.5
USIP 115/English 115

English as a Second Language

USIP 35/ESL 35

Session 2: July 5 to August 11

Full Courses that are offered:

English as a Primary Language Writing

USIP 1/English 1

USIP 2/English 2

English 110

Reading

USIP 5/College Skills 1
College Skills 2

English As A Second Language

USIP 30/ESL 30

Mathematics

USIP 70/Math 70
USIP 73/ Math 73

(the last time this course will be offered)

USIP 80/ Math 80

Math 90

Math 100

Core

Sociology 105

World Civilization 101

Orientation and Registration Schedule

Classes are limited; register early.

Continuing Freshmen

DATE	TIME	PLACE
Monday, May 11, 2000	12-2pm & 4-5:30pm	NAC 1/211 Non-SEEK Students
Thursday, May 25, 2000	12-2pm & 4-5:30pm	NAC 1/211 SEEK Students

Mopping out Morales

It's time for a housecleaning in the Office of Student Affairs.
Part 1 of 3.

by Rob Wallace

A presidential search committee has been convened at City College (more next issue). By the end of this year a new president should be named.

Traditionally, new presidents reshape their predecessors' administrations as they see fit. Some administrators are kept on, others dumped. While the Moses administration was characterized by incompetence and disrespect in many quarters, we at *The Messenger* think that if the next president wishes to retain any credibility with students, they must start their tenure by cleaning out the Office of Student Affairs currently presided over by Vice President Thomas Morales. Take a big sopping mop and swab the place right out.

First thing that needs to be done for sure is to fire Morales himself. Calling for someone's head is a very serious matter, but Morales's record clearly shows the sacking would be richly deserved.

In Part I of this *Messenger* series on Student Affairs, we'll address Morales's, uh, unique style of management.

Nasty Man

At a 1997 Council of Organizations (COO) meeting, where chartered student groups convene, student government Vice President for University Affairs Terrence Podolsky asked Vice President Morales a pointed question concerning administration policy. Morales responded by angrily calling Podolsky an "asshole" in front of a room full of student organization representatives.

As the Podolsky incident exemplifies, Morales has a talent for completely turning people off, even people who have no political interest in disliking him. In any room the gruff and pompous Morales enters and speaks in he can turn a room of students or staff or faculty into a seething pot of disdain. Even fellow administrators have openly voiced their antipathy toward the man.

USG president Rafael Domiguez characterized Morales as "stubborn and pretentious." Before his City College stint, as director of EOP and assistant VP for Student Affairs at SUNY New Paltz, Morales earned a reputation, according to one former New Paltz student, as "arrogant."

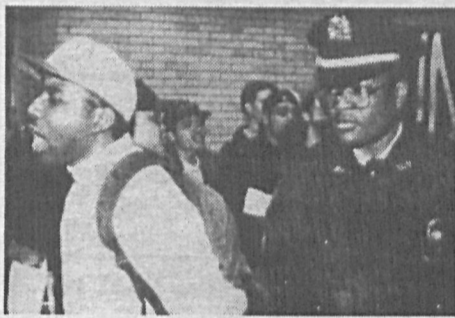
Some have kinder words for Morales. USG VP for University Affairs Cristina Cocheo called Morales "accessible and supportive of my initiatives."

"He called me worried that I was alone in putting together an immigration forum," Cocheo told the *Messenger*.

But the portrayals tend to be as vitriolic as they are ubiquitous. One faculty member mistreated by Morales called him "a sexist." Perhaps mimicking the VP's potty mouth or else bidding for an award in Associate Dean Paul Bobb's Civil City contest, a newly elected student official called Morales "a flaming asshole." Ouch.

Though we'll explore some more classic Morales moments later in this series, it isn't just a matter of style that earns Morales a pink slip. If any person can be blamed outside of budget butchers Cuomo and Pataki and President Moses for the destruction of student life at City College, it's Morales.

As VP for Student Affairs, Morales is



Top: April 1995, Morales, second from right, stands with then-President Yolanda Moses as she oversees the arrests (above) of CCNY students hunger-striking against proposed budget cuts. Other administrators include Charles Deccio, Paul Bobb, and Security Director Tim Hubbard. Left: Morales, who had an instrumental role in helping end Open Admissions at CCNY, stands at the Open Admissions commemoration last October.

in a position to affect very significant aspects of students' extracurricular life. He oversees Career Services, the Child Development Center, Disabled Students Services, the Finley Student Center, Athletics, and Student Health Services. The Office of Student Affairs also has significant representation on the Student Services Corporation and the Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation, two major CCNY allocating bodies. Student Affairs is the administration's interface with the student governments. The Office is also responsible for disciplinary procedures against students.

Want to join a team or work out? You're affected by Student Affairs. Need immunization? Affected by Student Affairs. Want to start and run a student club? Affected by Student Affairs. Your club needs money? Student Affairs. Want to table in the NAC Rotunda? Student Affairs. Looking for a job? Student Affairs. Need to blow your nose? Dean Bobb will be there to count the toilet paper squares. The last one's an exaggeration, let's hope, but Student Affairs is involved in just about everything students do outside the classroom.

The Vice-presidency, then, is an important position, currently filled by someone who is disdainful of the students he's supposed to serve and who has acted viciously against their interests.

Duh Enforcer

In 1995, a vibrant CUNY student move-

ment against a proposed \$1000 tuition increase manifested itself at City College as a hunger strike held in the NAC Rotunda near the Cohen Library. Morales spearheaded administrative efforts to destroy CCNY student organizing to block the proposed cuts. SAME-TV has video of Morales shouting hysterical commands through a bullhorn at chanting students in the Rotunda on the night President Yolanda Moses had the NYPD arrest the students.

Morales and Associate Dean Bobb later requested and used an "Enemies List" of these arrested student activists compiled by CUNY Central. The lists included the names, races, birth dates, Social Security numbers, home addresses, and arrest records of CUNY student activists.

In helping block student efforts to roll back the cuts and tuition increases, Morales helped assure that City College's student body would be decimated. In four years, CCNY's undergrad student body decreased from 15,000 to 10,000 undergrads.

In the face of such defeats, students still fought back, organizing against further tuition increases, against the arming of Security, against CUNYCard, against Security harassment, and in defense of remediation. The NAC Rotunda arrests left Moses with publicity egg in her face. So a different strategy was pursued. Specific student organizers would be marked in a low-level war of attrition. Morales played the administration's enforcer, targeting organizers.

In 1996 Morales helped suspend Graduate Student Council chair David Suker for his effective student activism. The penalty was so egregious that an appeals committee

at CUNY Central, with no love for Suker, rolled back Suker's one-year suspension to a semester. In 1998, Morales again went after Suker when the single parent Suker brought his two-year old daughter on a CCNY bus that was to take student leaders to a weekend leadership retreat. Never mind that other student leaders, and Vice President Morales himself, had brought their children to the retreat in years past.

At Suker's 1998 hearing in front of the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee, a kangaroo court stacked with Student Affairs appointees, Morales, acting as prosecutor, was allowed to give committee members copies of Suker's past disciplinary record and to verbally malign Suker's character. Meanwhile, all testimony by Suker's witnesses about the pattern of administration harassment against him or Suker's good character was ruled out of order. The subsequent and unsurprising judgement brought against Suker—prohibiting him from participating in student government or clubs for five semesters—was tailored precisely to silence Suker's activism.

Morales took a particular personal pleasure at targeting Suker, who was especially adept at foiling the VP's nefarious plans. After Suker had been suspended a second time, Morales crowed, "I hope you have some tissue for David" for the upset Suker.

Ironically, Suker made Morales's job easier as Suker made daily efforts for five years to invigorate student activities. For example, Suker helped organize the wildly popular Student Talent and Fashion Show. He also helped his fellow students wade through the paperwork necessary to found and run numerous clubs including, but not limited to, such disparate clubs as The CCNY Coalition against the Cuts, African Dance, SLAM! and the Hip Hop Club.

Threats Galore

In classic form, the day he had Suker suspended the second time, Morales went on to threaten GSC member and *Messenger* editor Brad Sigal. When Sigal asked Morales what the next step in Suker's "judicial" process was, Morales replied, "I hope you never have to find out."

In 1998, Morales threatened student activist David Thurston of the International Socialist Organization (and a *Messenger* contributor) with suspension if he continued the dangerous practice of placing ISO posters around the NAC Building (more on this and other student group issues next month).

The Messenger is aware that twice in the past few years Morales, has cornered USG officials who blocked his initiatives to whisper in their ears, "I'm going to get you."

Morales's *Godfather III* antics have been a major part of his standard mode of operation as VP of Student Affairs, particularly with male students. But since the professional demise of his major client, Yolanda Moses, Morales has attempted to cloak his rubout persona. As one student put it to *The Messenger*, "Morales is not walking around campus like the Big Man anymore."

The student puffed his chest, then deflated it. "Now he and Dean [Paul] Bobb are really, really quiet," the student continued.

It seems each Student Affairs administrator is lying low in an effort to buy time and win new allies with some meticulous brownnosing. They are in a fight for their professional lives. But neither can hide from their records, more sordid details of which we will reveal in Parts 2 and 3—details that do not belong in a family newspaper. **M**

NYC News...

Legal Aid Attorneys Oppose Police Abuse

In response to "Operation Condor," the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys has reaffirmed its commitment to provide each client with high-quality legal representation, aggressive case investigation and motion practice, and appropriate legal action against, and publicity about, the NYPD's pattern of false arrests and detention.

In response to what the ALAA calls "systemic police abuse that plagues New York City," they have called for far-reaching reforms, including:

- The immediate abolition of the Street Crime Unit, "Operation Condor," and all similar "search and destroy," body count, and arrest quota units.
- Dismissal of Police Commissioner Howard Safir.
- Permanent federal monitoring of the NYPD, and implementation of such long overdue reforms as police residency requirements and abolition of the 48-hour rule.
- Federal prosecution of the police officers responsible for the murders of Amadou Diallo, Malcolm Ferguson, Patrick Dorismond, and others.
- Prosecution of each City official who illegally released sealed records of former Legal Aid Society client Patrick Dorismond.
- Establishment of an independent state agency to aggressively prosecute future police violence and abuse.
- An end to the "War on Drugs," including the Draconian Rockefeller sentencing laws, which generates violent crime, police brutality, and mass criminalization, particularly against communities of color.

Not In My Backyard...

Two lesbian medical students have appealed their lawsuit against Yeshiva University and its Albert Einstein Medical College to gain school-subsidized student housing. Yeshiva offers graduate housing only to legally married students, a qualification same-gender couples can't current-

ly meet.

The night before the appeals hearing, students protested Yeshiva's policy by spending the night in tents outside the campus housing site. Sara Levin and Maggie Jones, the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, joined the "shelter strikers" along with members of the campus lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender group, which is also a plaintiff.

The ACLU says this is the first lawsuit in the U.S. to seek equal campus housing opportunities for gay and lesbian students and their same-gender partners and charges that the policy violates the New York State Human Rights Law by dis-

criminating based on marital status and sexual orientation.

Yeshiva claims that it treats unmarried heterosexual couples and same-gender couples the same so there is no discrimination.

The judge who dismissed the lawsuit last year noted that New York's highest court had consistently rejected extending marital rights to gay and lesbian couples, so change would have to come from the state legislature rather than his court. He also felt that Yeshiva could legally favor married couples for its own subsidized housing.

In 1989, the Einstein College

student/faculty senate passed a resolution calling for equal housing and other benefits for gay and lesbian couples, but Yeshiva University president Rabbi Norman Lamm blocked the initiative, saying, "Under no circumstances can Judaism permit homosexuality to become respectable."

Yeshiva is a secular institution now, with the exception of its rabbinical school.

New York City's only other universities offering married student housing, Columbia University and the CUNY Graduate Center, both treat domestic partners the same as married couples, regardless of gender. **M**

National News...

Ex-Black Panther Wins Long Legal Battle

The Associated Press reports that the City of Los Angeles and the federal Government have agreed to settle a lawsuit filed by Geronimo ji Jaga (formerly Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt) ending the 30-year legal battle of the former Black Panther whose murder conviction was overturned in 1997 after he had spent 27 years in prison.

Pratt was convicted in 1972 of the murder of a 27-year-old schoolteacher. He was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison and spent nearly a third of his sentence in solitary confinement. Pratt steadfastly maintained his innocence, insisting that he was in Oakland for Black Panther meetings when the murder occurred and said that the police and FBI agents hid and possibly destroyed wiretap evidence that would prove it.

"It doesn't prove that justice works," said Stuart D. Hanlon, who took Pratt's case in 1974 and has been with it ever since. "To me, if it takes 27 years and this kind of legal struggle to get someone out, it doesn't prove anything about justice. But on the other hand, it's a resolution that makes sense and lets everybody move on with their life."

Pratt wanted to take the case to trial to expose what he called the F.B.I.'s "evil scheme" of opposition to the Panthers and other radical groups in the 1960's and

1970's and subsequent cover-ups that would have implicated officials still serving in law enforcement.

Ultimately Pratt took the advice of his lawyers and accepted the settlement. "[Pratt's] 52 now," Hanlon told AP. "I think we felt it was better for him to have the money and get his life in order and move forward. He's not a rich man, but now he's going to have money every month."

Court: Student Fees Are No Violation

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday, March 22 that state-run schools can subsidize campus groups with money collected from mandatory student activities fees without violating the rights of students who find some of those groups objectionable.

The Messenger covered this story back in December. At that time student organizations across the country were apprehensively awaiting the court's decision.

In their decision, the justices unanimously upheld the University of Wisconsin's student-fee system after finding the school does not pick and choose which student groups to fund based on the views they espouse.

"The First Amendment permits a public university to charge its students an activity fee used to fund a program to facilitate extracurricular student speech if

the program is viewpoint neutral," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the court.

The amendment protects free-speech rights, and the mandatory fees had been challenged by students who said their rights were violated by forcing them to contribute to groups they oppose.

Had the justices ruled the other way, public colleges and universities across America would have had to stop giving money to controversial student groups or figure out some way to give partial refunds to those students who wanted them.

The ruling emphasized what Justice Kennedy called "the important and substantial purposes of the university, which seeks to facilitate a wide range of speech."

The court had split 5-4 when ruling five years ago that public universities and colleges cannot create a "public forum" for students by supplying subsidies and then refuse to fund some groups because of their viewpoints.

UW's student-fees system was challenged in 1996 by a coalition of conservative groups who objected to having some of their money funneled to liberal organizations and identified as objectionable 18 of the 125 subsidized campus groups, including the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center and International Socialist Organization.

The ruling will not affect private schools because the Constitution protects us against government actions only. **M**

Corporate TV

continued from page 1

opportunity to present our own views to fellow students.

Communications Professor Margaret Bates points out that "[CTN] emphasizes corporate interests to the detriment of student work." Bates adds that "It doesn't teach students to be media literate to have pseudo-news and commercials beamed into classrooms." She also expressed concern at targeting students with more commercials. "We should be beefing up the student produced work, not eliminating it," Bates continues. "I think it would be much better to have monitors in NAC with student work on them."

Money should not be much of an issue in this case, as WCCR has been granted the money for the transmitter they need. The hold-up has just been the implementation of the plan, as it involves several offices within the college, including physical plant. Ironically, it was the bungling

of the physical plant division that made it necessary for the transmitter's replacement. White reports that during the renovation of several college buildings, workers found several black boxes and discarded them. "Those were our transmitters," White explains. "They didn't know what they were."

Probably the worst thing is the consistent pattern of suppression of student activities by those who should be promoting them that is emerging. "What bothers me," says White, "is that now you have people who are trying to re-mobilize the Media Board and make organizations more active, but our efforts are being frustrated."

"Urban" commercials?

Programming to the youth market is big business; both CTN and their advertisers are hoping to cash in on a large captive audience. CTN Media trades on the NASDAQ exchange as UCTN and experienced revenue growth of 271% in 1999. The company posted losses last year, no doubt

attributable to a buying and growth spree that included LINK magazine, ID8 Advertising, Market Place Media (MPM), and the website Wetair.com.

The cash for this rapid expansion comes from the Chicago-based investment firm Willis Stein and Partners, which owns 83% of CTN. Willis Stein's strategy is to maximize profits in companies before selling them at huge profits. In this case, any profit will come from advertising sales.

The potential windfall from CTN is huge, however. CTN tripled the number of locations reached by the Network, going from 432 to 1,225 and growing. CTN has integrated itself into virtually all aspects of the college advertising market. LINK magazine is distributed free to over 600 colleges nationwide while Market Place Media is the largest representative of college newspapers in the country. As a result of this close integration, CTN figures that it can currently reach 50% of the 18-24 age group. They are off to a good

start: projections in their 1999 annual report estimate that by the end of this year CTN will be broadcasting in about 40% of the approximately 3,600 colleges and universities nationwide.

Subsidiaries of Market Place Media specialize in targeting both the military and minority markets for advertisements, which is probably what has them licking their chops at the prospect of signing up City.

CTN's list of advertisers is the real key to its growth. The list is long and includes impressive names, including many you'd expect—AT&T, MCI, Nike, Chevrolet—and a few you might not: the Army and Marines are prominently featured. Exactly what type of programming will be offered is a good question also, as CTN's annual report shows that they have a second channel of programming that they classify as "urban." Does this mean that we will be bombarded with rap videos and sneaker commercials that their programmers assume our target audience will consume? **M**

Antioch College Ignites Controversy Around Mumia Abu-Jamal Speech

by Hank Williams

Graduating students at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio made a courageous stand when they chose a political prisoner on death row and a lesbian transgender author and activist who is his supporter to be the twin keynote speakers at their commencement ceremony on April 29.

The graduating class came under heavy pressure from police groups and other conservative organizations when they learned Mumia Abu-Jamal was invited to speak at the school's commencement. Abu-Jamal will tape a speech for the commencement from his death row cell in Pennsylvania.

Teishan Latner, a member of the Antioch Commencement Committee, said, "We've been getting hit with hundreds of hate-type calls and e-mails from cops and conservatives all over the country." The Fraternal Order of Police, openly campaigning for Abu-Jamal's execution, launched a harassment campaign against the students.

Lesbian transgender activist and author Leslie Feinberg also spoke at the commencement. Feinberg, a co-founder of the National Rainbow Flags for Mumia coalition, said "The attempts by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police to terrorize these students is criminal."

"The sentence of death for Mumia is meant to silence the African American revolutionary journalist known as the 'voice of the voiceless.' But because public support for Mumia has widened and deepened, the state has not been able to carry out the execution. Now the Philadelphia police are trying to terrorize and silence that support," Feinberg explained.

Last year students at Evergreen College in Washington State decided to have Abu-Jamal tape a commencement speech, a decision that also brought nationwide protests from the Fraternal Order of Police. Abu-Jamal also taped a commentary for the 30th anniversary of the killing of Anti-Vietnam War protestors on May 4th at Kent State University in Ohio. **M**

A Transcript of Mumia's Antioch commencement speech

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

My congratulations to you all here today. To the students graduating, to teachers exulting in their graduates, to administrators rejoicing in their professor's successes, to parents who secretly hope this is the beginning of their children's financial independence and an end to their bills, to you all at an extraordinary college—Antioch. I thank you for your gracious invitation and I hope these words have worth and meaning to you all.

I've thought long and hard about your proposed query about an individual's impact on the world. Against what passes or matters, I'll answer a question with a question. Who do you admire?

Of course, in any huge student body, as I hope this graduating class is, there is a wealth of perspectives, or should be. However, on any given list, if logical, the following figures will be found: Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Ella Baker, and W.E.B. DuBois.

Just a few folks, right? What are the common features of these people. Of course, they were all radicals or revolutionaries but that's not it. Add Paul Robeson to that list. Does that help? How about Angela Y. Davis. Some quick wits out there in the audience might well conclude, well, they're all communists. Close, but that's not quite it either.

For neither Malcolm X nor Ella Baker, to my knowledge, ever joined the party. And, though that I'm not certain, I don't think Paul Robeson was a member of the CPUSA. When you look at these people, you find folks who committed class suicide, who turned their backs on the acquired class advantages and potential opportunities to give voice and supportive presence to the most oppressed sectors of their society.

Dr. Nelson Mandela trained as a lawyer, then joined the armed wing of the ANC, or African National Congress, to further the African Liberation Move-

ment in South Africa.

Malcolm X, with a stellar intellect, could surely have joined any profession that he set his mind to—he chose to work for the dispossessed of the Black nation.

Ella Baker, writer and organizer, worked in the Civil Rights Movement and in exposing the sexual exploitation of poor women who worked as domestics.

Dr. DuBois, despite his patrician-like bearing, was a genuine radical and iconoclast who was constantly betrayed by his class brethren for his radical opinions. He was purged from the NAACP.

Similarly, lawyer, athlete and actor Paul Robeson was vilified for his support of socialism and had his flourishing career broken like DuBois before him. Robeson had his passport illegally and unconstitutionally seized by the U.S. government for his anti-imperialist beliefs.

Angela Davis, as many of you no-doubt know, was chased across the nation, captured, chained, jailed and almost imprisoned for life for her support of the Black Liberation Movement.

We admire these people because, at critical junctures of their lives, they cast their lot with the oppressed, the poor, the worker, or those in the third world.

Now they didn't do this because it was popular, quite the contrary, it was quite dangerous for many of these people. All lived under constant government surveillance. Some lost their livelihoods. Others lost their lives. They joined, aided and/or formed the movements that they did because it was the right thing to do. Look at them. For there your answer lies.

Can one individual impact the world? Dr. Mandela led a chained nation from apartheid to multiracial political democracy.

Malcolm X inspired the Black Nationalist Movement of the 1960s.

Ella Baker was a key organizer who helped the Student Non-violent Coordi-

nating Committee, called SNCC, survive.

W.E.B. Dubois was a founder of the NAACP and a leader of the Pan-Africanist Movement.

Paul Robeson's cultural and political contributions to people the world over were, and remain, immense.

And Dr. Angela Y. Davis' work furthered Black Liberation and Prisoner's Rights Movements of the 1970s. Have those lives had impact?

Their lives have expanded the very notion of what freedom means in the minds of millions. Although they are and were extraordinary individuals, they worked with movements that truly transformed consciousness and how we look at the world.

Their lives teach us all what it means to betray one's class, to contribute to the movements that have meaning, and to work on behalf of the oppressed.

You, at this commencement at Antioch, have the somewhat unique opportunity to prove that old axiom that man is made for more than meat, and life is more than bread. In an age where everything, even the human gene, is commodified, it can't be denied that we are all material beings.

Yet, aren't we also social beings? If we say we are, then we must ask, what is owed to one's class? What is owed to humanity? What is owed to life, itself? Think of the lives of those people you admire. Show your admiration for them by becoming them. For by so doing, you give birth to movements.

Thank you.

On the move!

Long live John Africa.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Transcript courtesy of Mumia2000.org, where more information is available on Mumia Abu-Jamal and on his new book, All Things Censored, a collection of his commentaries.

Filipino Workers Center Joins Pro-Immigrant May Day March

by Dan Wilson

Every year, May first is celebrated around the world as International Workers' Day (May Day). The holiday dates back to 1886, when 350,000 workers in the US from 11,562 establishments went on strike to demand an eight-hour working day and were met with violent state repression. Among those who struck on May 1, 1886 were 25,000 workers in New York City who held a torchlight procession to Union Square. The primary organizers and participants in the movement were new immigrants, at that time European working class immigrants.

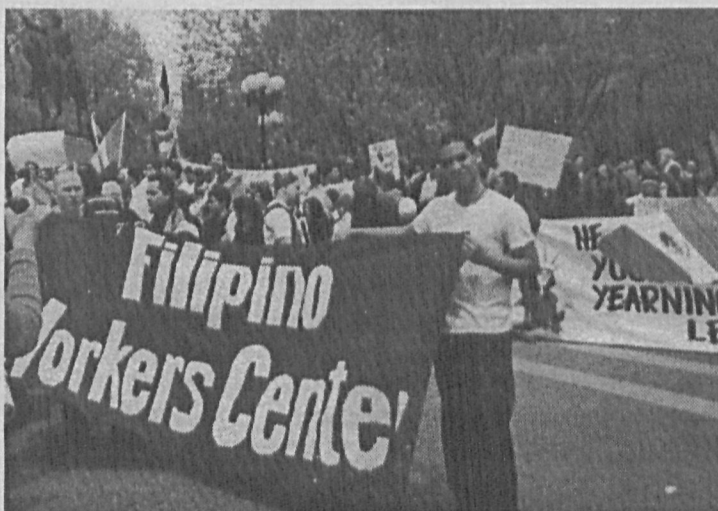
It is only fitting, then, that the largest celebration of International Workers' Day in New York City this year was a march whose main demand was for general amnesty for undocumented immigrants. Over the course of several hours in the middle of the Monday workday, a throng of thousands of immigrant workers and their supporters marched down Broadway from Union Square, past the Federal Building, and on to City Hall.

According to the website of one partic-

ipating organization, the Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants (CHRI), "Amnesty will allow undocumented immigrants to legalize their status so they can demand fair treatment on the job. It will allow them to seek US citizenship, so they can vote and partici-

pate in the political system. It will enable them to join in fighting racism and the other forms of discrimination that keep many people in this country from fulfilling their dreams. It will also allow them to visit their home countries to reunite with family members and help the communities they left behind."

The march was organized by the National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants. Participants included the Latino Workers



Center, Asociación Tepeyac, the Garment Workers' Justice Center, UNITE!, Refuse and Resist!, and Bangladesh Society, Inc. Most of the marchers were of Mexican origin, and many others were from Latin America. Most chants were in Spanish, including "¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!" (The people united will never be defeated!) and "¡Amnistía ahora!" (Amnesty Now!). The crowd was diverse, including workers and supporters of many nationalities standing in solidarity with

one another. Among the organizations represented was the Filipino Workers Center.

The Filipino Workers Center is a new project of the Philippine Forum, a New York-based education and advocacy organization. The Filipino Workers Center aims to arouse, organize and mobilize Filipino workers to work for social and economic justice for immigrant workers and to build a movement of Filipino workers aware of their rights and confident to lead actions to change or abolish oppressive structures. It organizes Filipino domestic workers, restaurant workers and other Filipino workers in the New York City area.

Robert Roy, executive director of the Philippine Forum, summed up the feelings of many: "It was a good march. It is heartening to see people of so many different nationalities coming together to demand justice for all people regardless of so-called 'legal' or 'illegal' status."

Dan Wilson is a founding member of the Network in Solidarity with the People of the Philippines (NISPOP). NISPOP and the Filipino Workers Center can both be reached at 212-741-6806 or philforum@juno.com. **M**

CCNY Joins CUNY-Wide Queer Conference

By Anne Naughton

On Saturday, March 6, 50 CUNY lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, questioning (lgbttq), and otherwise allied students, faculty, and staff gathered to soak up the air conditioning on the 9th floor of the Graduate Center. We were also there to participate in the first-ever CUNY-wide Queer Conference. The all day "Campus Organizing Across the Boroughs" conference, sponsored by CUNY's Center for Lesbian & Gay Studies (CLAGS), was light on ideology and heavy on intercampus networking, strategizing and cooperative future-activity planning.

It was no Millennium March. Not only was our event slightly better attended by official reports, but the conference was also decidedly easy-going. Alisa Solomon, Executive Director of CLAGS set the laid-back tone in her opening remarks. We are here, she said, "to share questions, victories, strategies, defeats and maybe a song or two." Although no one sang, two young men did do some modified ballroom dancing amidst the pesto, goat cheese and wine at the after-conference reception. Since I am new to queer organizing and shy of singing without Karaoke-machine accompaniment, my input at the "Queer Club 101" roundtable took the form of storytelling. At City College, we just formed our Rainbow

Alliance this year. City's campus is not like Queens College, where the Gay & Lesbian Union (GLU) is experiencing a renaissance. The GLU boasts 37 active members and a reputation as the most fun club on campus. Women who identify as straight, apparently drawn to the safe, open-minded—and of course, fun—environment, rank as some of the GLU's most avid supporters. Hunter College's two separate, but cooperative groups, Gay Men's Alliance and Lesbians Rising have been around for 30 continuous years. They have a giant room, a computer, a TV&VCR and weekly programming.

The climate at City is very different. At my first-ever City class, I was impressed that no one seemed to bat an eye at the African American male-to-female transgender student who took up a fair amount of class time voicing her identity issues. That night I was ready and psyched to spend my time at City in an atmosphere of previously unknown diversity and openness. I never saw that student again and spent the next year convinced I was the only queer about campus. My inquiries into the demise of

the last lgbttq club, which folded into mysterious oblivion in 1992, were met with shrugged shoulders and one vague reference to "someone, a long time ago, in the art department." I dealt with pervasive heterosexism in the classroom and homophobia in the halls by resigning myself to being an outsider. Now it is almost another year later and I know that City's campus is neither a hotbed of diversity nor the

last great bastion of heterosexuality. Finding my lgbttq community on campus required me losing my ridiculously narrow preconceptions about what queer people look and act like; it was also a matter of me losing my alien act and hanging fliers calling all queers to email me.

Participants in the organizing roundtables I attended stressed that CUNY campus organizers need to acknowledge and draw on differences within our student, faculty and staff populations for our strength. These ideas were doubly stressed during the Plenary, facilitated by Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz of Queens College Worker Education Extension Center and Oscar Montero of Lehman College. Issues of multiple identities and the need for equal representation and inclusion for all sisters and brothers shaped the bulk of our discussions. One student spoke of the "racism masquerading as preference" within his gay community. The ethnic and queer identities represented by the 50 conference participants reflected the same exclusivity queer academia suffers from overall. While the bars, clubs and the Village may be full of African-American, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian, Caribbean, etc. queer individuals,

queer academia continues to suffer from white-out. Professor Paisley Currah of Brooklyn College pointed out a similar lack of representation for transgendered members of the CUNY population.

Representatives from different campuses reported varying degrees of homophobia and heterosexism present in the halls and classrooms, but no one felt that their campus offered equal rights and equal opportunities for lgbttq individuals. Community and the visibility it provides were agreed to be essential to political gains. A faculty member from the College of Staten Island reminded us that there also needs to be an affirmation of the diversity in styles of living the life. Not everyone wants to be "out & proud" and who can agree what that means anyway? One in 10 and two in 20 loathe the conference terms "flaming" and "queer." A few attendees took pains to ground and reminded us that being out is not only a choice but also a privilege. College can be a time and space of questioning and change and lgbttq organizers need to provide a safe, confidential and supportive environment.

That the conference happened at all was considered an achievement of intercampus networking and cooperation in itself. Undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff of CUNY and CLAGS met several times over the semester to make the event happen. Planning committee chair Robert Kaplan and the CLAGS staff were thanked in particular for their organizational efforts. Plans made include: meeting like this annually, generating and circulating an intercampus email list, setting foot on each others campuses and marching in the Manhattan Pride Parade under a common CUNY banner. **M**

The Rainbow Alliance is still in its formative stages. We need new members, ideas and the support of other clubs. We can be reached at ccnyrainbow@hotmail.com.

CCNY Student Sent to the Tombs for Turnstile Jumping

by Hank Williams

City College student Simen Saetre learned a lesson about the American criminal justice system that he would rather not have when he was jumped a turnstile at the 137th St. and Broadway subway station. Saetre had an unlimited ride Metrocard, but jumped the turnstile to catch the train that had just entered the station.

What happened next was a lesson in the tactics of the New York Police Department's zero-tolerance policy even on petty "crime."

Saetre caught the train, but was arrested and handcuffed by undercover police. Saetre produced both his Metrocard and identification, but he was placed under arrest and transported to the police station where his picture and fingerprints were taken.

Saetre says that he was then taken downtown where he was held overnight. The police finally allowed him to see a lawyer and he was taken before the judge. He has to perform one day of community service and the judge claims that he will have no criminal record, although his fingerprints and photograph remain on file with the NYPD. He was held an entire day and missed classes the next day.

While Saetre admits that he was wrong and made a mistake, he is upset at his treatment by the police, who he says showed him no respect. Saetre doesn't think it needs to be like that. "Even though you commit a crime, you are still a person," he explains.

Saetre, who is from Norway, has a different view of the police now. "In Norway, police are fair; they're role models." Saetre doesn't feel the same way about the NYPD. He feels that their approach to petty crime is wrong also. "Making people

go through [what I did] will only make people lose respect for the system."

Saetre's crime was recorded as "theft of service" (\$1.50 of it) and "trespassing." "Apparently," he concludes, "[the police] haven't enough to do."

The irony of this isn't lost on Saetre, who often studies in City College's dilapidated Cohen Library. "Things [at City College] don't work, there aren't up-to date textbooks, and bathrooms don't have toilet paper...[But] instead of using money on education at City, [the government has] money to keep police at the station and catch students jumping the turnstile."

Saetre's experience gives him a perspective on the shooting deaths that have occurred. Police brutality and the shootings are the "natural consequences of how [the police] operate, their methods, how they think, their education ... as long as the system isn't totally changed, [brutality] will still happen."

The whole incident has given him a clearer picture of the contradictions in society today. Saetre says that he now sees that "placing police all over is a kind of system that doesn't work. When you educate people, they will commit less crime," he continues, adding that "instead of spending money on police [the government] should spend it on education."

Saetre notes the irony of how the American government has classified so many other countries as police states, adding that he's been to Colombia, Cuba, China, and Russia. "This would not happen there," he asserts.

To add insult to injury, Saetre says that when he went to reclaim his property from the police station the next day the batteries were missing from his pager. He replaced them: for \$1.50. So, they got their money back? "Yeah, I suppose so," he concludes wryly. **M**

CUNY Civil Disobedience against Police Violence

by Bill Crain

The Amadou Diallo verdict and the subsequent police shootings of Malcolm Ferguson and Patrick Dorismond sent shock waves throughout much of the city. The police seem to have new license to kill people simply because of the color of their skin.

On April 5, I joined 16 college students, many from Hunter College SLAM, in an act of civil disobedience to protest the police violence. Late that afternoon, we briefly stopped traffic approaching the Brooklyn Bridge. We were arrested, sent to One Police Plaza for a few hours, and then "put through the system" at central booking, better known as the Tombs. There we spent the night and much of the next day.

Until recently, people arrested for civil disobedience were spared the Tombs. They were typically released after a few hours at a local precinct. I believe the Mayor and the police are now sending protestors to the Tombs in a war against them.

In the Tombs, prisoners are placed into overcrowded cells where they try to relax on the metal benches. However the bench-

es are too slippery and you must constantly upright yourself to keep from falling off. Thus, it's difficult to sleep. Many prisoners try to get some sleep by lying on the cold concrete floor, but this doesn't feel too great, either. There are signs warning of TB, but there's little you can do about it. From time to time the guards move the prisoners to new cells, which also are overcrowded. As the hours wear on, prisoners become increasingly anxious to be called to "go upstairs" to see finally see a lawyer and go before a judge. Even people who have served time in various prisons find the Tombs difficult. They want out.

All the prisoners I talked to were grateful for our protest. Some police shared our sentiments, too.

One thing that made a deep impression on me was the large number of prisoners who were likely to serve long jail sentences for trivial offenses—especially for possession of marijuana. If one would like to reduce crime, judicial backlogs, and human misery, one would do well to work for changes in the marijuana laws.

Those of us arrested on April 5 were scheduled to appear in court May 1 and are being represented by lawyers Ron McGuire and Karl Franklin. **M**