

The Paper

Medium For People Of African Descent

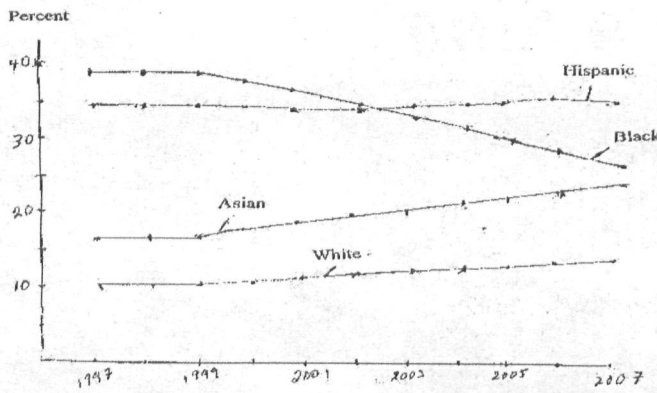
Vol. 126 No. 2 April 2008

"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

BLACK OUT at CCNY?

By Professor Bill Crain

The City College has suffered a sharp decline in the percentage of black students in the undergraduate student body. The figure below, based on data from City Facts, shows this trend. The percentage of black students was level from 1997 to 1999, when they comprised about 39 percent of the undergraduates. Then the decline began, and by 2007 black students made up only 26.2 percent of the student body. In absolute numbers, black students dropped from 3,259 in 1999 to 2,960 in 2007. The number reached a low of 2,747 in 2005 and has since climbed, but it is still lower than in 1999. The decline has been pronounced for both women and men.



Percentage of ethnic in CCNY undergraduate student body: Fall 2000 - 2007. Source: CityFacts, Fall 2007.

The year 1999 was the last one before CUNY began phasing in its current admission policy, which requires applicants to meet skills test cutoff scores to enter a senior college. Under this policy, a high school senior might have excellent grades and other credentials, but unless the student meets the standardized test cutoff scores, she cannot enter a senior college. City College was initially scheduled to implement this policy in 2000, but the date was postponed to 2001. The figure suggests the drop in black enrollment nevertheless began in 2000.

Higher Test Cutoffs Proposed

CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has proposed raising the cutoff scores on the math skills tests. Currently, an applicant must score 30s on two parts of the Math Compass Test, or score 480 on the Math SAT or 75 on the Regents test. Beginning next spring, applicants to CCNY and four other colleges would need 45s on the

Compass test and 510 on the Math SAT. The Regents math cutoff would remain the same until the state has completed its review of this test. Higher cutoff scores on the writing and reading tests are likely to follow.

Dr. Annita

Alting, Director of Assessment at The College, has estimated the effect the new math test cutoff scores would have had on the Fall 2006 freshman class. Her sample consisted of non-SEEK freshman but included GED and foreign high school students. Based on her results, I have calculated the percentage of each ethnic group that would have been admitted under the new standards.

Continued on Page 2

WILL AFRICA BENEFIT FROM AN OBAMA PRESIDENCY?

By Madi Ceesay

Many Africans are beginning to ask what their continent will look like if Senator Barack Obama, the son of a black father from Kenya and white mother from Kansas, becomes the Democratic Party's nominee and wins the General Elections in November. What will an Obama presidency mean to Africa? Will Africa be better off or will it be the same old "dark continent" under president Obama?

These questions might look too premature to ask right now, since the nominating process is still far from over; but with the African continent looking messier than ever before, I think it is not a waste of time, ink and paper to ask, at a time when the "son" of the poorest continent has a clear shot at the presidency of the richest nation in the world.

If history is anything that we can learn from, to predict the future, there are reasons of HOPE that Africa stands a lot to benefit if Senator Obama becomes the next president of the United States of America.

As a person, Mr. Obama does not seem to put Africa at the backseat. He had visited

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Say No to Saying NIGGA!

By Taqiyya Haden

Personally, I find it humiliating and disgraceful that at an institution of "higher learning" so many people are comfortable calling each other "nigga." And it's not just confined to African-Americans - I have heard all ethnicities in the school saying it which is even more ridiculous.

No matter what the intention is, it is a violent word; I have suffered physical abuse while being called a "nigga" and I don't believe that most of our fellow students saying the word have. I point this out because people in favor of using the word claim to be "flipping" it to a

different meaning. My question for them is: if you have never been abused under the name what gives you the right to "flip" it?! Do we so lack creativity as a people that we are recycling a word that came from raping, murderous, hateful, slave catchers? We can't come up with anything else?

I am guilty of approaching young Black men when I hear them using the word "nigga." I tell them how beautiful they were to me BEFORE they opened their mouths and spit on the graves of our Ancestors. I remind them of men who looked JUST LIKE THEM who were castrated, burned and lynched while that word was being yelled.

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BLACK OUT at CCNY?

Percentages of 2006 Freshmen
Who Would Have Been
Admitted Under New Math Cutoff Scores

Asian students	89%
White students	87%
Hispanic students	82%
Black students	76%

These figures suggest that the new cutoff scores will primarily add to the decline in black students.

Professor Ed Grossman of the CCNY Math Department has recently provided data that suggest that higher math test cutoff scores will produce better grades in Math 15000, the introductory course for our liberal arts students. Professor Grossman also reports that students who would have met the higher admission standards in 2004 earned generally higher grades and more credits by the end of the Fall 2007 term. Their dropout rate also was lower, but the

difference between their dropout rate and that of the others was not statistically significant.

But on the whole, researchers have found that standardized tests are relatively weak predictors of success at CUNY. For example, SAT scores are much weaker predictors than high school grades. (See, for example, the 2000 Rand report on testing at CUNY and CUNY's Index formulas). What's more, researchers such as Roy Freedle have raised serious concerns about the ways standardized tests might be biased against African American students (see the Harvard Educational Review, Spring 2003). Thus, CUNY should stop rejecting students from senior colleges solely on the basis of standardized test scores. Instead, CUNY should develop admission policies that best predict college success and give all students a fair chance.

Bill Crain is a professor of psychology at The College. His extension is 5650 and his email is wcrain@ccny.cuny.edu

Commemorating a King

By Easter Z. Wood

April 4, 2008 marked the 40th Anniversary of the violent, tragic and untimely death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who, along with other brave and mostly fallen soldiers, fought for peace and justice for people of African descent in America during the civil rights movement. Victories – both social and legislative – spearheaded by Dr. King were much of the impetus for many of the strides made by African Americans in the civil rights and post-civil rights eras.

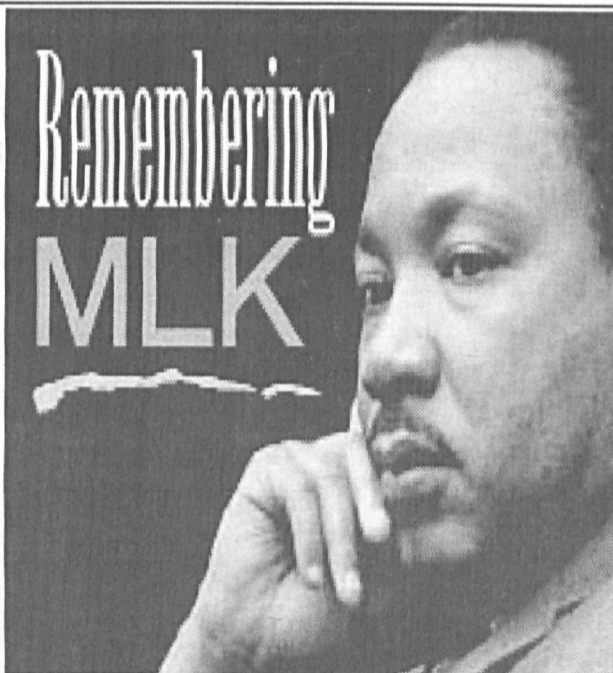
Many events were held to commemorate the day when Dr. King was assassinated and to reiterate his message of equality for all. Some of these events also questioned how much of his message has gotten through and asked: how far have we actually come?

Theorizing Blackness, a full-day, inter-disciplinary conference that brought together young African Descended scholars from walks and disciplines from Anthropology to English, was held at the CUNY Graduate Center on the anniversary and proved a breeding ground for enhancing and questioning the ideals set forth by Dr. King and others. Exploring topics like

homosexuality in the Black church, the redemption of Black womanhood, Blackness in popular fiction, Reggaeton's role in highlighting *Afro-Latinidad* and many others, pushed the limits of conventional thought and challenged conference attendees to explore what equality truly is, particularly in this climate of new xenophobias and circumscription of "otherness" even amongst our own people.

The day's keynote address, entitled *Fragments of a Feedback Loop: Blackness in Conversation*, was delivered by Dr. Mark Anthony Neal, author of four books including his most recent *New Black Man: Rethinking Black Masculinity*. A reception in honor of the retirement of the renowned Dr. William Cross, author of *Shades of Black*, a highly acclaimed reexamination of the famous doll study carried out by Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark and which tipped the scales of the Brown v. Board of Education case which banned legal segregation in American, closed out the evening.

While *Theorizing*



Blackness was not held specifically to commemorate Dr. King's death, it was fitting that it should have been held on that date. We lost much when we lost Dr. King, as this conference and other similar events demonstrate, however we retained our sense of curiosity about ourselves and commitment to figuring out how to make the world a more just place for us -- and for all.

ATTENTION
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Phone: 212-650-5029

Fax: 212-650-5022

Email: thepaper@ccny.cuny.edu

Website: www.ccnythepaper.com

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Editor-In-Chief

Lindsie Augustin

Managing Editor

Easter Z. Wood

FACULTY ADVISOR

Professor Debbie Kennedy

STAFF WRITERS

Kelly Brown

Nicholas Chin

Taqiyya Haden

Naeema J. Muhammad

Robert Twitty

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Professor Bill Crain

Dr. Lenora Fulani

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.

Open Letter to College Community

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

This is an open letter to all who have been affected by the tragedy of suicide. Suicide is increasing among people of color and young adults in the college community. Typically college is a time of so much growth and potential, yet, there are students who report experiencing so much psychological pain that they feel they can no longer function. Suicide was not a choice for them; rather it is a resource for coping when the pain exceeds all efforts (including drugs and alcohol) to eliminate their agony. Often, they feel ambivalent; they want to live, but they can't function, and want the pain to end.

Pain increases dramatically for family and friends that survive a loved one's suicidal death. The grief is qualitatively different for the survivors of suicide, than if that loved one died by natural, accidental, or health related causes. Survivors often grieve alone, or in silence. There is a looming secrecy that shrouds the grieving process often due to shame, confusion, and anger. The lingering question of why exists along side feelings of guilt, anger, betrayal, and feeling manipulated by the deceased loved one. This often leads to rumination about the deceased in the hopes of explaining why they committed suicide. It is stated that six people are left suffering for each committed suicide.

Many of you know someone who has attempted suicide....what do you say?? Who do you blame—yourself, or the person? Survivors of attempters feel angry at themselves and their loved one. You may be thinking how selfish they are or why would you leave me? These mixed feelings may provoke thoughts of suicide in you (Am I next?). For those of you who have relationships with someone who has attempted suicide, your feelings are often hidden, you are fearful that you may say something that would lead to another attempt. The feelings may be so strong, that you find you do not want to be around the person...you want to leave the attempter in order to escape your fear. You distance yourself from that person by decreasing your interaction with them, because you can not fix it nor understand your loved one's actions. Or, you may be afraid to leave them; for fear that they may attempt it while out of your view.

The Wellness and Counseling Center would like to provide a confidential and respectful forum for those of you who are the survivors of loved ones who have either attempted or committed suicide. This is a forum designed to discuss the ambivalence, confusion, fear, and sadness that survivors of suicide experience. This forum will be lead by trained professionals, who will help you to understand the multitude of feelings in your grieving process. Please come to the forum on Tuesday, April 15, 12pm-2pm,, Room 1/217A, in the NAC.; and every Tuesday there after. If you are interested, please call or email Dr. Pereta Rodriguez at (212)650-5915, or prodriguez@ccny.cuny.edu or just come....

Respectfully,

Dr. Pereta Rodriguez

~ POLITICAL ~ COMMENTARIES ~

The Philosophy of Change

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

As soon as the CNN debate between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton at the University of Texas in Austin was over, the pundits were trying to figure out who won. I thought the American people won and here's why. The contest is so close, the candidates so evenly matched, and the electorate so engaged, that Barack Obama could pursue a public dialogue on some profound philosophical issues – philosophical issues with immediate and practical consequences for our country.

The challenge in the debate for both candidates was to offer the voters a clear statement about the differences between them. And there are substantive differences. For example, on the question of the presidential posture towards Cuba in the post-Fidel era, Obama would meet with his brother and successor Raul Castro without conditions. Mrs. Clinton would impose conditions. Is this simply a difference over how “tough” to be with a communist or post-communist regime? No, though Hillary – as a woman, carries the burden of having to prove how tough she is in foreign relations (personal relations are another matter).

Obama took the conversation a step beyond the usual platitudes, for he located his willingness to meet with the next prime minister of Cuba as part of a pro-active initiative made necessary by the decline of American stature internationally. Our country has become so discredited and so unpopular in the eyes of the world that the next president must take personal responsibility for rebuilding trust and communication. Obama further argues that as someone who opposed the Iraq war from the start, unlike Hillary, he has the credibility to take that debate to the presumptive Republican nominee John McCain and win.

There were other substantive distinctions as well, having to do with the differences in their health care plans, responding to the foreclosure crisis, etc. But it was here that Obama made his

fundamental philosophical points about change by raising the issue – not of what should be done to make things better for ordinary Americans – but how these things can actually get done. It's not just a matter of putting forth policy positions, says Obama, but of bringing people together to demand those changes, to challenge the ways of Washington where, as he said, “good ideas go to die.” He acknowledged that he and Hillary – together with the Democratic Party as a whole – share a great many programmatic approaches. But, says Obama, unless we create a new coalition, a new political culture, one that includes more than just the Democratic Party, but also includes the mass movement of independent Americans, we will not change anything. Put another way (in more explicitly methodological terms) unless we change everything, we won't be able to change anything.

When I ran for president of the United States as an independent in 1988, I achieved some important firsts – through the hard work of many people, who were called “delusional” (and much worse) just as Obama's followers and supporters are now being branded. I became the first African-American and first woman to access the presidential ballot in all 50 states. My campaign was a tiny campaign, by present day Obama standards. I had 90,000 donors to my campaign, Obama has over 900,000. I raised \$1 million in matchable contributions (\$2 million the next time I ran), Obama has raised \$130 million and he's not done yet.

But for all the difference in scale, there are some notable connections in substance. I was fortunate to have as my campaign manager a Stanford University-trained philosopher, Dr. Fred Newman, whose rigorous approach to the methodology of change and development is deeply grounded in the relationship between totalities and particulars – between changing everything and changing anything. He helped me to develop my basic political message of being an independent, of transcending partisanship, of bringing black

and white Americans together by moving beyond identity politics and creating a new and inclusive coalition that focuses, not on the “what” – the “program” – but on the “how” – the process. My campaign was not designed to “win,” but to lay the foundation for an independent political movement based on these principles. Is it any wonder that the vast majority of independent voters today are supporting Barack Obama? No; for he is both a product of and a proselytizer for that independent movement which has taken shape “on the ground” over 20 years.

For centuries, philosophers have examined the question of “reality”. What is it? What is its nature? Can we perceive it? Does it exist independent of our perception?

I was struck when Obama brought the issue of “reality” into the Austin debate. He challenged the idea that his supporters – so full of hope and so ready to turn the page – were out of touch with reality. As he said, they're not out of touch. They see the reality of what's going on in Washington, and they want to do something about it. In fact, they are doing something about it by joining together to create a new politic. Hillary thinks she's the one who can do something, but the Obama movement sees things differently.

Perhaps the most important thing about this election is that ordinary Americans are becoming more philosophical. They can discern the difference between a Clintonian debate over what “is” is and a developmental debate about what reality is. And they're discovering that reality is something that people create. And so, they are creatively going about the business of changing everything.

Dr. Fulani is America's leading Black political independent. Based in New York, where she has been a key figure in the insurgent and independent scene, Dr. Fulani is also a developmental psychologist and innovator in the field of supplemental education.

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WILL AFRICA BENEFIT FROM AN OBAMA PRESIDENCY?

homeland twice in his adult life—the first was two decades ago and the second was in 2006 as a US senator. Infact, during his second homecoming, he and his wife Michelle, publicly volunteered to take the HIV/AIDS test; a noble action that has ever since boosted the Kenya government's endeavors in its fight against the epidemic. Kenyans started coming out in large numbers to check their HIV/AIDS status.

Senator Obama's presidential campaign website highlights significant actions, which he has taken to salvage Africa. He has worked tirelessly in the US Senate to “end the genocide” in Sudan's Darfur region, where over 200,000 Black Africans have been murdered and over 2.5million mostly women and children have been displaced by Arab militias funded by the Arab-dominated Sudanese government in Khartoum. Together with Senator Harry Reid, Obama has worked to secure a \$20 million for the African Union Peacekeeping Mission in the region. On top of that, he also met with Sudanese officials at the United Nations to express his concern about the gross human rights violations in Darfur. Senator Obama, has also visited refugee camps in the Chad-Sudan border.

Senator Obama has also written and passed legislation “to promote stability” in war-ravaged Congo. That bill authorizes \$52 million United States assistance for the Congo.

For West Africa, Senator Obama has passed a bipartisan amendment

to provide \$ 13 million for the Special Court for Sierra Leone to bring to justice former Liberian president Charles Taylor, for allegedly funding a rebellion in a brutal decade-long civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor is now facing war crimes charges in The Hague.

There is no doubt that a president Obama will have an especially different world view than say, John McCain or Hillary Clinton. He has said, over and over again that, as US president, he intends to go to the UN and say “America is back” and ready to lead the whole world, not just selected regions.

But, with the current battered image of the US around the world, that would take years to repair; it would be unrealistic for Africans to think that President Obama would by virtue of his deep biological connection to Africa put at the top of his table of preference the continent's problems and neglect the rest of the world. It won't happen that way in this age of terrorism and Hugo Chavezism.

What is reasonable to think is that, an eight-year Obama presidency will do more to rescue Africa than 16-years of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in the Oval Office. And one thing is clear: if Obama wins the race to the White House, every night that he goes to bed he will always remember one thing--- his father was Kenyan (an African).

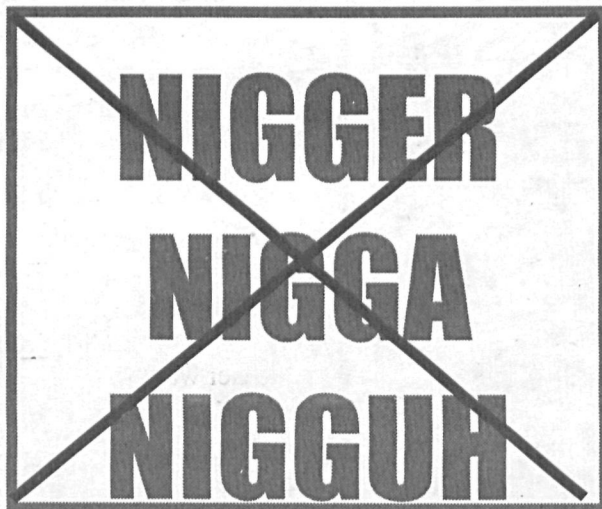
Say No to Saying NIGGA!

I remind them of the men and women that fought off dogs, police batons and water hoses so that we could even attend this or any university – surely they are turning in their graves. And we are not talking about 100s of years ago – try 50!

Black Americans are the ONLY race to embrace this disgraceful word and accept the dubious mantra that it's "not meant like that" and other immigrants of color take the permission from us to use it. I don't think they have considered how many Black Americans fought for freedom and rights while these immigrants were still in their respective countries. Very few of these immigrant groups actually fought America for the rights they now have, yet they have no regard or respect for the Black American struggle that allows them to move freely in this country. Using "nigga" as a "term of endearment" is a slap in the face to those Blacks who fought and died so that so-called "minorities" could enjoy the relative freedom they have in this country today. To say the derogatory word was "nigger" and they are saying "nigga" is as ignorant as the use of the word in my opinion. How many of these people even know the history of the word at all? Slave holders and auctioneers have said "Nigger,"

"Nigga" and "Nigguh" among other variations that were used according to the accent of the person speaking.

EVERY TIME I hear the word it truly hurts and angers me. I don't want to hurt or hate my people but I am deeply disappointed



in my Black American peers for allowing such disrespect to be made part of main stream culture. I have experimented in public places saying "nigga" many times and then start saying "gook," "chink," "kyke," "cracker" and "spic" all in the same tone and volume. Isn't it odd that only when I start saying these other "racial slurs" do people even turn to me? No one cared when I said "nigga" but somehow these other

words are forbidden. Michael Jackson had his "HIStory" album pulled from the shelves for saying "kyke" twice in one song yet artists using "nigga" 20 times in each song on their album continue to occupy shelf space.

Can you imagine young Jewish children facing their elders who suffered through the Holocaust after singing "kyke" in a song? I am not at all insensitive to the over 6 million deaths the Jewish community suffered, but how many people even know and recognize that well over 11 million Africans died just traveling the middle passage during Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade? And that is a conservative estimate, excluding the millions more who died after the boats docked. This number also doesn't even begin to touch the number of people lynched after reconstruction when Blacks were of little to no monetary value. Apparently we're now only of value when we're shuckin', jivin', degrading ourselves and calling each other "nigga" for the entertainment of others. I, for one, am not amused or entertained and I pray for the day when the use of this disgraceful and disgusting word will come to an end once and for all.

For more info, visit AbolishTheNWord.com/history

Become a Part of the

HARLEM 50 College Advisement Program

The Harlem 50 Is a group of young adult males from Central Harlem who are committed to completing their high school education, making a successful transition into college and becoming role models and catalysts for change in their neighborhoods. In order to do this:

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Events @ City

- EVENT** **IN GOOD COMPANY: CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF WOMEN FACULTY**
DATE Mon, Mar 3—Tue, Jun 10
TIME ----
ADDRESS Cohen Library/ NAC Building/2nd Floor Atrium
PHONE 212.650.7271
DESCRIPTION A tribute to past and present full-time women faculty at City College who have received particularly laudatory awards or achieved groundbreaking honors.
ADMISSION Free
- EVENT** **HPV VACCINE CLINIC**
DATE Thu, Apr 17
TIME 10:00 AM— 04:30 PM
ADDRESS City College/ Marshak Science Building Room J15
PHONE 212.650.8222
DESCRIPTION Free HPV Vaccine. This is the final dose of the series.
ADMISSION Free
- EVENT** **MFA EXHIBITION: ANA FILIPA FARRAIRA LOPES**
DATE Mon, Apr 28—Fri, May 2
TIME ----
ADDRESS 138th Street and Convent Ave./ Compton and Goethals / Art Department Gallery
PHONE 347-579-3259
DESCRIPTION Reception: Thursday, May 1st 5-7 p.m.
ADMISSION Free
- EVENT** **ANNUAL BANGLADESHI CULTURAL SHOW: BIOSCOPE**
DATE Tue, Apr 29—
TIME 6:30 PM— 10:30 PM
ADDRESS 138 Convent Avenue/ NAC Building/ Aronow Theatre
PHONE 917.330. 3284
DESCRIPTION There will be dances, songs, skits, dramas, fashion, poetry and lot more....
 2 guests allowed per CCNY/CUNY I.D
 For tickets please contact our event managers :
 Sagar 917. 330. 3284, Jiku 917. 379.8655.
ADMISSION \$ 5 (Advance); \$7 (At the door)
URL <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=9220557865>
- EVENT** **ANNUAL CUNY JAZZ FESTIVAL**
DATE Fri, May 9
TIME 11:00 AM— 10:00 PM
ADDRESS 138th Street Convent Avenue/ Aaron Davis Hall/ Theater B
PHONE 212.650.5411
DESCRIPTION Directed by Professor Mike Holober, featuring faculty and student ensembles and guest artists, to be announced.
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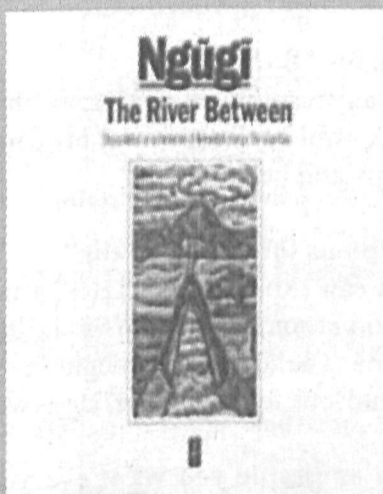


Must-Read Books for Spring

By Easter Z. Wood

In this newfangled world that revolves around television, computers, ipods, and video game systems, many people – especially people of color – have forgotten the importance of reading and the joy that can be found in a well-written story. College students often only read books that are assigned for class, and most college graduates admit to not having picked up a book since they graduated. Aside from the entertainment factor, reading is important for many other reasons, one of the most important being that people who read tend to have better vocabularies and be better writers – both of which are crucial characteristics of good college students and successful business people.

Now that the weather is beginning to break, the time couldn't be better to enjoy the sunshine with a cold glass of iced tea, iced coffee or good old fashioned H2O and treat your mind and spirit to some "unplugged" stimulation with one of these titles:



Fiction

The River Between by Ngugi wa Thiong'o

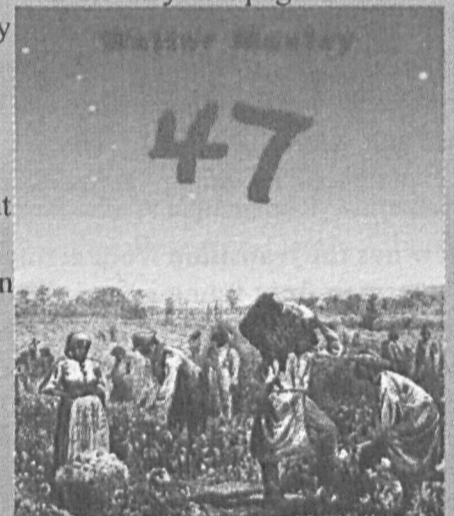
From Amazon.com: Christian missionaries attempt to outlaw the female circumcision ritual and in the process create a terrible rift between the two Kikuyu communities on either side of the river. The people are torn between those who believe in Western/Christian education and the opportunities it will offer, and those who feel that only unquestioned loyalty to past traditions will save them. The growing conflict brings tragedy to a pair of young lovers who attempted to bridge the deepening chasm.

My Take: This is a beautifully and poetically written story that draws you in from the very first page. From the gorgeous scenery descriptions to the poignant social commentary, this is truly a book worth reading!

47 by Walter Mosley

From Amazon.com: Mosley deftly weaves historical and speculative fiction into a powerful narrative about the nature of freedom. 47 is a young slave boy living under the watchful eye of a brutal slave master. His life seems doomed until he meets a mysterious run-away slave, Tall John. Then 47 finds himself swept up in a struggle for his own liberation.

My Take: Although classified as a "Young Adult" book, 47 is complex and interesting enough to keep readers of all ages engaged. The story evokes laughter, anger, tears and heartfelt connection with and concern for the characters. Mosley has created another masterpiece with this one!



Non-Fiction

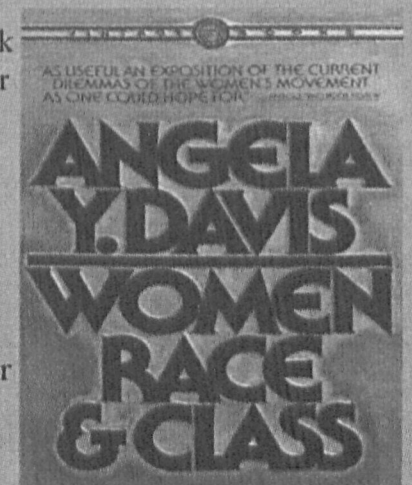
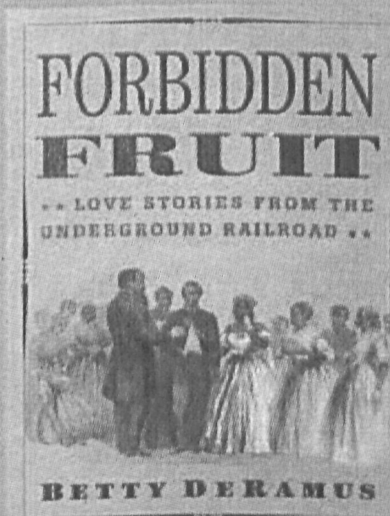
Forbidden Fruit: Love Stories from the Underground Railroad by Betty De Ramus

Booklist Review: Debunking one of the myths used to justify separating families during slavery, de Ramus offers a collection of stories recording the love and devotion of slave couples, many of whom risked their lives to stay together. Because families could be divided on the whim or financial woes of masters, real love was a luxury, a forbidden fruit. Drawing from historical records, unpublished memoirs, newspaper accounts, and stories passed down through families, de Ramus tells of couples fleeing the South via the Underground Railroad to attain freedom and to maintain their unity.

My Take: In 2008 when more than 50% of marriages are ending in divorce and people seem to fall in and out of "love" on a whim, the stories in this book are truly an inspiring testament to the strength of true love and the lengths our people have gone through to maintain it.

Women, Race & Class by Angela Y. Davis

From Amazon.com: Longtime activist, author and political figure Angela Davis brings us this expose of the women's movement in the context of the fight for civil rights and working class issues. Davis' message is clear: If we ever want equality, we're gonna have to fight for it together.



My Take: Did you know that within many of your lifetimes hundreds of thousands of Black and Latina women have been sterilized against their wills and/or without their knowledge right here in America? If you think the battle is over - and particularly if you know it isn't - this is an absolute must read for seldom explored perspectives on women's and "minorities'" rights. Still timely after 20 years!

Up-Close and Personal With Drake

By Kelly Brown

Known to many as Jimmy Brooks from *Degrassi* (on the Noggin channel), Drake goes far and beyond as a music artist. Also known as Aubrey Graham, Drake hails from "the great city" of Toronto, Canada by way of Memphis, Tennessee. Drake's rapping style is smooth yet temperamental, switching up without trouble. His attitude is reflected in his music and can get anyone feeling good. Drake is definitely someone I say to be on the lookout for this year.

I had the chance to ask Drake a few questions:

1. Let the people know who you are, where you're from...

My name is Drake also known as Aubrey Graham and I'm from the great city of Toronto, Canada by way of Memphis, Tenn.

2. When did you get into music?

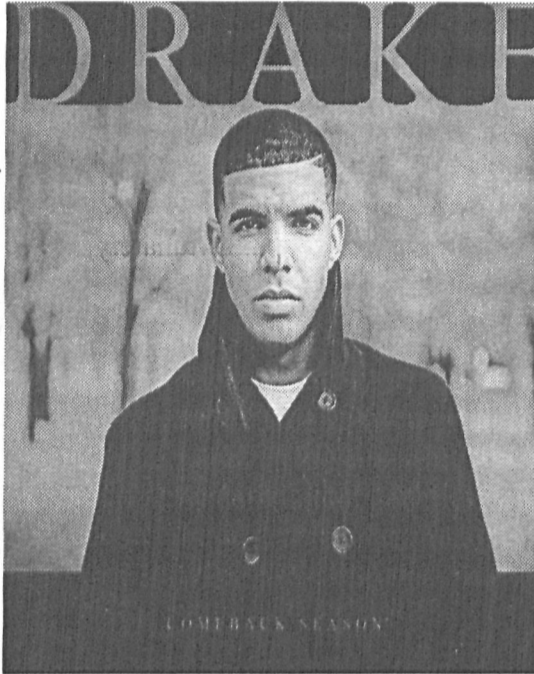
I got into music at a young age. At 3 years old I would start changing the lyrics to nursery rhymes my mom brought home. I started out singing in plays at a young age. Les Mis was the first major one I did. At 10 years old I began writing my own material. My dad and my uncle both hand their hands in the business so I definitely had the background.

3. Who and what were your influences?

My influences range from my dad, my uncle, Al Green, Barry White, Frank Sinatra, Pharrell, Notorius B.I.G., Tupac and Kanye. As far as lyrics I draw from my life experiences including family, friends and of course relationships.

4. How has the transition from acting to music been?

The transition from acting into music has not been too difficult from the standpoint of who I am because I try to separate the two as best I can by using the name Drake instead of Aubrey Graham. Getting into music I have to go through the same struggles as any other artist. We all know that can be a difficult process.



5. Talk about your latest project.

My latest project "Comeback Season" came out October 31, 2007. It has 24 songs on it and I worked with a wide range of people from Trey Songz, Lil Wayne, Dwele, Rich Boy, Little Brother, Andreena Mill, Slakah, Malice, Nickelus F, Phonte, and Elzhi. I'm currently working on my new album The Search which is due out this summer.

6. You've worked with the likes of Trey Songz and Lil Wayne. Is there anyone else you would like to work with?
I would like to work with Pharrell, Timbaland, Dr. Dre, and Kanye West.

7. Any resolutions for '08?

I don't really have any resolutions. I just hope that I continue to be successful in all aspects of my career and that I stay happy and healthy.

8. What are your plans for the new year?

This year the fans can expect new singles, a new album and a promotional tour. The album should drop around summer time. The tour should begin in mid 2008. The fans should look for a Clothing line as well.

9. Any shout outs or people you want everyone to look out for?

I think everyone should look out for Dow Jones hailing from Texas. I'd have to say the wise guys, Andreena Mill and Richie Sosa.

Check out Drake's Myspace page (www.myspace.com/thisisdrake) and get your copies of his mixtapes ("Room for Improvement" and his latest "Comeback Season"). He sends a big shout out to Toronto and to all his fans!!

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Exploring the Origins of Good Old-Fashioned Common Sense

(NAPSA)- Some say that a life without common sense would be uncommonly difficult. In fact, a recent study found that 94 percent of Americans say that having common sense makes life easier.

But what is common sense? While we tend to recognize it when we see it, it can be difficult to define. For the past few years Scott Tissue and Towels has consulted Americans to explore the concept of common sense, and recently conducted a survey to learn more.

What they found is that common sense is woven into just about every aspect of life, and having common sense can actually improve one's life. For example;

- ✧ 84 percent of Americans say that common sense directly impacts parenting;
- ✧ 81 percent of Americans believe common sense knowledge affects both their work and social life;
- ✧ 78 percent of Americans say that common sense has an impact on their managing of finances; and
- ✧ 72 percent of Americans say that common sense affects their health and physical well-being.

These statistics show that common sense means different things to different people, but the majority of respondents agree that the resources of generational common sense of invaluable and stays alive by getting passed through the generations, thanks to mom. Responses to the survey demonstrate that mom is the key to passing on common sense:

- ✧ 98 percent of moms plan to share common sense tips they have received from their families on to their children and loved ones;
- ✧ 81 percent of Americans say their mom played a role in developing their common sense wisdom;
- ✧ 53 percent of respondents identify moms as the number one influencer of common sense.

"The Scott Brand has provided common sense solutions and products for more than a century," says Mwanza Lumumba, associate brand manager. "It's important to us to ensure that common sense stays alive, and that people continue to pass it along to those who matter most."

Visit www.ScottCommonSense.com for further common sense tips and advice.

Depression & Suicide: Sad Realities amongst College Students

By Taqiyya Haden

As shocking as it may seem, many college students commit suicide and although the rate of death seems to be higher among the males, females also make frequent attempts. There is a particular stigma about depression and suicide in the Black and Latino communities, but it exists here too. The majority of people that attempt or think about suicide are clinically depressed and most reach out for help before actually trying. Doctors believe that these people lives could have been saved if they had received proper treatment. At

doing or how they are coping? They may be crying in front of someone right now, luckily not you!

The other response can be called "passing the buck." That includes telling a depressed person something to the effect of: "you have people that care about you and would help you." He or she probably thought you would help, which is why they humbled themselves to tell you about being depressed. Such rejection or "passing of the buck" could be the impetus for disaster. I'm sure it is not the intention of folks to push a depressed person over the edge, but an insensitive word can do just that. If you don't know what to say then

one point the average rate of death by suicide was one person every 17 minutes. These statistics are sad and only a part of the reality.

Any time a person becomes depressed and mentions suicide please, TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY. People may claim this is a ploy for attention but, even if that is the case this is still indicative of a problem. Depression is a treatable illness that kills people daily – it can get better but, unfortunately, it can get worse too. If you know someone who has been diagnosed or notice that they are having a problem, your response to them is very important.

One common uninformed response to depression include: "What are you depressed about?" which is usually followed with a list of problems in the world that are "worse" than the depressed person's and people who have survived "more" than them. That is a kicker because if a person is depressed, how is the pain of the rest of the world supposed to help them feel better? If it is to tell that person they are emotionally or spiritually weak that doesn't help much either. Do you have intimate details about how those people that survived "worse" experiences are really

admit that, and don't force yourself to say anything.

Here are some suggestions for responding when a friend or relative mentions being depressed or suicidal. If you are available or know someone else is it is best to not leave the person alone – especially at first. When you see them you might say: "Would you like a hug? Do you want to talk or just go watch a movie?" Distraction can help depressed people get through their worst moments. If you know the person believe in a higher power mention that. Maybe by saying "God is here with us right now and wants you to feel good about life"

Validating feelings and a quiet listening ear never hurt a person and can even benefit the person giving. It's NOT throwing a "pity party" – people do ultimately need to work on themselves and know depression is their responsibility BUT we are social creatures with a natural interdependency so it doesn't hurt to try to help someone if you can do so without compromising your own mental health.

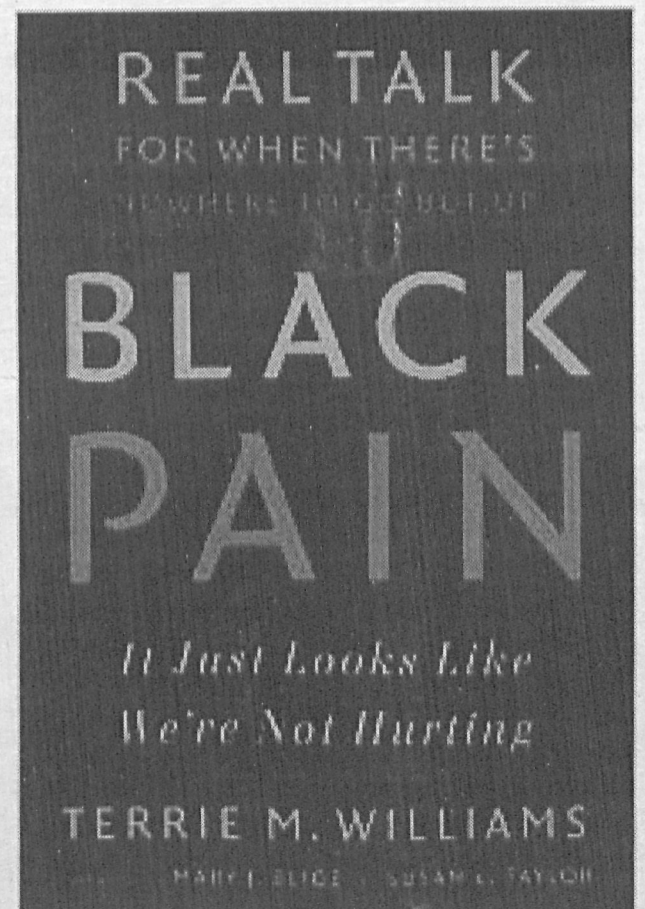
The good news is that with treatment, depression will hit less often and with less intensity.

If you know someone who is depressed – and most of us do – take it seriously and refer the person. Depression is a life threatening disease; please, don't wait to learn that the hard way.

Here are some resources that can help if you know someone who is depressed or suicidal:
Suicide Prevention Resource Center – <http://www.sprc.org>
National Suicide Prevention Hotline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

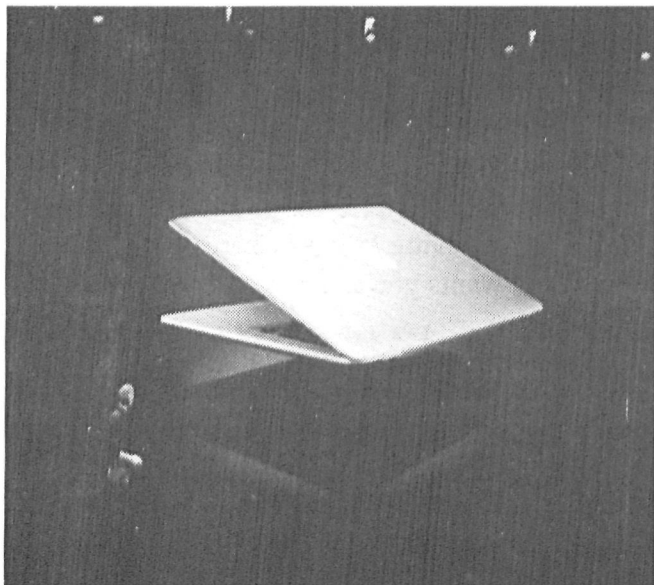
See the Open Letter to the College Community on page _ for resources right here at CCNY.

This new book about Depression in the Black community may also prove helpful:



Mac Air Book and MLB 08-The Show: Reviews

By Nicholas Chin



MacBook Air Review

Apple revealed its new product, the MacBook Air, which is thinner than any notebook ever made. It is thin enough to fit into a regular manila envelope with ease. It is .76 inches thick at the hinge, which is the thickest part of the notebook, and .16 inches at the front edge, which is the thinnest part of the notebook. It is also the same length and width as the MacBook, as it has a 13.3-inch screen. It weighs roughly about 3 pounds, making it easier to carry around. Apple boasts about not compromising features while making a thin laptop. Apple CEO Steve Jobs says that while making the Air, they did not compromise on the keyboard or the screen.

The screen is still bright, it being a LED backlight that saves battery but is still effective. Also, most keyboards on smaller, portable laptops are cramped and made smaller because of the size of the laptop. But for Apple, they were able to make a keyboard that is a full-sized one with backlighting. There is a sensor to detect the light in the room so that the screen and the keyboard do not waste energy with extra light. The mouse pad has been upgraded from the other laptops. It has a multi-touch surface, just like the iPhone and iTouch. You can use two fingers to zoom in and out, rotate pictures, pinch and squeeze, and take advantage of other features that are applicable with this new mouse pad.

With the MacBook Air, Apple wants to

push wireless capabilities more than ever before. One thing that is missing is the optical drive, or the CD/DVD drive. So how does one install programs or play CDs? For installing programs, the Air comes with software, called Remote Disc, which you install on any other computer, PC or Mac. This allows the Air to "borrow" the CD drive from the other computer and install the program wirelessly. For listening to CDs and watching DVDs, you can purchase an external optical drive, called the Air SuperDrive (\$99). Apple is aiming for consumers to buy music and movies from iTunes, so there would be no need for CDs and DVDs.

The hard drive for the Air comes in two capacities: 80GB or 64GB. The 64GB hard drive is more expensive because it is a flash drive instead of a regular hard drive, just in a bigger capacity than regular flash drives. It's more durable because it has no moving parts, and is also faster. On the downside, the speed is also slower because the processor is slower than other laptops.

On the side of the Air, there are three ports, one each for headphones, USB connection, and micro-DVI support (for connecting other screens). The other MacBooks usually have at least two USB ports and a few other connection options, such as firewire connection. The Air having only three ports limit what connects someone could have on the Air.

I wouldn't buy the MacBook Air because it is expensive to purchase (\$1,799.00 or \$3,098.00) and has a hard drive with less space. The missing optical drive is the main reason I would not buy one. An optical drive is necessary, as I would not buy all my music and movies from iTunes. Also, the battery is not replaceable, so you would have to go to the Apple Store to have them fix it; so make sure that your battery doesn't die because then your laptop is useless. In the end, the negative aspects outweigh the good, so I'll wait until the next new laptop comes out to purchase one.

MLB 08: The Show Review

As a fan of the MLB: The Show series, I always have high expectations for the game; and I was pleased this year when I played the game. They have done a good job making a great game.

The graphics are mostly on par except for one

thing: the players sometimes run through each other when running on base. Every players act like how they would act in real life. All the weird batting stances and every pitcher throw like how they would in real life. Orlando Hernandez still kicks his leg up so that his knee is right next to his face, and the crowd looks like a real crowd, instead of looking like cardboard people.

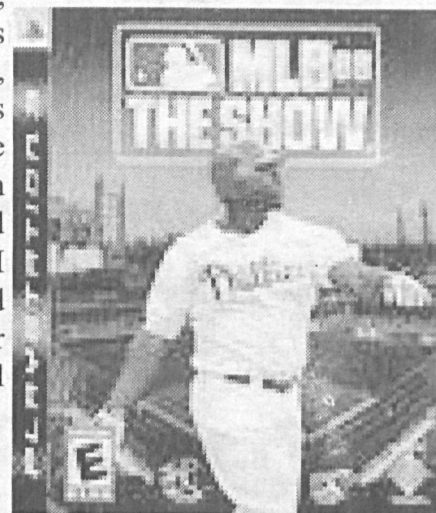
The game-play is fantastic, as it reflect real life baseball. The mode Road to the Show has improved. This is a mode where you create a baseball player and you try to make it to the big leagues. You go through the minor leagues and try to keep improving. During this mode, your coach will give you specific goals to accomplish, such as getting on base or turning a double play if you're an infielder. This mode is so realistic that they go over hand signals before you start playing so that when the coach gives you a signal, you have to know what it is and follow it.

Another cool aspect is that after the game, if you want to, is that you can look at every single replay of the game. It doesn't matter if it was a home run in the first inning or a single in the seventh inning, you can still look at it.

They also have improved fielding; make it more realistic to catch would-be home runs. One glitch that is in the game is that sometimes the pitcher doesn't pick up the ball, when he should, that rolls to him after the batter hits the ball.

A feature that the game includes is the ability to save the baseball game when you're in the middle of it. This way, you don't lose the progress you've made if you're in the middle of a game.

Overall, this game is a good game to buy if you're interested in playing a baseball game on the PS3, Xbox 360, or the PSP. Game-play is fantastic, the graphics are great, and it feels like you're actually in a baseball game. I recommend this game for all baseball fans.



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SPORTS CORNER

Upcoming Games

(All games are subject to change)

Men's Baseball

4/10	USMMA	4:00PM
4/19	CSI	12:00PM
4/20	CSI	12:00PM
4/22	Brockport	2:00PM
4/24	Oswego	2:00PM
4/26	John Jay	12:00PM
4/27	John Jay	12:00PM
5/2	Wesley College	7:00PM

Men's Tennis

4/10	Brooklyn	4:00PM
4/13	Muhlenberg	1:00PM
4/15	Mt. St. Vincent	4:00PM
4/19	Rutgers-Newark	12:00PM

Men's Track – Outdoor

4/12	College of New Jersey Invite	9:00AM
4/23	Penn Relays @University of Pennsylvania	9:00AM
4/24	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/25	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/26	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/27	Yale Spring Invitational	9:00AM
5/2	USMMA Invitational	9:00AM
5/3	USMMA Invitational	9:00AM
5/10	New Balance NYC Qualifying Challenge@Ichan Stadium	9:00AM

Women's Track – Outdoor

4/12	College of New Jersey Invite	9:00AM
4/23	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/24	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/25	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/26	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/27	Yale Spring Invitational	9:00AM
5/2	USMMA Invitational	9:00AM
5/3	USMMA Invitational	9:00AM
5/10	New Balance NYC Qualifying Challenge@Ichan Stadium	9:00AM

Men's Track – Indoor

4/16	St. Joseph's (LI)	4:00PM
4/25	Penn Relays	Penn Relays
4/25	Penn Relays	9:00AM
4/26	Penn Relays	9:00AM
5/2	USMMA Invitational	9:00AM

Have a poem or short story you want to share with CCNY?

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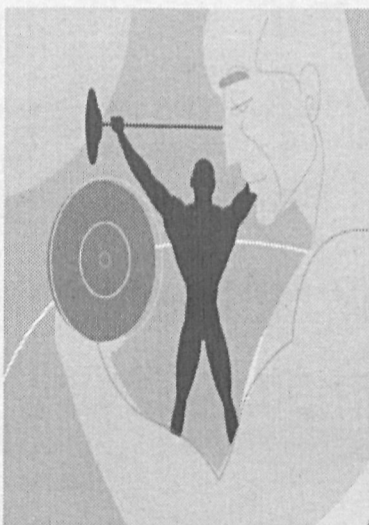
All submissions should be emailed to thepaper@ccny.cuny.edu

We look forward to reading your work!

Twelve Weeks of Transformation

A fitness journey with Robert Twitty

This is my journey... who am I? Well I consider myself "The Greatest". Yeah I know it may sound or come off as cocky... oh well, it is a part of life. You gotta have some kind of cocky element to you, in order to make people notice you. When I enter the gym or pick up those weights, all that is left behind. Towards those weights I am exceptionally humble, because in the gym the weights are God and if you don't respect them they will destroy you. Plus I don't want to pull a muscle trying to be overly confident (it's not worth it... trust me). A number of 12 weeks will be my journey to transform my body. It may sound like a lot, but you gotta do what you have to and in the scheme of your life really? This won't be because I do have college, work, to focus on also handle it.



like a lot, but you have to and in the – what is 12 weeks be because I do and relationships but I'm sure I can

At this moment I realized that no matter how much I know or anything: I'm training. The reason go is.... well it's necessary in order to have a bright future. With this 12 week process I will see how much light will shine on me. From Sunday to Saturday I will be on a strict diet high in protein and light in carbs and only one small cheat day (which is Saturday) where I can eat whatever I want to. I know what you are thinking, "I wouldn't do that," well that's because you don't want what I want, and don't have the desire like I have. Or maybe you do. You can join me on my journey or not, it really doesn't matter, because when I get up and look in the mirror, all I see is me not you. That's all that matters when it comes to this. So... you coming or not?

To be continued...

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