On Tuesday, May 4, 2010, the Center for Tolerance and Understanding, the Rainbow Alliance Club, the Urban Unity Club and the Office of Student Life partnered for a special panel – *Fostering Support for BCC's LGBT Community* – that addressed some of the issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students on campus. The program was the first of its kind in many years but it was an important first step in acknowledging the growing number of LGBT students on campus. Of special note is the fact that much of the planning and organizational work for this forum was student driven.

The panel, moderated by Lacroix Terrier, featured Student Development faculty member, Prof. Marilyn Russell, Victor Rajcoomar from the Center for Sustainable Energy, and students Sharon Chin and William Murray from the Rainbow Alliance and Urban Unity clubs. The panelists all evoked instances at the College where lesbian and gay students have felt shut out of the mainstream of college life. Rajcoomar added, however, that one positive path to acceptance is for students to become engaged in the fabric of campus life and to not isolate themselves in LGBT matters only. Russell added that the College has in the past offered counsel to LGBT students but that the support has not been sustained over time. She hoped that this forum would be the first in many other initiatives that will bring visibility to issues in BCC’s LGBT community and that it would also bring other voices into the discussion. Both Murray and Chin noted that the two new clubs – the Rainbow Alliance and Urban Unity – have brought together both gay and straight students.

This program also featured LGBT activists and spoken-word artists, La Bruja, Simply Rob and Katina Douveas. They brought a personal perspective and performance flair that electrified the audience.

The discussion was rich and allowed for audience members, from faculty to staff to students, to consider the many circumstances that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people face on a daily basis – from coming out of the closet to living and adjusting in a homophobia/transphobic and heterosexist society. One student noted, in a bitewest reflection, that she was excited to see this kind of public discussion around LGBT issues but sad that she is graduating this spring and will not be on campus to more fully engage in further activities.

When the panel ended, audience members had an opportunity to speak directly with panelists during a post-program reception. There was a lot of energy in the room as well as engaging discussions about next steps for similar programs on campus. One BCC student, who is a father of two children, is a busy person. She worked on the phytoremediation research project and also campaigned for Minority Participation in Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

BCC is an embodiment of active learning,” states Dr. Maria Psarelli, professor of math and faculty coordinator of the Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

“The fair is the celebration of undergraduate research. And research is the ultimate learning tool, the true embodiment of active learning,” states Dr. Maria Psarelli, professor of math and faculty coordinator of the Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

The student research exhibits included "Side Effects of Aspartame, an Artificial Sweetener," "Environmental Justice Issues in the Bronx," "Cramer’s Rule in Boolean Algebra" and more. The fair gave the BCC student-researchers experience in interpreting their projects as they answered questions from observers. The posters gave fellow students an opportunity to get a closer look at the world of science.

BCC student Jeffrey Guard worked on a project with Francesca Villar, a BCC 2009 graduate. Their project is "Phytotolerance to Toxic Heavy Metals by American and International Rice Oryza sativa Cultivars L. in vitro." It studies the use of rice (oryza sativa) cultivars to remove toxic heavy metals from contaminated bodies of water and plots of land. “The benefit of this technology is that phytoremediation can potentially be an effective tool in removing contaminated waste from water and soil sources,” says Guard. "The implications of this technology are significant in that they provide a powerful tool to anyone who knows how to effectively plant rice, which is relatively inexpensive compared to other methods for cleaning up contaminated ecosystems.

Ms. Villar, who is a single mother with two children, is a busy person. She worked on the phytoremediation research project and also campaigned in the citywide 2009 mayoral election (receiving 3,309 votes). Now, she is a student at Lehman College studying anthropology, biology and chemistry and running for Lehman College Student Government vice president. Guard is the recipient of a $2,500 Michael Steuerman Award. He plans to transfer to Lehman College to study biology. Eventually, he plans to become a doctor. He contends that it is vital that people understand the power behind the science, and that effective communication is key. Posters can break down the process and help people understand enough to appreciate the importance of what is being presented.

“This kind of project is important because it helps motivate students by providing opportunities for research,” says Biology Professor Charles Maliti, who mentors Guard and Villar. The professor believes that by working with a mentor, students can develop scientific skills that can be transferred to other scientific disciplines such as physics and psychology.

“Among the students who participate in this fair, some are the College’s best. I am confident that they will also be the best elsewhere, in senior colleges and in their professions,” says Psarelli. “Hopefully, some of them will successfully pursue their own research in graduate school.”

Student and mentor research projects included the following:

"Isosahedron": Student Adelita Lassu (Digital Arts) and mentor Dr. Anthony Weaver (Math & Computer Science).

Cramer’s Rule in Boolean Algebra": Students Iriskoufoulou Sibabi Akpo and Moutawakilou Ibrahim (Engineering Science) and mentor Dr. Alexander Khetyit (Math & Computer Science).

"Dynamics of the Sums of Cubes": Student Xavier Aglamey (Computer Science) and mentor Dr. Rony Gourague (Math & Computer Science).

"Coburn’s An Enhanced Uptake Form of Vitamin B12": Student Md Nuruzzaman (Nursing) and mentor Dr. Thomas Brennan (Chemistry).

"Environmental Justice Issues in the Bronx": Student Jeffrey Cruz (Nursing) and mentor Dr. Farnos Saeedi (Chemistry).

"Side Effects of Aspartame, an Artificial Sweetener": Student Indira Codero (Nursing) and mentor...
The Communicator

Editorial Policy and Disclaimer

The Communicator urges students to submit articles and editorials to the newspaper. We also encourage students to respond to the articles and editorials found in this newspaper.

The views expressed in by-lined articles and in published letters are solely those of the writer, and they do not necessarily represent the view of The Communicator.

We reserve the right to edit any article or letter submitted due to space considerations.

We reserve the right to refuse publication to any article or letter due to space considerations as well as those articles or letters deemed inappropriate because of profane language, non-verification problems, or slander.

No article or letter will be published unless the author submits his or her name, email address, and telephone number.

Please submit all articles and letters to the following email address: rowanandrewdavid@aol.com.

Notes:

No Word submissions will be accepted that are saved in Word 2007. Please save and submit in an earlier version.

JPEGs must be submitted as email attachments and should not be embedded in the Word copy.

The Communicator

Please note that The Communicator reserves the right to refuse publication of any submission due to space considerations or if the submission is deemed inappropriate because of profane language, verification problems, and/or slander.

Communicator Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Massawa Lawson

Managing Editor
Mouzaffirou Afoda

IOC Representative
Beatriz Ramirez

Staff Writers
Raya Bayor
Muhammad Jalloh
Astharte De Los Santos
Carmela Perez

BCC Secondhand Smoke Program Fulfills Commitment to Smoking Community

From the Co-sponsors of the Program,
Department of Health, Physical Education, and Wellness
Office of Health Services
Professional Staff Congress—BCC Chapter
Student Government Association

Per the request of the College Smoking Community, two outdoor smoking areas with protective overhanging structures have been designated with appropriate signage as follows:

1. Upper south side plaza of Meister Hall with ashtray, tables, and benches.
2. West side of Meister Hall with ashtray, table, and benches.

Both areas are centrally located within the campus and provide adequate protection from the upcoming challenging winter months. The areas also provide an environment that can accommodate numerous smokers.

Please remember that the Friendly Reminder Approach is implemented for the purpose of creating a program of fairness for both the non-smoking and smoking community members of the college. The program is working because of the support of the BCC Administration and the compliance of the majority of the smoking community.

Once again, thank you for your continued help in making this program a success!

(from left to right)
Carmela Perez, Astharte De Los Santos, Massawa Lawson, Andrew Rowan, Beatriz Ramirez, and Muhammad Jalloh.
Not pictured: Raya Bayor
Photo by Charles Sabat

Fall 2010
AN EXCITING ELECTIVE!
REGISTER NOW FOR A CLASS
THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU
EXPERIENCE MOVIES FOR THE REST
OF YOUR LIFE!

HISTORY AND THEORY
OF FILM

CMS 61
FALL 2010
SECTION # ON-LINE
MEISTER HALL CO2A

THE INSTRUCTOR JEFFREY WISOTSKY
IS AN AWARD WINNING INDEPENDENT
FILMMAKER AND A MEMBER OF THE
DIRECTOR’S GUILD OF AMERICA

PROFESSOR JEFFREY WISOTSKY
(718) 289-5572
3 CREDITS

Monday
2:00pm - 2:50pm
Wednesday
2:00pm - 3:50pm
Erwin Fernandez, a student at Bronx Community College, who is a member of the Speech, Drama and Debate Team, won third place in The City University of New York’s annual speech competition held at the New York City College of Technology, on Saturday April 24th.

Fernandez, majoring in history, prepared a persuasive speech which he presented at the meeting of the CUNY League of Active Speech Professors (CLASP). His speech, “Legalizing Hemp in New York State,” focused on the legalization of hemp, which he argues is a useful plant in the state of New York. “I’m trying to persuade people to support the passing of bills A.9016 and S.4041-B which would legalize hemp in New York State.”

He says he felt well informed on his topic and that he “was eager to speak about it and let people know what hemp is all about.” He felt some of the good qualities of his speech were his sources and structure. “I was informing you on a topic that is beneficiary for the whole world,” Fernandez states.

As a member of the Speech, Drama and Debate Team, Fernandez expresses that he is utilizing this experience to prepare for his future career goals. “The thing is, I want to be a teacher and eventually a lawyer and I need to get the jitters out now. I need to get started on this now,” he adds. “Also I need to develop my speaking techniques. It was also a personal interest; I thought it would be pretty interesting. Fun.”

The team finished with a bang. Now they are preparing for the following semester in which Coach Ellen Mareneck along with her team, seek to go to Nationals by the end of next year. She encourages students to join the Speech, Drama and Debate Team. Not only would it serve as an excellent opportunity to improve student’s communication skills, but it would also allow them to take part in events which will benefit their future.

If anyone is interest in joining, feel free to email Professor Mareneck at ellen.mareneck@bcc.cuny.edu or drop by her office at Colston 735 during her office hours.

On April 7, 2010, BCC’s Media Technology and Film Society presented BCC alumn Joel Weiss to campus who conducted an acting workshop for students in CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production.”

The BCC Media Technology and Film Society invited Hollywood actor, Joel Weiss to campus who conducted an acting workshop for students in CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production.”

Students in Prof. Jeffrey Wisotsky’s CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production” class pose for a group photo in Meister Hall, Room S07. Weiss has been an actor for 30 years and has appeared in more than 60 films, 60 plays and 30 television shows, and dozens of commercials, including multiple requests for him by acclaimed film directors Walter Hill, Garry Marshall and Robert Townsend.

Weiss to campus who conducted an acting workshop for students in CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production.”

The BCC Media Technology and Film Society invited Hollywood actor, Joel Weiss, to campus who conducted an acting workshop for students in CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production.”

Students in Prof. Jeffrey Wisotsky’s CMS 62, “Beginning Film and Video Production” class pose for a group photo in Meister Hall, Room S07. Weiss has been an actor for 30 years and has appeared in more than 60 films, 60 plays and 30 television shows, and dozens of commercials, including multiple requests for him by acclaimed film directors Walter Hill, Garry Marshall and Robert Townsend. Weiss is also a graduate of Bronx Community College. Mr. Weiss was one of the stars (Cropsey of the Rogue Gang) of the classic Walter Hill Film, The Warriors. Prof. Wisotsky was also an extra in The Warriors.

Photo by Jeffrey Wisotsky

BCC Media Technology and Film Society Presents Actor and BCC Graduate, Joel Weiss

On April 7, 2010, BCC’s Media Technology and Film Society presented BCC alumn Joel Weiss in a discussion, “Directing the Actor for a Student Film.” Weiss has been an actor for 30 years and has appeared in more than 60 films, 60 plays and 30 television shows, and dozens of commercials, including multiple requests for him by acclaimed film directors Walter Hill, Garry Marshall and Robert Townsend.

Weiss kicked off his career as one of the stars of the classic film The Warriors and has appeared in multiple episodes of some television shows like The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, Bernie Mac and Mike Hammer, PI with Stacy Keach.

MTV featured him as one of four actors, including Blair Underwood, in True Life: I’m an Actor. He has had starring roles in productions of beloved plays like The Front Page (Earl Williams), Career (Pinkie Bonaparte) and One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Billy Bibbit). Weiss is a graduate of both Bronx Community College and Lehman College in the Bronx.
Great Musical Talents in the Bronx

By Carmela Perez

Jesse and Susan Vasquez, two aspiring singers from the Bronx, seek to get their big break with their new single, “Atrapada.” Jesse, aka J-Harmony, and Susan Vasquez, Gangsta Twin, are of Dominican descent. Born and raised in the Bronx, M.I., short for Mirror Image began their singing careers at the age of 15.

“This is what we always wanted to do,” states J-Harmony. “We always loved music,” Gangsta Twin adds, filled with excitement. M.I. experienced their first singing duet at South Street Seaport in downtown Manhattan, during the summer of 2003, where they were asked to perform for a Disney Channel executive.

M.I. has gone a long way since their first performance in 2003. They have sung in various places such as The Copacabana, Shea Stadium, where they performed the national anthem, and for a political event held for Mayor Michael Bloomberg. “We have performed in several states also, including Calle Ocho in Miami as well as Canada and Jersey,” says Gangsta Twin.

M.I. going back to their Dominican roots is changing their music style to Bachata from R&B. “We do any to every kind of music, except for country! We like pop, Hip Hop and R&B, Spanish, Spanglish. We like to do songs that people can relate to,” J-Harmony says. “Right now we are working on Bachata, were going to our roots because we are Dominican and that is something we love,” adds Gangsta Twin. Although Hip Hop and R&B music is their passion, M.I. hopes to break into the Spanish music industry and slowly conquer the Hip Hop and R&B industry as well. “Our main focus was R&B, we always listen to Mariah Carey and Alicia Keys. We always love to listen to that kind of music,” adds J-Harmony.

“Right now, we have our new single out, “Atrapada,” which you can find on YouTube. Search “MI – Atrapada,” and they will find our song there. You can also contact us on Facebook, Mirror Image NYC or MySpace also Mirror Image NYC,” says Gangsta Twin.

Now preparing for their first video, which will be directed by Hanse Balbuena, they are excited for what the future holds. “We are going to be filming it in different places. We will have scenes with the guys in a park, also in a club and, finally, in our backyard, pretty much telling the story of our song,” says J-Harmony. “We are doing our video on topic!” adds Gangsta Twin.

They are currently working on writing other songs as well as trying to stay focused and on track while keeping up with their daily routines at work. “We write our own music,” says Gangsta Twin. “I do the harmony of our songs; that’s why they call me J-Harmony,” adds J-Harmony.

With these talents they will go to great places. They are not your ordinary girls, these girls share their love for music that separates an artist from a GREAT artist, and their music is something everyone can relate to.

Check them out on Facebook, MySpace or Twitter – Mirror Image NYC.

The other day while walking to class I saw a peace symbol chalked onto the concrete column of Meister Hall. It brought me back to the time when I lived in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, the heart of the “Summer of Love” hippie event of cultural and political rebellion back in 1969. By the time I moved there, most of the remnants of that era were gone from the Haight, but you would still see shops carrying tie-died merchandise and t-shirts and posters with the peace symbol.

The peace symbol was originally the symbol of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Great Britain, and it was then adopted in the US as a symbol of peace and non-violence. During the protests of the 1960s it was meant to represent an opposition to war, a symbol of love and peace, of a revolution of ideas, a movement against the status quo. And it represented courage for those taking a stand against government, many of them students, individuals often seen as anti-American – or worse.

Looking at it today, it looks cool. A symbol from another era, really, but still relevant to our times today as many of us oppose the wars we are currently engaged in and hope for a revolution of social change and new ideology. It is interesting to note that it is a symbol without a copyright law-free for all to use. Deliberately never copyrighted, the symbol is still recognized in great Britain as the logo for nuclear disarmament, but is known worldwide for peace and non-violence. No one has to pay or to seek permission before they use it. As a symbol of freedom, it is free for all (Design Boom).

The spring semester here at BCC is quickly coming to an end. Some of us will continue with summer school; others will graduate. Wherever you might be heading to this summer, may PEACE AND LOVE go with you.

Works Cited

MERCY COLLEGE
GET THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE

TRANSFERRING MADE EASY

» Maximize your transfer credits and choose from over 90 academic programs taught by esteemed faculty.

» The Mercy College Honors Program offers competitive scholarships and laptops. Featured as a smart choice by Smart Choices: Peterson’s Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges.

» One of the most affordable colleges in the country offering scholarships and financial aid.

» PACT is the country’s premier program that pairs undergraduates with their own professional mentor to ensure career success.

LEARN MORE.
WWW.MERCY.EDU | 877-MERCY-GO
It was the most challenging of times and the most crucial for me. It was the summer of 2008 and I was working a minimum wage job at a local retail store. But it was a time for me to take one of the most crucial decisions in my college career. I had known my success in life was a function of how intimate I became with my books and how soon I returned to school to pursue my higher education studies and my dreams of becoming a professional developer. Such determination was time and the thus ran the dreams of my heart and the musings of my intellect. But this was the time and I had to make a decision. I had decided that this fall will not pass me by. I would run in the Student Government Association (SGA) for an SGA Senator is just an extension of my service in my position in the SGA. But he pointed out that my service much-needed leadership rather than run for a senatorial position in the SGA) by the staircase and having asked me why before the deadline for submission for candidacy, I met leadership, I gave up the thought of running for the com.

I was a member of the club’s website, www.BCCMSA. com. I had always wanted to be involved in the college governance of the college, serve the student body, gain SGA elections. I had always wanted to be involved in the student center. “Yes, it is. I have been looking out for you,” Mr. Lopez admitted. It was an honor I could not have asked for, especially since I did not even know about the existence of the Academy. I sent in the application and waited for the results. But they were many weeks in the making.

Meanwhile, the new SGA senators were invited to attend the New Leadersh...
“The Fellows that Could”: The Malave Leadership Academy Fellows at the Innovation Workshop at John Jay College of Criminal Justice with the team from “The Medici Effect.” Standing, from L-R: Julie Agosto (CUNY Corps and Service Learning Coordinator), Muhammad Jalloh (BCC), Ayeesha Berte (Lehman College), Evita Belmonte (City Tech), Linda Gomez (CUNY), Deyni Marcano (York College), Jasmine Patel (Brooklyn College), Christopher Brown (Brooklyn College), Lillete Lopez (Hostos CCS), Fitz Kings, (John Jay), Karishma Chouda (Brooklyn College), Philip Parris (Medgar Evers), Leen Feliciano (QCC), Brunt Douglas (Medgar Evers), Qimei Luo (CUNY), Alyna Brown (Lehman College), Keisha Fuentes (Executive Assistant to the director of the Academy), Sweet Joy (Medici Effect Team), Christina Joseph (coordinator for special programs and professional development). Sitting from L-R: Edgar Romero (LaGuardia CC), William Leverett (Queens College), and Dr. Joe-Joe McManus (executive director of the Academy), Christian (Medici Effect), Karnataka Hunnan (CUNY), Jimmy Dometh (CUNY), Jay-Sherriee Allen (City College) and Carlos Ruiz (Baruch).

has been set aside as the “National Day of Service” to help to remember the victims of the tragedy of 9/11. As a Muslim, this held special significance to me. I consider myself above average when it comes to a conceptual and contextual understanding of Islam and Islamic Law. But I also know that Muslims have been blamed for the tragedy of 9/11 eight years earlier. It was also clear that current US foreign policy towards the Muslim world was not the most favorable. But I found solace in knowing that I can and should be able to bridge the cultural gap between “East and West” and the Muslim and Western world. And this was one of those perfect opportunities to gauge the feelings on the “American side.” Working alongside other Fellows and staff members of the Academy at the HELP USA Islands rehabilitation center and helping to clear the facility of unneeded junk and giving it a “facelift” by helping to paint it, it became clear to me that one of the most effective ways to unite people was to have them put aside their trivial differences and work together to make life better for the less-privileged members of our world.

During this time, school was already in session and I was also very much involved in the BCC Student Government Association. At an earlier meeting, the SGA had chosen to make me forward as the sole candidate for the vice-chairperson of the College Senate (a post traditionally held by the SGA President). At the first Senate meeting, I was nominated by my colleagues for the position. The vice president of the SGA, Omar Murray, had also decided to run for the same position during this Senate meeting. After the “campaign speeches” were done and the votes were cast in and I beat him by 31 votes to 15 to become the vice-chair of the BCC Senate.

As a fellow in the academy, the government gave me the opportunity to attend both the Mr. Woode Awards (which recognizes the best of radio, musical and media excellence on America’s colleges and universities) was also, along with the other fellows, invited to attend the “Investing in Futures” higher education event organized by The New York Times and CUNY and heavily attended by stakeholders in higher education, the unions and others. This was an opportunity for me to widen my horizon, expand my cultural competence and hear and understand the challenges facing public higher education in the US from those intimately involved in the system, including CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and Dr. Muriel Howard, the president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). The contacts I made at this event were also invaluable.

Throughout the same time, I was also involved in the BCC SGA’s planning and execution of both the BCC Christmas Party and the Halloween Party and events that had become SGA traditions over the years. Being rather unaccustomed to attending parties and very uncomfortable in the arts of parties, I had engaged myself in what I could do best: conduct interviews, write feature pieces, and shoot videos.

By mid-December when the finals came around and the winter break came knocking, I was already looking forward to the Fellow’s Retreat put together by the CUNY Leadership Academy for the 2009-2010 cohort. The two-day retreat was a welcome relief from the previous week’s hopes and dreams I was to usher in the New Year. But the retreat was just a beginning good for what promised to be a year full of experiences for the fellows. At around this time also, the University was considering renaming the academy after the former vice-chancellor for budget and finance Ernesto Malave, who had passed away in Puerto Rico while attending the “Somos El Futuro” Conference.

A week later, I was on my way to Tucson, Arizona, along with 11 other fellows and two staff members of the CUNY Leadership Academy for the annual National Collegiate Leadership Conference. Being my first time traveling to the American Southwest, it was an invaluable opportunity for me to meet other student leaders from different parts of the country and establish a strong social and professional network of like-minded people from diverse backgrounds, academic pursuits and socio-political interests. Realizing the enormity of the opportunity at hand, I had gone ahead and finally launched my own blog site on the making of leadership networking site, www.Rumiya.com. I had also ordered some business cards to make it easier for me to share my information with others without risking their losing them if they lose piece of paper I scribble my contact information on. For the first time, I came into contact with “real” Native Americans, usually thought by many people to be almost extinct. I met and made friends with people from both the Navajo and Pueblo tribes. It was striking to note that many of them may be easily mistaken to be Hispanics, whether as a Pueblo tribes. It was striking to note that many of them may be easily mistaken to be Hispanics, whether as a

While it may seem that I had done my own fair share of traveling, learning and experiencing leadership, it was a rewarding and interesting task for those who see the rich diversity of our world, the (now) renamed Malave Leadership Academy had one more experience in store for me. This came in the form of the “Cincinnati Urban Experience,” an alternate spring break opportunity volunteering to work with the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless in far-away Ohio. This was an opportunity to realize that, despite the wealth of America and the somewhat carefree and luxurious lifestyle (by world standards) that many of us lead, homelessness and hunger were as real as it was in the most unfavorable. But I found solace in knowing that I can and should be able to bridge the cultural gap between “East and West” and the Muslim and Western world. And this was one of those perfect opportunities to gauge the feelings on the “American side.” Working alongside other Fellows and staff members of the Academy at the HELP USA Islands rehabilitation center and helping to clear the facility of unneeded junk and giving it a “facelift” by helping to paint it, it became clear to me that one of the most effective ways to unite people was to have them put aside their trivial differences and work together to make life better for the less-privileged members of our world.

During this time, school was already in session and I was also very much involved in the BCC Student Government Association. At an earlier meeting, the SGA had chosen to make me forward as the sole candidate for the vice-chairperson of the College Senate (a post traditionally held by the SGA President). At the first Senate meeting, I was nominated by my colleagues for the position. The vice president of the SGA, Omar Murray, had also decided to run for the same position during this Senate meeting. After the “campaign speeches” were done and the votes were cast in and I beat him by 31 votes to 15 to become the vice-chair of the BCC Senate.

As a fellow in the academy, the government gave me the opportunity to attend both the Mr. Woode Awards (which recognizes the best of radio, musical and media excellence on America’s colleges and universities) was also, along with the other fellows, invited to attend the “Investing in Futures” higher education event organized by The New York Times and CUNY and heavily attended by stakeholders in higher education, the unions and others. This was an opportunity for me to widen my horizon, expand my cultural competence and hear and understand the challenges facing public higher education in the US from those intimately involved in the system, including CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and Dr. Muriel Howard, the president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). The contacts I made at this event were also invaluable.

Party, Retreats, Conferences, and Conventions

Around the same time, I was also involved in the BCC SGA’s planning and execution of both the BCC Christmas Party and the Halloween Party and events that had become SGA traditions over the years. Being rather unaccustomed to attending parties and very uncomfortable in the arts of parties, I had engaged myself in what I could do best: conduct interviews, write feature pieces, and shoot videos.

After a year serving in the BCC SGA, working alongside the president of the SGA and aspiring to better navigate and embrace the invaluable opportunities that present themselves to us. But I also know that my experience this past year is a testament to the fact that a quality CUNY education and co-curricular experience may be all one needs to acquire the skills needed to make a difference in our communities and the increasingly globalized world that we live in and must adapt to.
This spring is an especially great time at BCC because—there is a garden growing on campus! ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs) selected six students for their leadership program. They were given the responsibility to create a project that would benefit students in some way. The idea of creating a garden seemed like a positive and uplifting way to enhance the lives of BCC students.

Living in an urban setting can sometimes be very stressful. We can easily forget nature and all that it has to offer. Spending some time planting or watering a garden can bring a smile to one’s face, just like it did to the ASAP students who participated in the first day of planting. Everyone was ready to roll up their sleeves, get a little dirt on their hands, and play a part in this new endeavor. So far we have planted herbs such as basil, thyme, oregano, and even strawberries. It was a great experience to see so many enthusiastic students gather together and help BCC Go Green!

On April 29th the ASAP Leadership Program also made a presentation for other ASAP students. It was on environmental issues that affect all of us who are part of the Bronx community. There is an immense amount of air pollution due to waste transfer centers, bus depots, and traffic running through the Bronx area. As a result, asthma rates are very high. The presentation addressed these issues and presented some thoughts on how a garden can contribute to making a difference.

Aside from the aesthetic beauty of plants, they also contribute to our health and well being. Plants absorb the toxins in our atmosphere, and create the oxygen we need to live. Breathing in fresh air is very important for each one of us. Therefore, any small effort we can make to increase the amount of greenery that surrounds us will greatly benefit us all. The other reason to create a garden is because it is fun! You can take a break from your academic studies, spend some time with your friends, and slow down from the fast pace of New York City.

The garden is still in its first stages of development, and we have lots of grow beds and still lots of planting to do. We welcome anyone in the college community to join us in our continued effort to create an outstanding garden. We have even given some thought to creating a gardening club!

The garden is located behind Colston Hall, near where the new children’s daycare center is located. Come check it out and join us for a day of gardening. We want to keep the BCC garden healthy and alive for a long time to come! If you are interested in helping us maintain the garden, feel free to contact the gardening team at bccgarden@gmail.com.

Have a great day and good luck on your finals!
EXERCISE SAFETY AND INJURY PREVENTION

Hot Weather and heat Stress

Human beings depend on a relatively constant body temperature to survive. An increase of just a few degrees in body temperature can quickly lead to distress and even death. Exercise safety in a high-temperature environment depends on the body's ability to dissipate heat and maintain blood flow to active muscles. Heat from exercise is released through evaporation of sweat, which cools the skin and the circulation near the surface of the body. People with a low level of fitness are a greater risk for problems associated with heat stress, which can include dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and life threatening heatstroke.

Dehydration

Your body needs water to carry out many chemical reactions and to regulate body temperature. Sweating during exercise depletes your body's water supply and can lead to dehydration. Drink fluids before, during and after exercise. As a general rule drink at least 2 cups (16 ounces) of fluid 2 hours before exercise and then 8 ounces every 20 minutes of exercise.

Terms To Be Aware

1. Heat Cramps result from a sudden development of muscle spasms and pain associated with intense exercise in hot weather.
2. Heat Exhaustion is heat illness related to dehydration resulting from exertion in hot weather.
3. Heatstroke is a severe and often fatal heat illness produced by exposure to very high temperatures, especially when combined with intense exercise, characterized by significantly elevated core body temperature.
4. Heat Indexes are a measure of how hot it feels when you combine temperature with relative humidity.

If you have any questions or comments, please email me at: WellnessFall@yahoo.com

Be well.
Dr. Wayne
Health, Physical Education and Wellness

Following Directions; Making the Grade

A Note on Following Instructions

By Ragnhild Utheim

I recently went to park my car in a newly renovated automated parking lot, rushing in distracted overdrive to catch a train. A stressed out mom of two with a job to get to and studies to complete, the directions for how to procure my parking spot were but a nuisance in my mind. I followed the prompts provided on the ticket booth interface, inserted my $10 bill and waited for $5 in change. Nothing. Looking up, down and around the booth, I soon discovered the Grade. "If you have any questions, raise your hand and direct the said question to the instructor—no one else. This test is not to be taken lightly or seriously. After printing your name on the line provided, do, say, and write no further. Good luck!"

Instructions: Be certain to follow any and all instructions as closely as possible. Remember the importance of order or its non-importance.

Name: __________________________

1. Circle all the words in this sentence that begin with a “B”, “C”, “S”, or “W”.

2. Say hello—Quietly— to the person sitting to your right. (Note: if no one is to your right, say “AHHHHH”— quietly; you do not want to distract the other students taking this test.)

And so on.....

I was told that on average, roughly half the class subjected to this activity fail to follow the instructions, some catching on to the hoax sooner; some later. The exercise is meant as an amusing reminder of certain details we so take for granted that we tend to overlook their significance. It does not, of course, account for the importance of instructional clarity, or ambiguities and the seeming "trick" questions that can appear on tests or assignments – particularly standardized ones that are inappropriately geared toward a prescribed and "typical" student population. Nor does it account for more substantive problems in comprehension, what we commonly refer to as "higher order thinking skills" in WAC. Indeed, sometimes we might not truly understand what we are being asked to do. But all the more reason for students to carefully read and be sure they understand a set of directions before they can systematically follow them.

A simple piece of advice for accomplishing the good grades that most students hope for is thus to begin by reading ALL assignment instructions and course goals carefully. Always ask your professor to clarify any questions or concerns that you have—in good time. Do NOT wait to decipher an assignment's description, for instance, until the night before it's due and you're ready to hack away. Waiting for the eleventh hour to tackle any requirement is always a bad idea, but can become particularly taxing if you suddenly discover that you are unclear about the expectations. Read through instructions early on. Use writing-to-learn tools like underlining, commenting in the margins, and brainstorming—jotting down your ideas in writing— when you read through an assignment's description. Pull out the essence of what you think you are supposed to do and check in with your professor—in class, or privately if you prefer. Create an outline, template or rubric (sometimes provided by professors) for what you are expected to produce, and follow it. Once you work through and complete your project, check it against this outline. Making sure you accurately understand and can adequately respond to the various aspects of an assignment will bring you a long way toward good results.

Ragnhild Utheim is one of BCC's six Writing Fellows. To learn more about WAC and how Writing Fellows can assist students and faculty, especially in Writing Intensive courses, visit us online at: www.bcc.cuny.edu/WAC.
Those of you who have taken an English class with me know about my love for South Africa, a country where I have lived, studied and taught. It is a country which I see as my own, even though I only discovered it in my late thirties. My love for this place is obvious to anyone who walks through my office door, which is covered with pictures of places and people from South Africa that have changed my life and make me want to go back whenever I can.

My love for South Africa also comes through when I teach, as I often use books written in that part of the world. *Kaffir Boy*, a memoir written by a black South African man who grew up under apartheid, helps me inspire my BCC students to overcome the challenges they face as learners, workers, parents, and family members, while they seek to transform their lives for the better with an education. I have used *Kaffir Boy* by the students I was lucky enough to work with in South Africa, who had to face enormous difficulties in order to be able to go to college. Whenever I do, my impression is that BCC students are left with a much better sense of who they are and what they can do with their lives.

This semester, I was able to spend two months in South Africa. I spent time at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), in Durban, South Africa’s third largest city. While I was there, I started a partnership to bring students on both sides of the Atlantic a little closer.

UKZN is like another home for me. In 2007, I was invited to teach a graduate course there, and at the same time, I spent a semester observing and interviewing students taking remedial courses as part of the research for my Ph.D. My goal was to get a better understanding of the challenges college students face when they take English courses, so that I could become a more effective teacher. Last February, I returned to UKZN and I spent a week with 25 South African students taking remedial writing courses. Together with their instructor, Professor Veena Lutchman, I ran a workshop to help them write essays about the way they empowered themselves in their lives.

The first thing we did was reading some of the amazing personal stories my BCC students wrote in Fall 2009. Writing about my own experiences allowed the students to see the common threads in common: students’ ability to overcome challenges and to transform their lives for the better. For example, one of these stories was written by a young woman who was diagnosed with bone cancer when she was 8; her leg was amputated when she was 10. Despite all this, she has been able to live a fulfilling and successful life and to be a role model to many people who met her. Another story was written by a boy who was born in a small village in Ghana, where there was not much, other than huts and farmland. Because his father was a polygamist, his mother rejected him, so he grew up with a foster mother in a family that did not value education. Nevertheless, he worked really hard to do well in school, and with the help of some missionaries, he was admitted to a very competitive college in Ghana before he emigrated to the United States. He is now an exemplary student at Bronx Community College who inspires other students with his talent and determination.

As I expected, students in South Africa were moved by these stories, and after we had a discussion of the theme of empowerment, they felt ready to write their own. Professor Lutchman and I guided them through the writing process with a series of activities. We first asked students to jot down some notes about all the difficulties they had to overcome to be where they are today in life. Then we paired them up, encouraged them to share ideas and to start writing a first draft. I made myself available for consultations after class and the following day. Two days later, we paired students up once again. We asked them to read their stories to each other and give feedback. Then, a few volunteers read their stories to the rest of the class.

It is very difficult, even for an English professor, to express how moved, inspired, and humbled we all felt by the stories that were shared that day. I will not even try to tell you what sort of challenges some of these students had to go through to survive and to be admitted to a prestigious university in South Africa. Instead, I will let these stories speak for themselves through The Communicator. So look for them in the next issue. I have no doubt that you will also feel moved and inspired. And who knows? Maybe you will also want to write and submit your own story of empowerment.

This is exactly what I am hoping to achieve with this partnership: students inspiring each other with their stories, realizing how much they have already achieved and how much they can transform their lives with the education they are receiving.

As part of this partnership, every student in the learning community cluster with Professor [Julie] Bolt (English 02), Professor [Georgene] Osborne (RDL 02), and Professor [Melissa] Gonzales (OCD 01), will correspond with one of the South African students I met last February and exchange a personal essay about his/her personal empowerment. My hope is that with time, this partnership will grow by involving more classes. I also dream that one day, this partnership will make it possible for an outstanding BCC student to study in South Africa for a semester and vice-versa. This is just a dream for now, but as so many students’ stories prove, there is a lot we can do to make our dreams come true.

---

Let’s talk about Swiper, an aggressive Silver Lamanh chicken in my flock of now 15-week-old pullets who earned the nickname the old fashioned way – by swiping. Anything fed to the flock from the first day they arrived would eventually wind up in the tight grip of the mostly white Swiper’s beak. Swiper moves fluidly, legs in constant motion while the body floats above, using quick changes in direction and 360s to avoid the hungry pecks of the rest of the flock. To Swiper, it came easy – the bird changes in direction and 360s to avoid the hungry pecks when the time comes. For now, I will enjoy Swiper and the flock progressed, and the treats grew larger and tastier, Swiper continued to claim more than his share. I’ve fed the birds baked salmon, meal worms, night crawlers, red wigglers, wax worms, and even fruit. Swiper has been well taken care of and, once the flock was moved outdoors, the swiping continued. It turns out there were plenty of insects, worms and snakes for them to have – which saves me from running to the pet store and paying for the stuff. So, with my help, Swiper has continued his swiping ways, following me around and darted and danced around the 25 foot by 8 foot run, galping down the snake as fast as possible. I was proud of Swiper – it was my hope from the start that the hens would become successful rulers in the yard for the best possible natural diet as G-d intended. It was a beautiful sunny day and all the sleepless nights I spent caring for and raising my flock were worth it – they were becoming self sufficient.

Early the next morning, I let the flock out, and Swiper ran to the far end of the run and did something unusual. Standing tall and erect, Swiper began flapping white wings sturdily against a puffed out chest and let loose a cough – a dry puff of a sound. I wondered if the snake had made Swiper sick – maybe he ate too much? Then Swiper flapped and coughed again and again and then I realized what I was witnessing – Swiper’s first crown. Swiper was not a hen. Swiper is a rooster. His crown is louder now and he’s a healthy bird so it will only get louder. It’s an amazing cat deterrent as they seem to think Swiper is some kind of a dog, and cats scatter when he lets out a cockle doodle doo. I want to keep him for as long as possible – he’s really become my “lead” dog in the flock and I am worried that a neighbor will complain and either animal control or the police will force me to remove Swiper from the flock. It’s inevitable and I’ll deal with it when the time comes. For now, I will enjoy Swiper and the protection he provides the flock.

---

**FREE CONCERT!**

Orchestra of the Bronx

Sunday, June 6, 2010 at 3 pm

Lovinger Theatre, Lehman College

Tchaikovsky, Symphony #6,
“Pathetique”

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.2

MAXIM PAKHOMOV, piano

Admission Free, no tickets required.
For information please call:

(718) 365-4209
You Can Transfer To Iona College.

- Over 40 majors and minors taught by professors, never teaching assistants
- Successful alumni
- Fantastic internships
- Scenic suburban campus just 20 minutes from midtown Manhattan
- Dozens of campus clubs and activities
- State-of-the-art athletics center
- New student union
- Study abroad opportunities
- 21 NCAA Division I (MAAC) athletic teams
- Earn a degree that matters

Join A Club

Come spend a day or schedule a campus visit. To speak to an admissions counselor call (800) 231-IONA or visit us online at iona.edu.

IONA COLLEGE • 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10801

Follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/ionacollege)
Poetry Corner

Portrait of the Road
By Beatriz Ramirez

Left or Right
Wandering
Any which way is worthy of wondering Careening corners and careening cinder blocks Stretching so far, so far, so wide, to expand my grasp of all I can find Contorting correctly, carefully calming Uncomfortably posed, deformed demeanor of twisted bones In the hearts of holy hearts
Those unaware and complete in their lives A green mind that follows dancing paper Get Low, Get Low, to the lowest point Sprouting colors from my emotional seasons Shred my skin to sooth the scenery Free from implications of your social storm With contemplation through the concrete Tasting the tart sun Breathing blue skies Exhaling dark clouds Deeper to fathom To eat
To drink
To feel
Or not feel
It’s cold
But it’s home
Safely sedentary in soil Sinking softly Firmly Foundation is forged

Return To Sender
By Ibrahim Siddiq aka P.O.E.T

I'm writing you a letter that I know you’ll never receive expressing my sorrow is a goal I'll never achieve And even if I could I wouldn't know where to begin Because where ever I start it hurts my heart Knowing there’s an end
If I had the opportunity to convey my regret, I wouldn’t know how She was my girlfriend at the time, but you know that by now She and I had been through everything we had history I didn’t know anything about you, what intrigued me was your mystery I swore she was the one I would marry but at that point we weren’t happy It's weird but I was somewhat relieved when our situation had risen Because there was something missing At the time I felt confined, there was a lot on my mind I needed to briefly break out and you seemed like the perfect escape route I remember the day she found out Our relationship, once open and honest was then covered in lies The situation was the main cause for our demise And although she said she didn’t blame me… I could see it in her eyes She tried to make excuses and give me a way out The truth is I wanted you both, but even then I knew that wouldn’t play out So I had to either choose you or lose you And I knew once I let you go I could never get you back I live every moment of my life with that fact I tried to epitomize your existence but was met with resistance Because I could never contain your worth with any set of words my brain could ever birth And it hurts to know I couldn’t give you what you deserved I wish I could go back and change every wrong second, every minute and every hour It’s like an unbloomed flower, never to be seen or felt Our love, a flower never to be smelled I often wonder about how it would’ve been... about how it could be My girl, she meant the world to me But for you, I would have gave up the world you see And even though we parted before a relationship could even be started I love you with all my heart and that you can trust
Love,
Your father who never was

Ode to Ahmed
By Saba Sarwar

If you combine the smell of the roses, Falling of the rain drops, Countless leaves on the tree, Forest fall of all animals singing with joy, Freedom of the birds, Sweetness of chocolates, Brightness of the sunny day, Smiles of the moon, Twinkle of stars, Waves racing on ocean, Shivers within my body, Priceless pearls, They express my love for you, And remind me of you, Only you, yes the beloved of the Most Gracious, Ahmed.

Note: Ahmed is one of the about 200 names/attributes that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) is known by in Islamic literature.

Soon & Very Soon
By Bill Murray

(POEM INSPIRED BY ANDRAE CRUCH AND DEDICATED TO REGINA SMITH AND JIM SHEREHAN)
Friday, July 10, 2009

Somebody sang
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
Undeniably and assuredly We are going to see the King
My God loves without fail So shout a song of praise for him!
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
We are a witness, his missionaries and pupils We’re devil dodging Lucifer with scruples
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King" So sing a joyful hymn for Him!
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
The Lord of lords, The Son of Man, The Prince of Peace And by whom we were saved upon his decease Somebody sang
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
Undeniably and assuredly He returned to life after that last supper, in Easter Undeniably and assuredly His Holy ghost crossed the threshold of this ether "Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
My God is the morning star, my dove of afar Undeniable and assuredly
"No more crying there... no more dying there, we are going to see the King"
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
So say “Amazing Grace!” for he has brought me Undeniable and assuredly
"No more crying there... no more dying there, we are going to see the King"
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"
Angels will trumpet seven in court of conscience, on the day of reckoning In heaven’s tribunal of penance we are going to see the King
"Zakiel saw the chariot, a wheel in the middle of a wheel True and just are his bowl judgments, true and just are our fates sealed
Take him on faith, he loves every living thing!
"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King"

Poem One
By Robert Josman

Stars above hear my song For only an angel could I have waited so long An angel that is like the snow upon the hill Dying cold and still Waiting for a chance to make the world warm and soft again I can only hope that this angel knows that with her beauty to look upon my heart and soul could never die because her beauty is the reason that spring is warm and soft I can only hope that this angel of spring will choose to provit the world with me

Poem Two
By Robert Josman

The nursery rhyme has changed compulsion rules Mary’s little lambs are now raised by wolves A voyeur with wings flashes a cure She knows of forbidden things and they are lonely in their harem They ensn her ways seven deadly sins She could seize the day, she could seize the hour Her ideas need no explanation, her expressions need no tales For her beauty lives from within

A Common Denial
By Erwin Fernandez

It is let known to us enough So that we feel as if enough we know But not enough
So that we feel as if enough we know It is let known to us enough
But deciding and acting collectively
In times of uncertainty
In thinking individually
But deciding and acting collectively

The Communicator – May 12, 2010

Poetry Corner

It Takes a Mistake
By Erwin Fernandez

Our Perfection is our imperfection It is a gift to be wrong For mistakes to make us strong Within US, Ignorance must belong

1 + 1 = 2 + 2 = 4 ...
By Erwin Fernandez

In times of uncertainty
In thinking individually
But deciding and acting collectively
For the Love of Thee
By Muhammad Jalloh

Once upon a heavy heart,
When love beckonests, Shans idle rests,
And echoes to be heard.

There lived a bearded chap,
Who dreamed of a maiden in a flowing cap,
Flowing down her bosom like a heavenly tap,
Who transported his mind in an ambiguous wrap.

Like the constellations of heaven was her face,
Which left lightning lamps in her trace.
To her he did quill without menace,
On a French papirus to seek her grace:

For the Love of Thee and thine for me,
For the sake of Him who planted thy soul in the heart of me.
Hold my heart in bondage, I prithee,
In bondage to thy love for the sake of we.

I prithee to tell, of generations come and gone,
Who makes thee frown and smile and fine,
To tell who claims thy pearly mine,
Or retrace my hearty strides when I lose my ways.

I beseech thee not to shed a tear on my shroud,
Who claims thy heart without being irate.
I prithee, tell if I am thy loving pirate,
To whom belongests the warmth of thy mind,
And for whom was borne the message of thy dove.

I prithee, tell thy tale of love,
Who makes thy heart skip a beat,
Like a hearty tide on a summer Nile,
I prithee tell who makes thee cry,
Smiles of love stretching for a mile.

I prithee to tell, of generations come and gone,
In bondage to thy love for the sake of we.
Me,
For the sake of Him who planted thy soul in the heart of we,
For the love of we and the heavenly scores,
By all, high and low, near and dear.

Thy love for me or stolen stare,
Let it be witnessed by the birds of the air,
By every clown, scribe, priest or nerd.
And let what thy felt for me be loud and heard,
I prithee, from the gallows, free my bleeding heart,
To her he did quill without menace,
On a French papirus to seek her grace:

For the Love of Thee and thine for me,
For the sake of Him who planted thy soul in the heart of me.
Hold my heart in bondage, I prithee,
In bondage to thy love for the sake of we.

I prithee to tell, of generations come and gone,
Who makes thee frown and smile and fine,
To tell who claims thy pearly mine,
Or retrace my hearty strides when I lose my ways.

I beseech thee not to shed a tear on my shroud,
Who claims thy heart without being irate.
I prithee, tell if I am thy loving pirate,
To whom belongests the warmth of thy mind,
And for whom was borne the message of thy dove.

I prithee, tell thy tale of love,
Who makes thy heart skip a beat,
Like a hearty tide on a summer Nile,
I prithee tell who makes thee cry,
Smiles of love stretching for a mile.

I prithee to tell, of generations come and gone,
In bondage to thy love for the sake of we.

In bondage to thy love for the sake of we.

With much gratitude,
Eva Joyce
Global Citizen
The Last Day of Judas Iscariot, directed by Professor John Socas, was a play based on Judas, one of Jesus’ twelve apostles, who betrayed Jesus for a bribe. The play begins with a young lady who speaks about her child, whom she was unable to bury. The scene changes and the audience is taken to a court room, where Judas’ trial is taking place. Cunningham is Judas’ lawyer who is defending her client against those that are accusing him of betraying Jesus. The opposing lawyer, El Fayounny, is accusing Judas of being a traitor, which deserves to be in eternal damnation. Throughout the play, the audience gets a background of the story of Judas Iscariot and his role in Jesus’ life. There is a scene in which Judas has a conversation with Jesus, filled with repent, Judas asks Jesus why he was unable to forgive him, when he had forgiven others and had given his life for them as well. He recognizes having made a mistake and angrily demands to know why he could not be forgiven. The play ends with Judas’ trial coming to an end and being found guilty. Personally, I believe that the acting was good; however, the context of the play was way too explicit and unnecessary. Any Christian spectator would have taken this play to be blasphemous. I don’t mean to come out conceited or arrogant, but the play was way too ‘ghetto’ for my liking. Perhaps they could have lowered the ‘ghettiness’ down a notch. What struck me the most was the use of foul language, curse after curse. It definitely did not make the play any better. Two of the actors that stood out the most were Langston Belton who portrayed the Devil and Johnathan Aviles who interpreted the lawyer. Amongst them were other good actors who played their part well. One of the scenes, which I thought was kind of crappy, though, was that of the angel, who was portrayed by a young woman. I don’t know what made her part the worse, the cursing, the “ghettiness,” or maybe just the combination of both that made me squirm in my seat with annoyance. One of the best scenes, however, was that of the Devil with Judas who was acted by Keisean Dasser. Regardless of the curses, which by now I was immune to, the combination of both that made me squirm in my seat with annoyance.

My Friday Night...You Be the Judge
By Carmela Perez

The play, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, is a demanding play that combines drama, comedy, history, satire and philosophy. The BCC Theatre Workshop has risen to the challenge and produced a memorable experience for everyone in the audience. Congratulations to all.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot was directed by John Socas; Assistant Director: Samantha Day; Stage Manager: Langston Belton; Crew: William Crespo; Script Editing/Dramaturgy: Laurence Bonten; Costume Design: Shawn Alexandre; Technical Assistance: Rex Butt; Film Crew and Editing: Phillip Thompson, Shawn Alexandre, Fernando Gil.

Join
THE COMMUNICATOR
Team!
Cover campus news events
Explore local, state, national and global stories
Put your finger on the pulse of the BCC community.
THE COMMUNICATOR
is looking for Writers, Photographers, Advertising representatives
Become part of our time, and join
THE COMMUNICATOR
today!
Work study and Independent study may be available. Contact us at 718.289.5314 to schedule an appointment.
Keep up your reading and critical thinking skills over the long summer break. Here are some suggestions from the BCC faculty.

**Knots** (2007) by Nuruddin Farah
Set in Mogdishou, the war-torn capital city of lawless Somalia, the novel is about courage and hope of common people who seem to enjoy life against all odds.

**Women of Sand and Myrrh** (1992) by Hanan Al-Shaykh
These are four intertwined narratives from women in a wealthy Arab desert country. All of the characters live in luxury and privilege but are denied the very basic freedom of self-expression.

**So Long a Letter** (1989) by Miriam Ba
This long letter is written by a widow, Ramatoulaye, to her friend, over the mandatory forty-day mourning period following the death of a husband. Both women married for love and had happy, productive marriages; both were educated and had work they loved. During their lives, both of these women’s husbands chose to take a second wife - and each woman then made a different choice.

**Waiting** (2000) by Ha Jin
Lin Kong is a Chinese army doctor trapped in an arranged marriage that embarrasses and repels him. (Shuyu has country ways, a withered face, and most humiliating of all, bound feet.) Nevertheless, he’s content with his tidy military life, at least until he falls in love with Manna, a nurse at his hospital. Regulations forbid an army officer to divorce without his wife’s consent—until 18 years have passed, that is, after which he is free to marry again. So, year after year Lin asks his wife for his freedom, and year after year he returns from the provincial courthouse: still married, still unable to consummate his relationship with Manna.

**God’s Bits of Wood** (1996) by Sembene Ousmane
This story enters on a railroad strike by Negro workers in and around Dakar. The plot revolves around the battle that ensues along racial lines and the long-lasting effects on all those involved once the strike ends.

**Native Speaker** (1996) by Chang Rae Lee
This book recounts a young Korean-American’s struggle to conjoin the fragments of his personality in culturally diverse New York City.

**Stolen Lives** (2001) by Malika Oufkir
Oufkir tells of the 20-year imprisonment of her upper-class Moroccan family following a 1972 coup attempt against King Hassan II by her father, a close military aide.

**Queen Victoria** (1921) by Lytton Strachey
Strachey’s classic biography offers a fascinating portrait of the long-reigning Queen of England and Empress of the British Empire whose reign spanned the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

The author traces how the cultural, social, and political practices of the Indians of the Americas transformed the way life is lived throughout the world.

**The Custom of the Country** (1913) by Edith Wharton
Flowing between the stifling social seasons of New York and Paris society, *The Custom of the Country* is Wharton’s powerful dark satire of the beautiful, amoral Undine Spragg. Since her gender and class deny her an independent existence, she uses marriage with cunning and chilling skill to achieve the life she thinks she deserves.
The argument is whether or not the cause of juvenile gang violence derives as a result of genetic predispositions or environmental influences. Scores of scientists, scholars, psychologists and other behavioral experts line up on either side of the issue. A case can be made and supported for both views. I believe the scale tips in favor of environmental influences. All humans have the capacity for violence; the majority of us have it under control. When confronted with a volatile situation, it may seem to look for the violent solution to our disputes. We think of violence as the last resort and not the first option. We, as a species, tend to be “learners” we are not born knowing everything. If anything, the opposite is probably true. Violence is a learned behavior; there are myriad influences for this type of behavior. In the following passages, I intend to discuss five that are consistent contributors: economic factors, permissive families, unstable neighborhoods, delinquent peer groups and the mass media.

Most juveniles learn how be violent through environmental factors. Violent behavior and crime has many faces, which usually depend upon who are occupying the bottom rung of the economic ladder. Ethnic groups such as the Irish, Italians and Jews at one time resided in pockets of depressed neighborhoods. Each group displayed a tremendous capacity for violence and criminal behavior. Turf wars over drugs, gambling, prostitution, and other criminal enterprises were common in inner city neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were infested by drugs, guns, and a sense of hopelessness. What we are faced with is a dangerous situation. Inner city role models in these deprived neighborhoods are drugs dealers, pimps and gang bangers. They’re the ones driving expensive cars, living in luxury apartments, and possessing huge (tax-free) bankrolls. That’s a powerful image to an impressionable teenager living in poverty. His only alternative is to stay in school, work hard, and maybe, if he’s lucky, he can avoid the pitfalls associated with the ghetto. According to Delbert S. Elliot, author of “Environmental Factors Contribute to Juvenile Crime and Violence,” “ineffective parenting, violent schools, high drop out rates, high adolescent pregnancies rates, substance abuse and high unemployment rates are all concentrated in such neighborhoods” (3).

Adolescents of today are dealing with issues that are unique to their generation. They live in the super city role models in these deprived neighborhoods. Each group displayed a tremendous capacity for violence and criminal behavior. Turf wars over drugs, gambling, prostitution, and other criminal enterprises were common in inner city neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were infested by drugs, guns, and a sense of hopelessness. What we are faced with is a dangerous situation. Inner city role models in these deprived neighborhoods are drugs dealers, pimps and gang bangers. They’re the ones driving expensive cars, living in luxury apartments, and possessing huge (tax-free) bankrolls. That’s a powerful image to an impressionable teenager living in poverty. His only alternative is to stay in school, work hard, and maybe, if he’s lucky, he can avoid the pitfalls associated with the ghetto. According to Delbert S. Elliot, author of “Environmental Factors Contribute to Juvenile Crime and Violence,” “ineffective parenting, violent schools, high drop out rates, high adolescent pregnancies rates, substance abuse and high unemployment rates are all concentrated in such neighborhoods” (3).

Adolescents of today are dealing with issues that are unique to their generation. They live in the super city role models in these deprived neighborhoods. Each group displayed a tremendous capacity for violence and criminal behavior. Furthermore, Wasserman’s article continued to say that, “Violent programs on television lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch those programs” (Barbour 1). The not-so-subliminal method is, if one needs money, use violence, if one has a dispute, use deadly violence, and on and on goes the list. Furthermore, an article by Charles S. Clark titled “TV Violence” pointed out that, “The child who has been watching programs with primarily aggressive content comes away with the impression that the world is a jungle fraught with threats of all kinds, and the only way to survive is to be on the attack” (2).

I believe that we are already seeing the effects of juvenile gang violence all across the nation. For instance, the tragedy of the school that has had the greatest number of deaths at “Columbine” is a perfect example. As author Paul Klite pointed out in his article “The Government Should Restrain News Coverage of Violence and Crime,” “Many fingerprints are on the proverbial trigger—ineffective parenting; the availability of guns; alienation of youth; mental illness, school security, manipulative violence in film, video games, television, the internet and pop music.” (1). The mere fact that children that have been able to pass metal detectors on their way to class is a clear indicator that juvenile violence has become a major concern. As Delbert S. Elliot illustrated, “Between 1985 and 1983 the firearms-related homicide rate for adolescents has increased over 150% and firearms now account for nearly three-fourths of all homicides of young black men. Surveys estimate that 270,000 guns are taken to school each day” (4).

Some researchers firmly believe that the predisposition argument is more convincing. Most of the Judeo–Islamic tradition has been in the area of IQ. To paraphrase an excerpt from an article by Dr. Anthony Walsh titled “Genetic and Environmental Explanations of Juvenile Violence in Advantaged and Disadvantaged Environments” bio-researchers do not ignore the ramifications of the environment, nor do they assert the presence of “crime genes” (188). The biosocial view of violence recognizes the mutually influential and interactive effect of the biological and the social in producing human behavior (Walsh 188). Likewise, Dr. Walsh’s article further explained that biosocial researchers “are approximately three times more common than the environmental component in accounting for variance in delinquent peer association and delinquency itself” (Walsh 188). In addition, an article written by David Wasserman titled “Is There Value in Identifying Individual Genetic Predisposition to Violence” further acknowledged that, “In 1993, researchers did find a marker, then a gene, associated with violence and aggression, in the male members of a Dutch family. This was a very dangerous and somewhat awkward finding: it looked like the kind of ‘major crime’ gene that researchers had not been expecting to discover” (25). Furthermore, Wasserman’s article continued to say that, “while the family studied was atypical in several relevant respects, the study had enormous impact, in part because the affected genes was known [sic] to produce a protein, Preprodopamine, which is involved in metabolism of serotonin, a neurotransmitter thought to play a role in…mediating genes and behavior” (26). In contrast, most of the evidence previously mentioned in this essay clearly demonstrates that there is an ample volume of data pointing in the direction of environmental influences in comparison to those of the genetic predisposition argument. For example, the same article by David Wasserman, paradoxically expressed that, “some critics argue from an evolutionary perspective that while all human beings, or all human males, may well have a bias in their genetic propensities for violent behavior, individual differences in the strength of those propensities are unlikely to have a genetic source” (25).

In the final analysis, the argument, (nature vs. nurture) is still raging. There is supportive data for both sides of the issue. However, the majority of evidence points towards environmental influences, despite the fact that some researchers assert that the genetic predisposition argument has more validity. More importantly, additional studies need to be conducted in order to establish conclusively that genetics to some degree are responsible for juvenile violence. Science and technology are opening new windows of information into the world of genetics. While this may be true, it is still too early to rely on current findings. We are taught to behave according to values and beliefs handed down through parenting, religion and social, societal mores and decorum. It can be easily argued that our entire lives, from the cradle to the grave, are a learning experience. We are taught how to eat, act, crawl, and walk before we utter our first words in life. Furthermore, I believe we are in a transitional phase, we as a society, need to start looking at new ways of preventing juvenile exposure to violence. It is evident that we have played a significant role in this deteriorating drama. There are principles we should all stand for as a society. Unfortunately, it is one of the things we haven’t quite learned yet. There will be a time when genetics, combined with environmental regulations, play a role in curbing violence, but we as a nation are not there yet. Scientific developments could offer some promising changes in the future, but we still have a long way to go in the interim, we are a species of “learners” and we always will be.

Works Cited


