

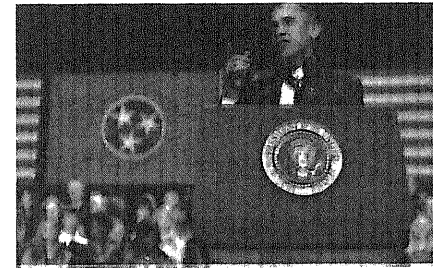
THE BANNER

The Official Newspaper of the College of Staten Island

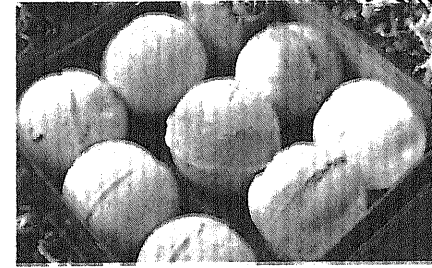
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February 10, 2015

Issue # 11



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The Fight for a Long and Overdue Raise

CUNY Faculty Union and Chancellor Push for Budget Increase



Members of Professional Staff Congress gathering in front of the pavillion on May Day 2012

BY CLIFFORD MICHEL

CUNY Chancellor James Milliken vouched for university faculty on February 10 when providing testimony to the New York State Legislature in Albany. Milliken requested to increase CUNY's budget by \$221.7 million dollars to fund various initiatives, most notably was his call for the state to budget retroactive pay for CUNY faculty and staff.

The Professional Staff Congress, a union that represents over 25,000 faculty and staff, has worked without a contract since October of 2010. This is largely due to former Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who avoided settling union contracts that expired from 2006 to 2010.

"Our ability to attract and retain talented faculty is compromised by our inability today to reach a collective bargaining agreement," said Milliken. "We cannot make an agreement we cannot pay for. It is essential we get state support for an agreement that will be in alignment with those of other state

"No contract, no peace."

unions, including retroactive increases that will recognize the commitment our faculty and staff have made over the last six years."

PSC leaders also provided testimony to state legislature, showing unity in a year of high tension between the union and administration.

The largest demonstration by far was in late September during the university's Board of Trustees' first meeting of the academic year. Nearly a 1,000 union members marched outside of Baruch College, setting the tone between the two bodies for the year.

In late January union members left a shortened Board of Trustees meeting chanting: "no contract, no peace."

Barbara Bowen, PSC-CUNY President,

wrote a scathing letter to CUNY administration on January 26 and accused the university's brass for taking credit of CUNY's widely regarded achievements, while failing to negotiate a contract with its professors.

"During the more than five years since our last raise, costs in New York City have soared, CUNY enrollment has grown, salaries at competing institutions have kept pace with inflation, and CUNY faculty and staff have been required to take on bigger workloads as initiatives by college presidents and CUNY administration proliferate," Bowen wrote. "We doubt that any of you would work at your positions for five years without a raise, and you clearly did not expect a chancellor to work at the pay rate of 2009."

Bowen, who demanded that a contract be offered by the end of the Fall semester, told administration that the union is prepared to escalate their demonstrations.

"We are prepared to escalate our cam-

Continued on Page 4

Professor Makes Impact on a Growing Trend

EMBRACING THE SHARING ECONOMY

BY AHMED AHMED

Barbers, tutors, ladders, chefs, DJ's, and tools are just some of the few advertisements listed on Rentah.com, a new sharing economy based company founded by geography professor Anup Desai in 2013.

With its headquarters located in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, Rentah hopes to alter the way people do business with one another.

"A Peer to peer marketplace where people share their products is our objective," said Desai. "We want to be the newer more sophisticated Craigslist."

Rentah's public launch in 2014 was well received, with hundreds of users signing up, and thousands of items being made rental available in the NYC area.

Defined as tech-start up far from Silicon Valley, Rentah has obtained the attention of many local radio stations, and newspapers.

"It's a great idea," said President of the Entrepreneurship Club David Santos, "Many people have so many items that they don't use laying around which they could definitely profit off."

LejDet, Rentah's sister company in Aarhus, Denmark has been very successful in connecting users with one another in sharing goods across Europe. Serving a small population of 300,000, LejDet website lists over a half million rental items available to neighboring cities and countries.

"Everyone has a skill or product that is not utilized on a daily basis," said Desai. "Whether you're a chef or straight A student, someone out there is willing to pay for your services."

Financial analysts have attribute the rise of the sharing economy to the global economic recession. It has paved the way for entrepreneurs to develop alternative marketplaces where individuals can make money through other channels.

Sharing Economy companies like Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb have become household names in recent years by banking off the personal profit motive. Lyft and Uber compa-

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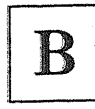
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COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND CAMPUS MAP

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
College of Staten Island

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North Campus

- Astronomical Observatory 6N
- Business School of Campus Center 3N
- Campus Center 10
- Campus Services 10
- Food Center/Plant 1M
- Children's Center 2P
- Computer Science 14
- Dolphin Cove Youth Center 14-21
- Engineering Science and Physics 2N
- Engineering Technologies 2N
- History March Hall 2N
- Physical Therapy 2N
- Political Science/Economics 2N
- Psychology March Hall 2N
- Sports and Recreation Center 1P
- Future Use 2M

South Campus

- Biology 2S
- Chemistry 2S
- Education School of 2S
- English 2S
- Foreign Languages 2S
- Mathematics 2S
- Media Culture 2S
- Nursing March Hall 2S
- Performing and Creative Arts 1P
- Psychology 2S
- Social Work 1L
- Sociology and Anthropology 2S
- World Languages and Literatures 2S

Administration Loop

- Center for the Arts 1P
- North Administration 2A
- South Administration 1A
- West Administration 3A

College of Staten Island

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BANNER POLITICS

An Analysis of the President's Plan for a Free College Education Grants and Partnerships Offering Two Free Years of College a Key Feature

BY EDWARD ANGELL

During the State of the Union address in January, President Barack Obama laid the foundation for what he believed to be a plan that would help college students all over the country further their education. He proposed that college students attending city colleges will have the ability to obtain two years of free education through a series of increased government aid grants and partnerships with businesses across the country for specialized training as laid out on whitehouse.gov

President Obama drew on the policies of President Lyndon Johnson, known for his get-it-done style of governance, and of the early nineteenth century's Progressive Party to illustrate the need of supporting middle-class workers.

"We set up worker protections, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to protect ourselves from the harshest adversity. We gave our citizens schools and colleges, infrastructure and the internet—tools they needed to go as far as their effort will take them," Obama said. "...Middle-class economics means helping working families feel more secure in a world of constant change. That means helping folks afford childcare, college, health care, a home, and retirement."

The President has said that jobs that require at least an associates degree are projected to grow twice as fast as opposed to those which require only a high school education. This plan has been met with both optimism and also plenty of skepticism.

In an article written by the staff of The Economist, staffers examined the appeal to this proposal using her own struggles as a guideline for how much this could help middle to lower middle class students looking to further their education.

The articles cites a hard working CUNY student as the model of who President Obama wants to reach with this new program.

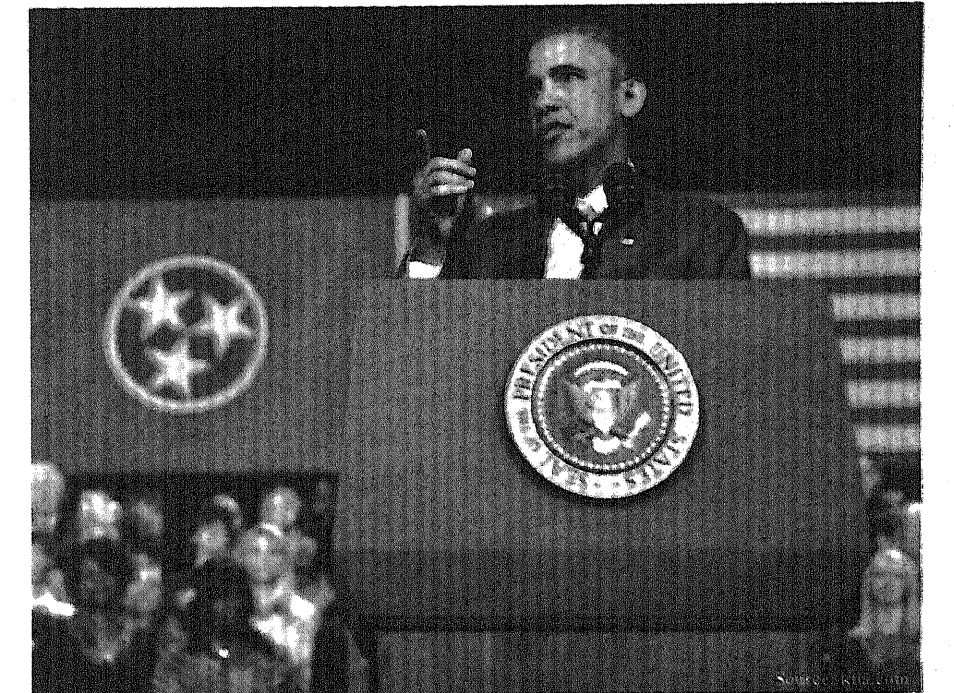
"Ashley Martinez studies accounting at LaGuardia Community College in New York.

She is also the mother of a toddler and worries about the cost of textbooks and daycare," the article states. "She is exactly the type of person Barack Obama is trying to help with a new proposal to make at least two years of community college free."

The article goes on to say how this plan is loosely based off the Tennessee Promise, which is a program available to students graduating from Tennessee high schools this year that help incoming college students alleviate the funds required for their education. The Tennessee Promise has drawn in almost 90 percent of the state of Tennessee's high school seniors, effectively double what the state had figured would apply.

A New York Times article written by Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Tamar Lewin discussed how this plan, while ambitious and would certainly benefit students across the country, may come off as an intimidating prospect for those in the Republican party who would be against the idea of spending the money required to make this a reality.

Now that the GOP controls both the Senate and the House of Representatives, conservative lawmakers have two years to prove to



bring U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate education committee. Alexander oversaw the creation of Tennessee's Promise, a program that pays for the tuition of all community college students.

financial aid as it stands today is too complex and overly complicated.

A bill could be passed in order to remedy this problem in the near future, making filing for financial aid a less tiresome process.

Stephanie Simon, a writer for Politico, starts off her article by detailing how much the plan would cost the United States altogether. A price tag of over \$60 billion dollars is allegedly required in order for this to become realistic. Simon also strengthens the argument made by many writers that congress will more than likely not approve this proposal due to not wanting to spend more money on federal programs.

It is no secret that American colleges are the most expensive in the world, many countries approach their citizen's advancement into higher learning in a variety of different ways. An article on distance-education.org written by Jennifer Williamson describes how other countries around the world approach college education.

Up until fairly recently, college was free in the United Kingdom. And while students native to the country are paying for their educations now, it is still nowhere near what we pay as students here in the United States.

Other countries like Sweden have a more sophisticated approach to their students' bills. Sweden allows both native and non-native students 12 semesters of free education, the rest of a student's education can be paid with student loans. This program sounds similar to what the president is trying to do here in the states with partially paying for student's education.

With the plan still being very rudimentary and in its fledgling stages there is still plenty of room for improvement assuming the plan even makes it far enough as long as congress doesn't immediately shoot down the proposal. The coming months will be very telling when it comes down to the fate of this program that practically all American students would love to see become a reality.

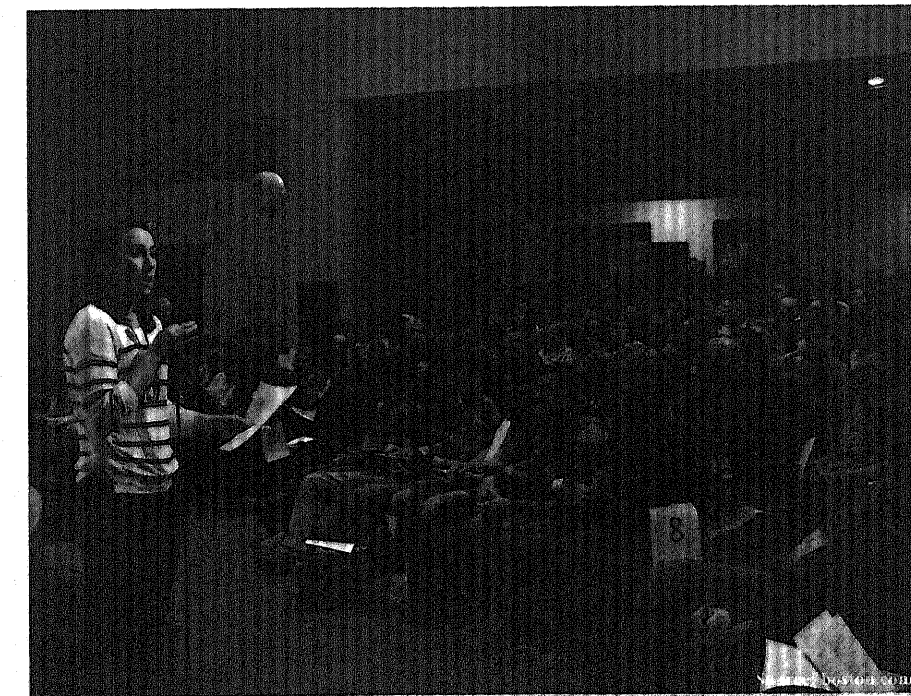
Additional reporting by Clifford Michel.

"The President has said that jobs that require at least an associates degree are projected to grow twice as fast as opposed to those which require only a high school education."

Americans that they can govern effectively. This will make legislators extremely nervous to cut any type of deal with democrats.

Now over a month since the President highlighted the plan in his speech, few Republicans have crossed the aisle in support of his plan.

The White House has surprisingly failed



4 **"Embracing the Sharing Economy"**
Continued from front page

gies allows users turn their personal vehicles into a limousine or taxi service.

In cities across the world from NYC to New Delhi, tens of thousands are utilizing an alternative unregulated transportation method, which has left local politicians in from many cities angry. They accuse Uber and Lyft of having lax regulations, while violating many city taxi rules.

Law-enforcement officials have warned participants to be cautious in entering unlicensed taxi drivers, as numerous crimes including rape and robbery have taken place.

Airbnb provides users a platform to rent out their apartments, homes, or villas to other people for a fee determined by them. Local officials are debating whether it is legally permissible to allow makeshift hotels in a space while under a contract or mortgage.

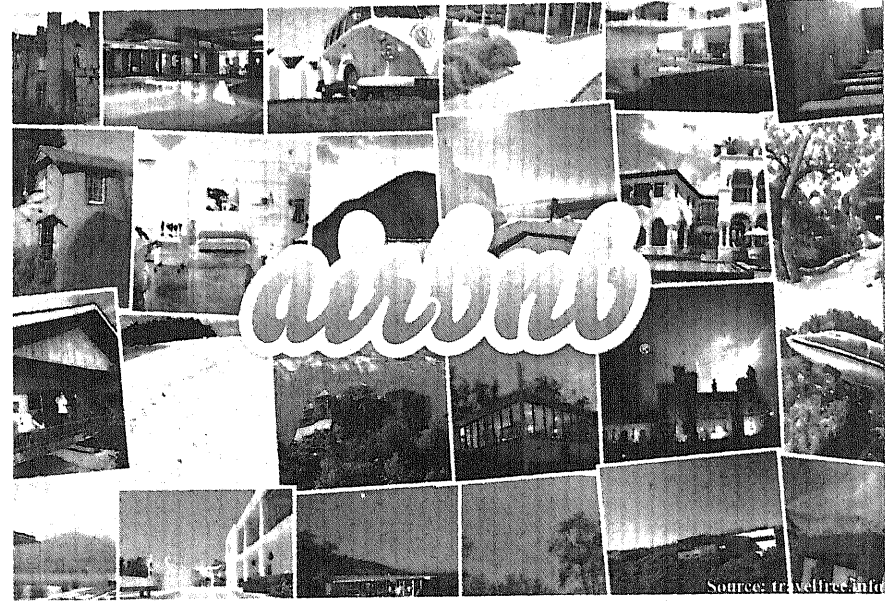
NYC Council members and Mayor Bill De Blasio fearful of the precedent set, are taking steps to ushering in regulatory measures against Airbnb.

"We have a strong enforcement apparatus to pursue complaints of illegal hotel activity," said Mayoral spokesman Wiley Norvell in a press conference. "When we have a bad actor putting people's safety at risk, we're going to go after them."

While they all battle in court to remain in service, profits from the sharing economy have soared above all expectations, generating over a billion dollars in revenue in 2014, providing many people valuable income in an age of stagnant wages, and an uncertain job market.

Rentah hopes to avoid the legal troubles its competitors have found themselves in by working with the city government in developing a sustainable business model.

"Our business stems from a genuine be-



Sharing Economy companies like Airbnb have become household names in recent years by banking off the personal profit motive

lief in the power of collaborative consumption, "said Desai. "Collaboration is integral to Rentah and we want to create as many re-

lationships with as many like-minded people and organizations as possible".

CSI Seeing Sharp Decrease in Professor Evaluations

Recent Change to Online-Based Forms a Cause

BY BRIANA DELBUONO

Data shows that CSI is seeing a significant decrease in email submissions for end of semester teacher evaluations by students.

Interim Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. Syed Rizvi, who has been working at the College of Staten Island since 1996, believes this is happening because students are not frequently using their CSI emails and therefore becoming locked out over a period of time.

"The accounts deactivate if students are inactive for 90 days" Dr. Rizvi said. "The problem occurs when we have a large number of accounts deactivated during the two week window, leaving many students without enough time to fix their accounts when the end of the semester grows near."

This is a growing problem for students and the evaluations are suffering because of it. "I haven't logged into my CSI email all semester," a student of CSI expressed. This is the case for many students at the college.

The evaluations can be done anytime within the two-week window before the end of the semester. "We encourage the students to use their CSI email account periodically especially during the two week window. We are working with OIT [Office of Information Technology] to resolve these issues. We want to unfreeze the frozen accounts beforehand."

Dr. Rizvi stated.

The evaluations were traditionally done on paper until a year ago, and was changed because of an initiative to go green and foster convenience. The college has decided to switch to an online, email-based medium.

"Everything's online because that's the advantage of modern technology. It saves time, saves paper, and helps us become more efficient and productive," the Interim Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness said.

Students completed the evaluations as opposed to 60-65 percent when the evaluations were still being done on paper," Dr. Rizvi stated.

This has become problematic because evaluations are very important to the college and affect both the students and professors in the long run. "We want students to complete the evaluations so we can see how the professors are doing" he said.

"We use evaluations for key decisions about instructors. Your feedback is taken very seriously. We use them regularly in re-

The college is aiming to introduce a pilot in which tablets would be provided in all classrooms and students would be able to take 15-20 minutes of class time to complete the evaluations online. This way, professors would be able to ensure that they are getting done, even though they are not mandatory.

"It would be just like the old system except now with tablets. We really do value your feedback. That would be a pilot that we plan to run next semester. I will be thrilled if we can do this for Spring, but if not then definitely for the Fall semester," Dr. Rizvi explained.

As an incentive to complete the surveys, last spring the college held a campaign called "Make Your Voice Heard" in which students who completed their evaluations were entered into a drawing where they could win either an iPad, the first prize, or a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Eleven people were able to win. "This gives the students incentive. The main thing is, it's a matter of telling a professor that they did or did not do a good job and if the course was helpful to them," he said.

"If you don't tell us how we are doing, we don't have an opportunity to improve. At the same time, if someone is doing a good job, students are able to tell him or her that he or she is doing well. I cannot overemphasize how important the evaluations are."

"If you don't tell us how we are doing, we don't have an opportunity to improve."

"Fighting for an Overdue Raise"
Continued from front page

paid this spring in every way necessary until a fair, progressive contract settlement is reached. A delay of more than five years by trustees who claim to have the best interests of the University at heart is unconscionable," Bowen concluded.

College of Staten Island professors have also been active in the struggle for a new contract.

"CUNY is very concerned about the fact that the city does not seem to be paying attention to at least some of the needs that the university has to sign the contract," Dr. Fred Naidler, CSI's Provost, told a representative of Cuomo's administration during a town hall meeting in early February. "It is very difficult to maintain a competitive faculty with the pay structure that we have."

Professors also placed a sign in the front

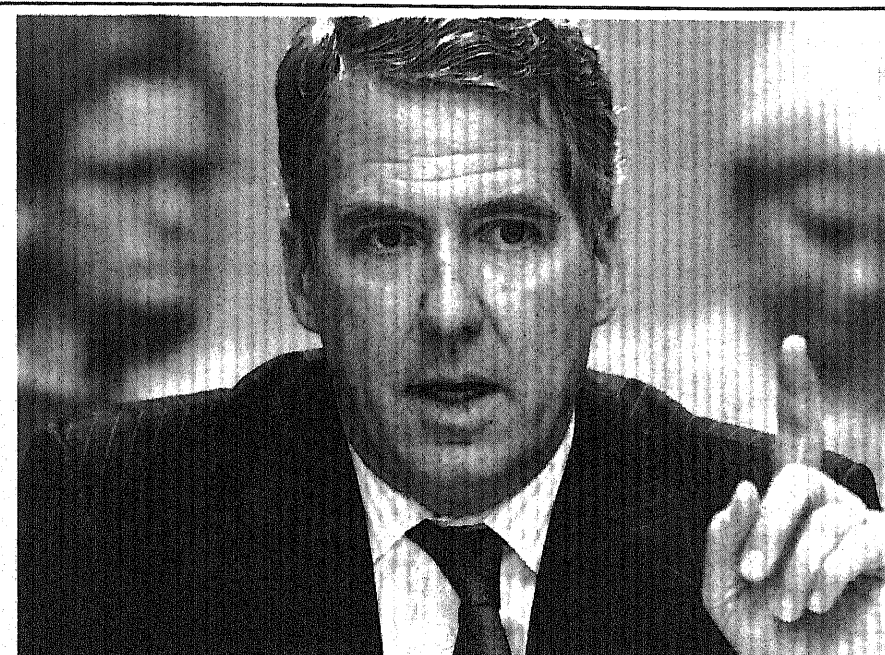
row from PSC-CUNY, which read "CUNY needs a raise!"

Other significant requests from CUNY included about \$54 million budgeting for 500 more full-time faculty to add to the university's 7,000 professors. Administration also asked for \$7 million to expand and improve its online class services.

Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio have been silent on the union negotiations and didn't mention it in the State of the State and State of the City address, respectively.

Cuomo announced his continued support for CUNY 2020, a competitive challenge grant for CUNY colleges.

de Blasio announced \$30 million to strengthen STEM programs at community colleges and a little over \$1 million for the Fatherhood Academy, a program that supports young fathers from the ages of 18 to 24.



If legislators include funding for wage increases, CUNY administrators are still responsible for negotiating a new contract.

The New York State Legislature is expected to adopt a budget in March and the fiscal year will begin in April.

5 **Fong's Hung Ga Celebrates Chinese New Year**

Kung Fu School Performs Lion Dance in Manhattan Parade

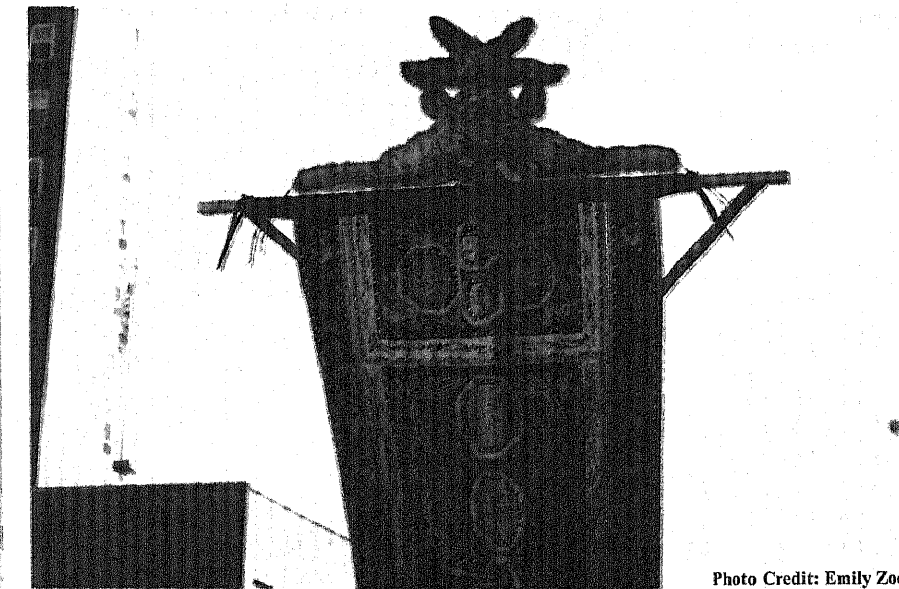
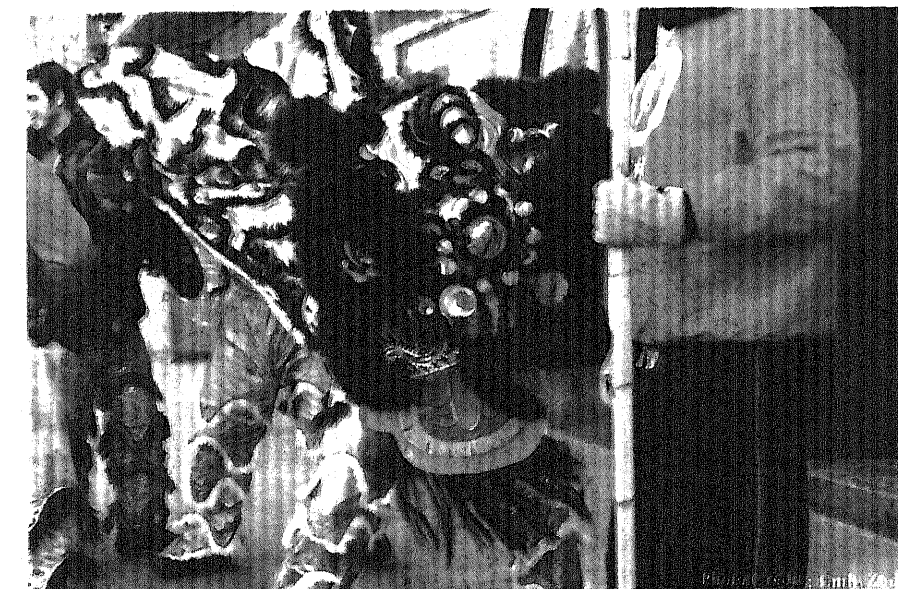
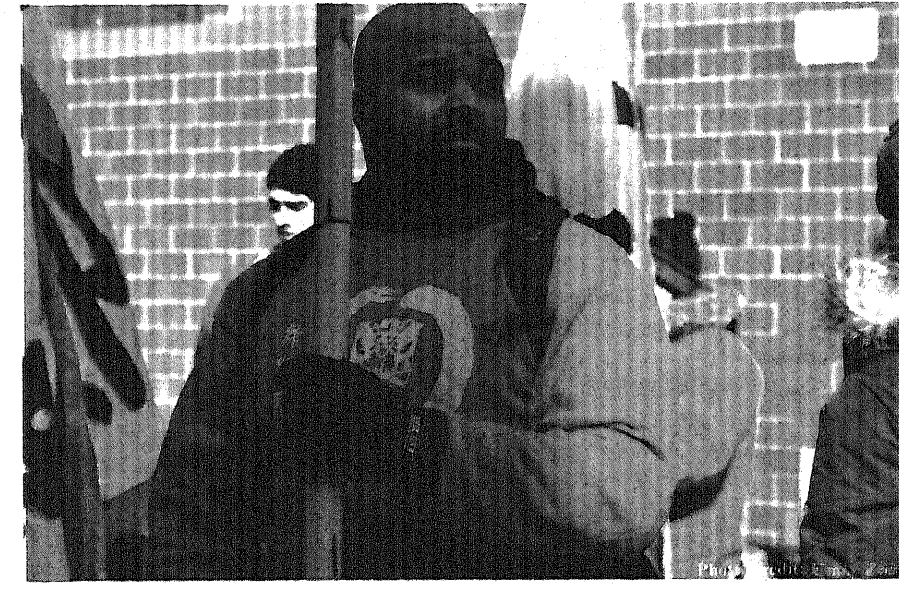


Photo Credit: Emily Zeda

BANNER LIFESTYLES

Cosmetics Line Creates Hottest Bath Time Trend

BY EMILY ZODA

LUSH Bath Bombs have been blowing up recently—literally. It's appealed to bath tub lovers everywhere. These balls of soap, coming in various colors and scents, are thrown into running water to create a tub of color.

Starting out as a mail order cosmetics business, LUSH became the company's official name to the first storefront in Poole, England in 1995.

Ever since their start, LUSH has opened international stores in Canada and the United States with the promise of pure and fragrant products for hair, skin, and more. Their products are supplied by two production kitchens in Canada.

Other companies such as Basin and Fortune Cookie Soap have also followed LUSH in the bath bomb trend.

Fortune Cookie Soap, from the Bath and Body's franchise, offer cute varieties of soap such as Munchies Bath Bomb shaped as a donut and Gelato bath bombs.

Pinterest users have even created recipes for their own bath bombs. "Often imitated but never duplicated, Bath Bombs are an original LUSH invention," according to their official website.

These bath bombs are featured in stores and on their website with quirky names and specialized ingredients to keep your skin healthy and smelling great.

Their bestselling bomb, Sex Bomb, was created for lovers in the tub, including jasmine, clary sage, and ylang ylang as aphrodisiac scents. Soya milk fizzes and dissolves in the tub and leaves the skin soft and smooth to create that special moment.

When tossed in hot water Sex Bomb

LUSH Bath Bombs Blast their Way to Popularity



turns the tub into a lagoon of pinks and purples. LUSH lists their ingredients to all their bath bomb products and offer descriptions of the natural ingredients they use.

Grapefruit oil, sea salt, seaweed, avocado, and extra virgin olive oil are merely a few of the many ingredients they use.

There's even an option to auto refresh your LUSH orders. They'll charge you every one to six months depending on your preference and send your favorite products right to your door.

Soya is made up of omegas and saturated fats. These act as antioxidants and conditions your skin and hair.

Coming in as the second bestseller is the more chaste bomb, is Twilight. There are stars and planets printed on the purple bomb, releasing a sweet fragrant mix of lavender and tonka absolute, an ingredient which is described on the LUSH website as "vanilla

saucier's cousin."

The lavender helps calm your muscles as well as your mind to ease your stresses.

Tonka is used to treat joint problems as well as act as an antispasmodic. At room temperature, tonka is known to smell like vanilla and is used in a variety of other LUSH products.

The hot water transforms this bath bomb into shades of the night sky from pink to purple to blue.

Here's a short guide illustrating how to create your own Bath Bomb experience, supplied by BrightNest:

You'll Need: 8 oz. of baking soda, 4 oz. of citric acid, 4 oz. of corn starch, 4 oz. of Epsom salts (make sure these are fine grained), ¼ tsp. of water, 2 tsp. essential oil, 2.5 tsp. almond oil (optional), a few drops of food coloring, round, plastic, snap together dome molds, a whisk, bowl and cup for mixing, and

If your bath bombs are a gift, wrap them in cellophane or tissue paper. To store them, keep them in a plastic, airtight container.

a fluffy towel.

First, choose your essential oils. You can go with floral scents like lavender or rosemary, or a citrus blend with lemon or grapefruit. Some other common essential oils used for bath bombs are peppermint, vanilla and chamomile.

Then, combine your dry ingredients. Dump all of your dry ingredients (citric acid, corn starch, Epsom salts and baking soda) into a big bowl and stir together with your whisk.

Once that's taken care of, combine wet ingredients. Place all of your wet ingredients—water, essential oil, almond oil and food coloring—into a cup and stir until well mixed.

After that, mix them together. Pour the wet ingredients into the bowl with the dry ingredients and stir them. The mixture should begin to clump together.

Pack the mixture into molds. Grab your plastic mold and pack the mixture into the first half of the mold. Pack it as tightly as you can! Then, do the same with the second half.

You're going to want to then press them together. Add some extra mixture on top of the second half and squeeze the molds together to create your sphere. Press firmly! Tip: If the mixture isn't packing well, place the ingredients back in the bowl and add a tiny amount of water. Be careful, though—too much water will ruin your bath bomb!

Lastly, let it dry. Wait a few minutes, and then carefully remove the bath bomb from the mold. Place them on wax paper on top of a fluffy towel. Let the bath bombs dry for at least one day before you use them!

Keep them in a plastic, airtight container.

Enjoy This Valentines Day on a Budget

Intimate Ideas Under \$30 That Won't Break Your Bank

BY BRIANA DELBUONO

With today's economy and Valentine's Day just around the corner, it stands to reason that many people will be staying in to avoid crowded restaurants and other pricey excursions. Do not fear—I have compiled a list of wallet-friendly activities that you and your significant other or some friends can do on this wallet-emptying holiday.

If you are willing to keep an open mind, and are not opposed to creepy crawlers, you and a loved one can spend a measly \$10 at The Bronx Zoo and give one of their 58,000 Madagascar Hissing Roaches a name! If you are willing to stretch your budget, you can even get a chocolate roach for \$25.

If six-legged creatures aren't your thing and you are running low on cash, don't worry, most of us are, you can head over to the almost two mile long Highline by fourteenth street in Manhattan and stargaze at night. How romantic! Just dress warmly and bring hot cocoa, of course.

Pick up a camera from your nearby convenience store for a Valentine's Day date that will only cost you \$20. You and your lover or friends can get together and walk around the city with a disposable camera and shoot

some cool pictures of yourselves and your surroundings. Don't forget to turn it around and get that Valentine's Day selfie!

For a more intimate and cozy date, snuggle up at your nearby Starbucks or Dunkin' Donuts and grab coffee. This date will cost you about \$15 at most. What better way to connect one-on-one with someone than over a steaming hot caramel macchiato?

If all else fails, have a wine tasting at your own home! Invite a few friends over and tell

"If you just don't have the funds this year, take advantage of these money saving date ideas."

them to each bring a different type of wine and taste them all. Pair the beverages with different types of cheeses and this night won't cost you more than \$30.

The Brooklyn Brewery has free tours that only cost \$10 on weekdays. Grab a couple friends and carpool into Brooklyn for this fun filled activity. Plus, there's beer involved! What's not to love?

This might be something for the free spirited couples but take your boyfriend or girlfriend to The Museum of Sex in Manhat-

tan on fifth Ave. With a \$20 admission fee, you can take part in many erotic exhibitions or just sit at their lounge and bar and get a nice buzz.

Get your freak on with their alcoholic aphrodisiac treatments or their sensual bath and body kit. This trip is pretty much guaranteed to ensure a romantic evening for you and your significant other.

Instead of paying \$60 or more on a couple's massage, try creating your own massage

atmosphere. Oil up your lover and take turns giving the massage of a lifetime. This is a completely free date, barring the fact that you have massage oils already in your home.

If not, they will only set you back anywhere between \$7 to \$15. Not bad for a relaxing evening at home while your significant other gets the knots out of your back!

Who says you can't have a picnic in February? This Valentine's Day, lay out a blanket on your living room floor and pack a cute lunch and have a little picnic with some

friends. This V-Day option is free if you already have the cold cuts for the sandwiches. Mmm!

Head out to the movies this Valentine's Day to see Fifty Shades of Grey! Nothing says hot date than watching two people fall passionately in love with each other and tie one another up. This excursion will cost under \$15. If you're by yourself on this holiday, don't worry! Order some takeout and rent a movie, or do some online shopping. Don't forget to pig out on Valentine's Day chocolate. Who says you can't treat yourself?

Another thing you can do by your lonesome is draw a nice bath and throw a both bomb in and enjoy the relaxing colors and view. Bath bombs average about \$5 each. Open up a good book in there and you're bound to get your mind off being single.

Valentine's Day comes around only once a year but it sure can muster up some interesting questions about your love life and empty out your wallet quite a bit. If you just don't have the funds this year, take advantage of these money saving date ideas.

And don't worry if you are alone this year, being single has its advantages. Do not forget, that's less chocolate you have to share.

BANNER LIFESTYLES

What Revisiting the Bands of My Youth Showed Me

The Still Relevant Rock Music of a Decade Ago

BY ROBERT LAROSA

We all get that feeling of accidentally discovering something from our childhood that we totally forgot about. It blasts us with the memory of the sounds, sights, tastes, fears, love, regrets and touch. It takes you back to a place where you can remember exactly where you were and what you were doing.

Music has had that effect on me lately but it has taken a little bit of a different twist. Music that was popular ten years ago, while I was growing up, has become fossilized while dance and dub-step control the airwaves.

I'm not taking anything from that genre, in fact, I enjoy that music as well.

I can't speak for everybody when it comes to music taste but for me the three bands that have changed my view on them are Blink-182, Green Day, and Sum 41.

Many would say that these bands are past their prime, which might be true based on radio play and chart positions but these bands are so much more relevant to our lives now than they were ten years ago.

Granted, these bands have been around for easily over twenty years but their music and its meaning hits home to anybody willing to listen.

Not many bands can have a career defining album twice and Green Day accomplished that with American Idiot. During a first hearing, the song "American Idiot" sounds like a simple punk song that makes you want to mosh around and feel rebellious.

Ten years later, I finally sat down and listened to the entire album and the message literally punched me straight in the face.

"American Idiot" is all about standing

"Sum 41 is the most unique band of these three because their style of music changes throughout each album but each song, regardless of topic, can make you relate."

up for what you believe in even if you share the less popular opinion. During a time where America was going to war with Iraq and living in the post 9/11 world, it seemed ludicrous to disagree with anything our government was about to do.

Green Day did disagree with the involvement in Iraq and were very open to expressing their constitutional right of freedom of speech.

With an album opening chanting "Don't wanna be an American Idiot" it definitely grabbed the nation's attention and while many were quick to label them anti-American, what they were doing was probably the most American thing that they could do.

An even more political song on the album is "Holiday" and they go as far as associating George W. Bush with Hitler, "Seig

"The beauty of Blink-182 lies in their songs' ability to go from immature and hilarious to depressing and beautiful poetic imagery."

hail to the president Gasman."

This album screams to its listeners that they need to stand up and take action if they don't like what is happening around them, even if you share the least popular opinion, your voice still needs to be heard.

Another band from the same time has just the same effect on their listeners, but their topics in song differ drastically from Green Day.

That band is Blink-182 and they are considered to be one of the most influential punk bands in the early 2000s. Blink-182, for much of their early career, wrote catchy and upbeat songs about hanging out, drinking, causing mayhem and girls rejecting

you. It wasn't until later into their career did their lyrics become a little more serious as the band matured.

Most of Blink's songs all revolve around growing up in broken homes, staying out with friends, acting immature and getting rejected by a love interest. Everybody has been in at least one of those positions in their lives.

As a kid growing up I heard hits like "All the Small Things" and "What's My Age Again" but never got into Blink until late in my senior year of high school and

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"The beauty of Blink-182 lies in their songs' ability to go from immature and hilarious to depressing and beautiful poetic imagery."

boy did I relate to everything they sang about.

Songs like "Dammit" showcase the breakup of a relationship and the awkward aftermath in a time where you need friends and accept that this is life, "It'll happen once again/you'll turn to a friend/someone who understands/sees through the master plan."

Another song like "Feeling This" flips between two sets of extremes in the case of raw, hot and lustful sex "Show me the way to bed/show me the way you move", then jumps to a more passionate and sensual chorus with "Fate fell short this time/your smile fades in the summer/Place your hand in mine I'll leave when I wanna."

That's the beauty of Blink-182 because their songs can go from immature and hilarious to depressing and beautiful poetic imagery.

All their songs showcase something we as young adults have already or soon will go through in our lives. Now, as our genera-

tion gets older we can fully experience what these songs were telling us ten years ago.

Sum 41 is the most unique band of these three because their style of music changes throughout each album but each song, regardless of topic, can make you relate. Their biggest hit "Fat Lip" deals with growing up in a typical suburb town and wanting to become more in life than what society expects Generation X to become. "I don't wanna waste my time, become another casualty of society."

"In Too Deep" deals with being in a troubled relationship and wondering when it's time to call it quits. Anybody who's been through a break-up can relate to the feeling of wondering when it's time to end it for your own sanity. "Seems like each time I'm with you I lose my mind because I'm bending over backwards to relate."

"So Long Goodbye" represents a song of accepting that someone you love is no longer in your life and dealing with your loss respectively.

We have all lost someone dear to us from disagreements, death or growing apart but in the end we just have to accept the fact that this person is no longer with us. "Just look up to the stars and believe who you are cause it's quite alright and so long goodbye."

These bands and their songs might have a date on them or might be considered old because they aren't in fashion now but all these bands have a message and that message is still being heard in 2015.

After ten or so more years after these songs have been recorded, the generation that grew up listening to them and can finally sit down, understand and relate to what our childhood was trying to tell us. "Well I guess this is growing up."

BANNER ARTS

Sexual Tension Absent in Cinematic Version of Raunchy Novel

Fifty Shades of Disappointment

BY LUCIA ROSSI

The highly anticipated *Fifty Shades of Grey* film was a complete disappointment compared to the infamous novel by E. L. James.

The film was merely a skeleton of the book, as if it was stripped of all its humor, quirkiness, depth, and fantasy.

The first six chapters of the book were so much of a reincarnation of *Twilight* that it hurt. This is somewhat expected since it started as a spin-off fan fiction. However afterwards, the story picks up the momentum with lots of witty humor in the conversations, the taboo sex scenes, and the mysterious backgrounds and issues behind the main characters. These things that made the book so great, were not represented well in the film.

The book had very convincing explanations to the viewers that are skeptical about BDSM and presented good arguments as to how it is not rape, sexual abuse, and all the anti-feminist assumptions people make about the film. In the movie, there was none of that, so Christian Grey seemed much more creepy and stalker-like, and Anastasia Steele looked like a victim, when actually she's not suppose to be.

The novel is written from Anastasia Steele's point of view. Her character is quiet and spirited. Reading her thoughts in her mind however was entertaining because she curses often, constantly second guesses her-



self, and scolds herself when she thinks she did something stupid. This helped to know what she was feeling which in turn helped make sense of what was going on. Since you don't know what she thinks in the movie, her actions seemed random and unexplained.

The movie skipped many small scenes in the book that connected one scene to the next. Without those small connecting scenes, at one point it looked like Anastasia completely ditched her mother for Christian when in the book her mother told her to go to him.

Ana had no dream sequences either in the film. She didn't talk much to her friends, there were not many email exchanges between her and Christian, and much more

background information could have been given to make certain actions make sense. For example, there was no mention of how Christian felt about Ana biting her lip or rolling her eyes, so when he reacted, viewers would have to make a guess.

There was no witty banter between them, which was a shame since in the book they make fun of each other, they challenge each other, and it is clear why they like each other. In the film, it isn't clear at all why they like each other and how it is evolving.

The book was much more humorous, yes there were a few funny awkward moments between the two main characters, but certainly not enough because Christian Grey

was much more stoic and unemotional than he was in the novel. Anastasia's clumsiness, awkwardness, and witty charm showed through in the film though.

The sex scenes were the biggest let down. The sex scenes on HBO shows are more exciting than the ones they had. It is true that the film contains so many sex scenes that the film of course could not display all of them, especially the ones that were more taboo and intense than others. This was not a porn film and it was not as sexually violent as people make it sound. Far from it in fact, you might even get bored. It is understandable how the filmmakers wanted to avoid NC-17 movie rating, but overall the sex scenes were short, quiet, similar, and unexciting.

Sorry ladies, no full frontal from Jamie Dornan. Dakota Johnson has a beautiful body as well but her acting during sex was repetitive and unreadable. Where were the orgasms that she unrealistically got every single time in the book?

One part of the book I was glad to live without was the many times that Ana said she blushed or flushed. Let's be honest, if we had a dollar for every time that happened we would be as rich as Christian Grey.

Compared to the novel, the film seemed half-assed, cheap, and rushed. A lot of it did not make sense if you didn't read the book. It was true to the book in most of the scenes and in the script, but left out its most likable parts.

Fourteen Tracks, Five Ladies, One Message: Girls Rule

Fifth Harmony Shows their New Vibe in "Reflection"

BY VICTORIA PRIOLA

2015 is the year of women empowerment so it's no surprise that pop group Fifth Harmony is trending up a storm with their latest album *Reflection* that debuted on February 3. The highly anticipated album has made it to number one on iTunes within the first twenty-four hours of release, surpassing Taylor Swift's 1989. While collaborating with artists such as Meghan Trainor and Tyga, Fifth Harmony sought out inspiration for their songs from female media icons such as Beyoncé, Oprah and Michelle Obama.

Before the girls were making money like the First Lady, they took to the stage of the music talent show *X-Factor* in 2012 and came in third place with the help of their mentor Simon Cowell. Shortly after the show ended, the band followed in the footsteps of Cowell's previous mentees One Direction and Emblem 3 and signed a joint deal with Cowell's Syco Records and L.A. Reid's Epic Records. They released their first EP *Better Together* including their hit single "Miss Movin' On" in November 2013.

A band that easily could have fallen into the "one hit wonder" category quickly became the leading feminist musical influence in 2014 going into 2015. The girls have an MTV "Artist to Watch" award from the 2014 VMAs and a gig at the White House to prove it.

According to band member Camila Cabello's twitter, *Reflection* had been assigned a release date three times before it ultimate-

ly came out. The band was not ready for the world to hear their music and wanted their work to be perfect.

The hype for *Reflection* was rekindled during July 2014 when the band released their single "BOSS". The video displayed a more mature wardrobe and choreography than the band has ever done before—prepping "Harmonizers", formally known as Harmony fans, for a game changing record.

The second single "Sledgehammer" emerged in late August 2014 and was co-written by Meghan Trainor. The song led to Harmony performing their chart topping

Although a fair portion of the album has to do with millennial relationship issues such as breakups or having feelings for a person but not having the guts to say anything (blah, blah, blah), Harmony puts a significant amount of focus on empowering young women to become successful entrepreneurs and to set themselves apart from others instead of being dependent. Songs like "Them Girls Be Like", "Suga Mama", and "BOSS" have a feminist point of view, while keeping the music fun and upbeat.

All fourteen tracks have an up tempo dance club beat, while songs like "Brave,

"This is How We Roll", "Body Rock" and "Top Down" are not exactly the most memorable tracks of the album, but they keep with the theme of pop artists turn rhythmic.

Although the album was an overall hit, critics recognize that the band is still new in the music industry and trying to find their own voice.

Their inexperience has been beneficial for them in the eyes of their more famous fans. Simon Cowell tweeted on *Reflection*'s release date "Got to hand it you @Harmonizers. The @FifthHarmony album is currently number one on iTunes in 25 countries. LA is the man!" The band also received praises by Meghan Trainor and Demi Lovato.

With a number one album and overflowing social media attention, Harmonizers knew a tour was the next thing to come from the girls. Harmony's twenty two date tour presented by MTV was announced on January 7. The band will be performing in sixteen states within the next month along with Jacob Whitesides, Jasmine V, and Mahogany Lox.

Harmony can also be seen collaborating with Becky G and Internet sensations like Alphacat and Kingbach in the anti-smoking ad "Left Swipe That". Inspired by the trending dating app Tinder, the artists came together and recording a song all about how unattractive it is to smoke.

For more Fifth Harmony updates, follow the band's twitter @FifthHarmony. Their album can be purchased on iTunes or any major music store in the area.

"Critics recognize that the band is still new in the music industry and trying to find their own voice."

hit on Ryan Seacrest's Z100 Radio Show and an acoustic version of their track "We Know" on MTV's Artist Unplugged.

iTunes radio released the whole album free for Apple users a week before its release and Harmonizers were far from disappointed. According to Time magazine's review, *Reflection* has many layers to all the songs on their album.

Reflection is geared more towards a younger generation - one who is growing with the band itself. This album has been a milestone for the band and Harmonizers are coming along for the ride.

Honest and Beautiful" and "Everlasting Love" bring back the heartfelt melodies Harmony has done before.

Another trend the girls bring back in their album is the rhythmic R&B style of the 90's hit "Always be my baby" by Mariah Carey. Harmony uses that beat and adds their own personal flare to it on their track "Like Mariah".

"Worth It" was the third single released before *Reflection* came out and immediately exploded over the Internet. It has a very similar sound to Jason Derulo's "Talk Dirty to Me".

BANNER ARTS

An Author's Take on a Villain's Origins

Marissa Meyer's "Lunar Chronicles" Second on Bestseller List

BY DENNISE DEJESUS

Over the recent years, a series has taken a hold for readers and fans alike. The Lunar Chronicles is a New York Times Bestselling Series written by Marissa Meyer. Currently it is #2 on the bestselling series list.

The series takes place in a dystopian futuristic world in which the citizens are affected by massacres and deadly plagues. Refreshingly compared to other dystopian series such as *The Maze Runner*, *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* series, *The Lunar Chronicles* does not have the theme of being in a sorted society.

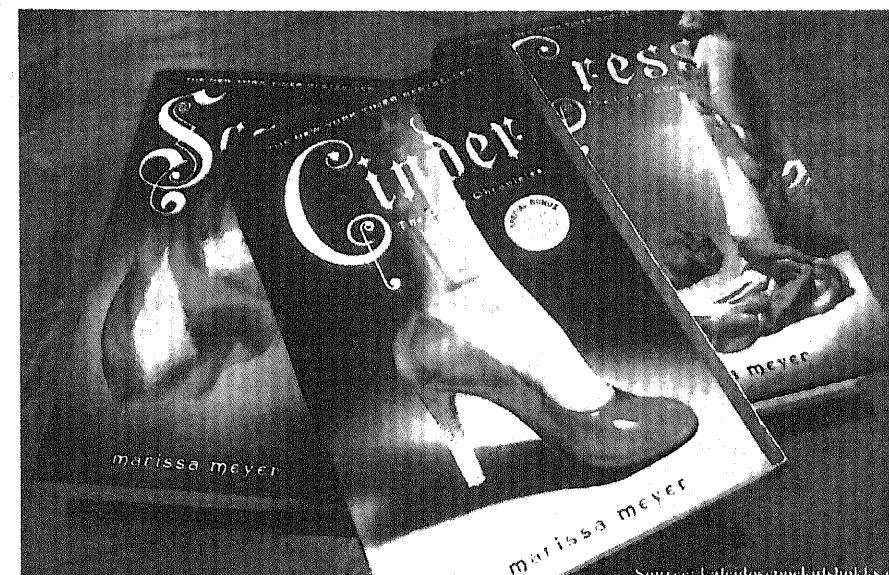
It is based on the struggles of the four protagonists as they work together to fight for honor, freedom, and independence.

Each novel within the series is based on a fairy tale character with four different central protagonists. There are some parallels to the manga *Sailor Moon* in *Cinder*. Despite the shift between protagonists, Meyer seems to magically center each novel, linking the current main protagonist, the past protagonists and minor characters from separate plots that eventually become a universal story web.

Starting in the series is *Cinder* which is based on the fairytale *Cinderella*, revolves around *Cinder*, a 16-year-old mechanic who deals with struggles with her family and being a cyborg.

Moving onto *Scarlet*, based on *Little Red Riding Hood*, 18-year-old *Scarlet* is searching for her missing grandmother when the authorities refuse to help.

Cress, which is based on *Rapunzel*, follows 16-year-old hacker *Cress* and her journey to freedom. Closing off the series will be *Winter*, based off of *Snow White*. *Winter*, will face her stepmother, *Levana* in her tirade



of overpowering her.

Fairest is the latest addition to the series. The novel follows the beginnings of the main antagonist of the series *Levana* and how she became a menacing queen. As with the other characters, *Levana* parallels the evil queen in *Snow White*.

Though for *Lunar Chronicle* fans, the release of *Fairest* fills in the long gap in between *Cress* in February 2014 to the upcoming release of *Winter* in November 2015. It serves as the book that answers the questions left unattended in previous novels and the origins of the characters *Cinder* and *Winter*, protagonists of their respective novels.

When encountering *Levana* first in *Fairest*, she appears to be a naive, spoiled version of the person she currently is. Recently, her parents were killed by assassins and the throne will be handed to her beautiful, cruel older sister *Channary*.

Levana is jealous and resentful of her sister becoming the queen since she fools around with romantic escapades and neglects her duties.

She struggles to find her own happiness since her sister denounces and tortures her and deals with heavy body issues with mutilations on her face from an accident. Insecurely, *Levana* hides her face with the illusion of the Lunar gift with the scars.

Additionally besides the inhumane treatment, the relationships between *Levana* and the people around her is deflected by a psychological barrier that isolates her into lunacy. The barrier eventually leads to her current motives and personality in the current novels.

This was not the best piece of work written for this series. Comparing *Fairest* to the first three novels of the *Lunar Chronicles* is like tasting a dry slice opposed to a whole frosted cake. The lengthy, well-detailed

chapters of the regular novels were reduced to sections that were back-to-back within each other.

It is understandable that the context of *Fairest* would not contain the quirky, happy moments in *Cinder*, *Scarlet*, and *Cress* that balanced serious moments.

But considering the novel was not meant to be a completely happy one, it would have been preferable to see *Levana* with happier moments to completely empathize with her.

There were also moments that were sickening in *Levana*'s character such as manipulation and sexual situations. Additionally, some of the questions answered from previous novels could have been answered in the novels themselves.

Though *Fairest* is a prequel to *Cinder*, *Scarlet*, *Cress* and *Winter*, it does not contain the same whimsy and adventure the usual novels did.

The prose of the novella is a total blow to the buildup of the first three novels. But there is hope with *Winter* to make up the blow with the style similar to the first three novels. But the novel is a good placement to answer questions not answered within the first three novels and the final novels.

It is recommended for a person who has never read the first three novels to consume this between *Cress* and *Winter* in order to gain a full understanding of past references.

The novel itself is not worth a buy or reread since the basic ideas of plot can be absorbed in one sitting. To be fair, the novel was a miss for the extraordinariness of the series. But, do not hold the opinions of this novel to be on the same structure of the main novels. Overall, the main series is an exciting one that should not be missed.

A Fresh Fantasy Movie for the New Year

"Seventh Son" Comes in Seventh Place

BY MATTHEW MCKENNA

One would hope that a movie with an all-star cast consisting of Jeff Bridges, Ben Barnes, and Julianne Moore would be great. Sadly, *"Seventh Son"* didn't meet its expectations. *Sergey Bodrov*, who also directed *"Mongol: The Rise of Genghis Khan"*, decided to make a movie based off the book *"The Spook's Apprentice"* by Joseph Delaney. But much like most popular book to movie iterations, it falls flat with only a few good things about it.

The story starts off with Master Gregory, played by Jeff Bridges, an old knight known as *Spook* that protects the innocent from the forces of darkness, who is summoned to help save a young innocent life.

When he arrives, he learns that a witch that can shape shift into a metal dragon named *Mother Malkin*, played by Julianne Moore, that he sealed away long ago has returned and intends to wreak havoc on the land followed by her supporters.

When she kills Gregory's apprentice, who is played by *"Game of Thrones"* Kit Harrington, he is forced to find a new apprentice who must be the seventh son of a seventh son.

Gregory's search for his new apprentice leads him to a small house near a lake where he and the audience meets *Thomas Ward*, played by Ben Barnes. Buying *Thomas* from his father, Gregory begins his new apprentice

with his training. However, *Thomas* only has a week to train because *Malkin* intends to use the blood moon, a mysterious natural event that occurs every century and grants witches enormous power.

She wishes to use this power to rule the world in fear and darkness with her supporters. During his training, *Thomas* meets a beautiful girl that he falls in love with, but it complicates things since Gregory disapproves for his own reasons. Later in the movie, we learn why *Thomas* has to be the one to kill *Malkin*.



In terms of the movie, there are fewer good things about it than there are bad. What stands out as eye candy are the special effects, some of the humor, and the fight scenes. The monsters are well designed especially the realistic feel of dragons.

Fight scenes are fluid and quick, a little too quick though which is one of the drawbacks. Jeff Bridges is the one who delivers most of the humor and quick one-liners are the funniest to boot. His traveling companion known as *Tusk*, is also funny.

What makes this movie bad is the writ-

ing and acting. Any dialogue that you listen to doesn't feel believable and often the audience will catch themselves going, "wait, didn't they say this", or "that doesn't make any sense". Jeff Bridges does his best but even his acting falls flat from time to time in certain scenes. Ben Barnes doesn't give the same quality that he did in his role as Prince Caspian in the *"Narnia"* franchise.

Julianne Moore doesn't deliver a villainous witch performance that we have all come to know in most movies and it feels like she was hired at the last second. Even though this movie is over an hour and 40 minutes long, it feels rushed.

Even though there was a mentioning that the fight scenes were good, they could have lasted a little longer. Camera shots weren't all that great either.

To sum up the movie, it could have been executed better. Either the movie needs to be written better, the actors could have put more emotion into their work, have a different director for the movie, or hire a different cast all together, but keep Jeff Bridges in the cast. Another option is shooting at a different location.

If they had done one of these things, then the movie would be better and more enjoyable to watch. Rotten tomatoes gave it eight percent out of 100 and IMDb gave it 5.8 out of 10. This reviewer gives the movie five out of 10 magic pendants.

BANNER OPINIONS

How Bigotry is Excused Under the Guise of Free Speech

Does the Right to Express Become the Argument to Justify Intolerance

BY JANELLE NORMAN

In the aftermath of the shooting at the Charlie Hebdo publication office that resulted in 12 deaths, people are outraged that anyone's freedom of speech could be result in such a tragedy.

Granted, as a writer I fully support freedom of speech. I appreciate that I have the right to express my opinion on various different platforms without prosecution. Needless to say, I also would hate to be killed for my beliefs, so condolences to all who were killed.

However, one disturbing thing about this incident is that it made me notice a pattern. In the wake of a new civil rights movement, we have plenty of incidents where the freedom of speech of protestors and activists weren't defended with the same fervor.

To see protesters in Ferguson sprayed with tear gas and shot with rubber bullets while the rest of the world generalizes them as thugs and rioters makes me wonder, where is the same support for freedom of speech?

When the Ram's players arrived to the stadium with their hands up, a harmless gesture to show solidarity, people entirely ripped them apart. In addition to "#RamsFansNo-More" trending on twitter, the STPLD demanded an apology from the team. Nobody but the supporters of the movement argued that it was their right to protest.

We recently witnessed thousands of NYPD officers break a chain of command by turning their backs on Mayor de Blasio. The NYPD also booted the Mayor at a police graduation. Many police officers even wrote

CHARLIE HEBDO



letters to the Mayor, banning him at their funerals if they were ever killed on duty. The NYPD protest even resulted in a slowdown, where cops refused to make arrests unless it's "absolutely necessary."

All of this commotion was caused by de Blasio openly admitting that he told his son what millions of other parents tell their children, "Be extra cautious around the police."

These events made me come to the realization that freedom of speech is an argument often used to protect bigots from consequences or excuse prejudice behavior. The victims involved in the Charlie Hebdo shootings may not have deserved to die for their beliefs, but I refuse to defend islamophobia and racism under the guise of free speech,

especially when the same support isn't reciprocated for the people who publicly fight for marginalized people.

To my understanding, freedom of speech in journalism was historically used to provide a platform for the voiceless and the marginalized. It was used to spread awareness of issues in communities that didn't have the means to get the support they needed. Contrary to popular belief, I don't consider it brave or admirable for a French magazine to use their platform to demonize people who are already stigmatized.

With France's reputation of islamophobia, most notably the ban on burkas and the desecration of French mosques over the years, it's safe to say that publications further

encourage the discrimination that France's Muslim community already experiences.

I can't help but be disappointed at people rewarding the magazine or playfully passing it off as satire, while anti-islam discrimination has worsened in France after the incident. I'm saddened by the fact that free speech is mainly used to protect those who already have the largest platforms.

I've seen an unanimous urge for people like Anthony Cumia and Donald Sterling who have made prejudice statements to be protected while there is either complete silence or support of the defamation of public figures who speak out against social injustice.

I've come to the conclusion that nobody truly supports freedom of speech in its entirety unless we agree with what's being said or done. When a public figure says something that offends us, our first reaction isn't to respectfully disagree because it's their right to express themselves.

With that being said, I can't help that assume that if you supported Hebdo's xenophobia and islamophobic illustrations, it's more about your solidarity with its bigotry than the genuine support of free speech.

It isn't necessary to defend the magazine's content just because you don't believe that anyone deserves to die for expressing their opinions. And yes, we can openly acknowledge how awful and harmful a lot of the content Charlie Hebdo published are while we express our condolences. To me, open and honest discourse, as opposed to reactionary support of blatant intolerance, is true freedom of speech.

Why Now is a Great Time to Fill Your Tanks

New York Fuel Drops, Leaving Drivers with High Hopes

BY VICTORIA PRIOLA

A roughly fifteen minute commute to CSI can turn into a forty-five minute hike on its worst days.

After finally getting off the campus on an icy cold day, I stopped by Costco to get gas. When I looked at my receipt after filling up, my jaw nearly hit the floor. I couldn't believe my bill had been nearly cut in half since the last time I went to the pump.

If you live in Staten Island you're not a driver, now is the best time to become one. According to NewYorkGasPrices.com, the cost of gas in New York City is currently in between \$1.94 and \$2.13 per gallon. Gas prices have not been this low since November 2008, when the cost was comfortably \$1.84 per gallon and we were in a heck of a recession.

To what do drivers owe the pleasure of this significant drop? Bankrate.com explains that the reasoning may be the descending value of oil and the rise in hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking in the Gulf of Mexico.

Some are less than pleased with the way this "drivers discount" has come to be. Dangeroffracking.com states that seventy two trillion gallons of water and three hundred and sixty billion chemicals resign in the five

hundred thousand cumulative gas wells in the U.S. This also leads to chemical contamination of our drinking water.

Fracking sucks. But the gas price reduction is a perk to those who depend on this fuel for a paycheck.

Americanprogress.org says "[Oil and gas industries] five largest companies—BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, and Shell—have earned more than \$1 trillion in profits over the past decade."

Saved money is the best money.

"Let's enjoy it while we can. According to a Bankrate.com, each American driver will save about \$452 on gasoline in 2015."

Lower prices means more people with families driving around and spending their money. The more money they spend, the better the economy gets. This checks and balance cycle seems to be successful for the moment but surely as Americans know, this may be temporary.

For the moment, let's enjoy it while we can. According to a Bankrate.com, each American driver will save about \$452 on gasoline in 2015.

Vox.com relates the dropping gas prices

and forth to school and not spending a whole paycheck on fuel.

Syracuse.com says that Idaho has the lowest costing gas around in 2015, which was \$1.89 per gallon. New York may not be up to par but it's better than the \$3.93 we paid back in June 2014.

On the Island, it is so difficult to get anywhere without a car. The lowering price of gas may raise a few questions to people who travel via public transportation. Will MTA bus fares be reduced since their fuel is cheaper?

Currently a bus trip costs New Yorkers \$2.50. The New York Times reported in January that the MTA will increase their cost by a quarter, making yet another inconvenience in the lives of an everyday commuter.

According to the LA Times, their gas drop of 40 percent decrease has not affected the Los Angeles County bus fare. No word yet from New York MTA.

Drivers have had a great start to 2015. The lowered gas costs has allowed a lot more traveling to be done when it needs to be, and a lot less stress when bills start piling in.

These prices make the long waits for parking spots on campus not too bad. Ha, just kidding.

Valerie Tobias, student at CSI and driver of a 2012 KIA Sportage.

My 2010 Chevy Malibu has always been fairly decent on gas mileage. When my gauge is on a quarter of a tank, it currently takes approximately \$25 to fill up. With the CSI parking pass at \$99 a year, it's nice to get a short break from major expenses.

The most common car driven by college students, according to Boston.com, is the Honda Civic. Anything from Honda or Toyota is reasonable with commuting back

SEX AND THE ISLAND

The Night I Gave in to My Lust-Ridden Desires

A Busy Schedule and Sexual Frustration Made that Night Too Good to Pass Up

BY FRANCESCA MICELI

A busy semester in college or a demanding career, can sometimes make you neglect and forget your personal needs.

Now I'm not talking about your hobbies or your hygiene, I'm talking about the one thing that every person needs after a long stressful or accomplished day.

SEX! The nature of the beast! That fulfilling feeling when you can just enjoy the lustful and passionate company of another individual.

However, it can be quite challenging to maintain a relationship with a full time career or a full time academic regimen. But don't deprive yourself to not indulge in the act of sex just because you are not currently monogamous.

Sex and orgasms are healthy, regardless whether or not you are in a relationship. Orgasms releases serotonin in your body—which is a mood stabilizing chemical in your brain.

It's released when you are both euphoric and happy, but releases less when you are stressed out or angry. Another vital chemical are endorphins. These are receptive chemicals that release when the body relaxes or copes with different levels of pain. Both of these chemicals are released during sexual intercourse and it's partly why sex and orgasms feel so intense.

Now, everybody can obviously achieve an orgasm on their own, but you need to ask yourself, how fulfilling would that be? For how long are you really ok with not having someone to share that moment with? There is nothing

wrong with picking a "friend with benefits" if you do not have the time to fully commit to a full-fledged relationship.

Recently I encountered a situation. My academic schedule, plus having a job, does not leave me too much time to enjoy the perks of a relationship, and that includes sex as well!

But recently I returned to my old bartending job, and discovered that the same guy I used to work with happens to still work there as well. He was someone I was always attracted to, but I never wanted to mix business and pleasure.

Well, that's definitely not what happened one evening! It's been about eight months since the last time I had sex because I've been so busy, so sex became a second thought to me.

"I looked over my shoulder and he started kissing me. Chills went through my entire body."

But something about him just really turned me on. During a night we both worked together, it started off innocent, as any situation would, with a casual conversation and flirty gestures. Then he, the other bartender, and I started taking shots together.

After the shots I made my way around the bar and checked to see if everyone was ok. I realized I needed singles for my draw because I ran out. In a way I was glad, because I kind of wanted

"When I went into the office we were both smiling—like when a kid has a crush for the first time"

"I nodded for him to walk with me to a more private area in the bar."

an excuse to go into the office and see him alone.

When I went into the office we were both smiling—like when a kid has a crush for the first time—and he got up from the chair and kissed me. When we kissed, we both wanted one other in the worst way, but we didn't pursue each other any further at that moment.

I went back to the bar and when he came out of the office, he allowed me and the other bartender to mix up our own shots, and hung out with us for a while. The night was a little slow at the

me anticipating and wanting more to happen that night. With the liquor flowing from earlier, and the repressed sexual tension between us, I pushed him down, climbed over and straddled him to continue kissing.

We were both a little under the influence, but anyone who has drunk and had, or wanted to have sex, understands that alcohol and sex just seems to go together, a lot like spaghetti and meatballs do. We kept kissing for a little while until I couldn't take it anymore.

I had to have him! I nodded for him to walk with me to a more private area in the bar.

We both went to a different section and I pulled him on top of me and asked in a seductive voice "Do you want me?" He replied back in a seductive voice "Yeah." I took off my pants and pulled him inside me. After sometime passed he grabbed me by my hips and pulled me on top of him.

I was so sexually pent up and turned on that I almost had an orgasm in a couple of minutes.

He felt so good inside of me and that feeling of being able to moan, grab him, and pull him deeper into me felt incredible.

Honestly, I needed this! After relieving that sexual repression from the last eight months, that one night alone was enough to make me feel relaxed again. No one should ever feel guilty about needing, or wanting to have sex.

It's a natural thing for everyone and sexual frustration is the worst thing to feel, especially when you are already stressed out from everything else.

He's got these nice full lips and he knew how to kiss well. That alone had

SPORTS

CSI Athletics Debuts "First Year Program"

Men's Varsity Volleyball Preview

BY JEAN BAAK

The College of Staten Island men's volleyball program transitioned from a two-year club intramural to a full varsity sport as of January 2015. CSI was the last of the CUNY colleges to officiate men's varsity volleyball.

Head Coach Juan Lopez expects to surprise the conference schools in the anticipated games and to prove that his first-year Dolphins can dive in the deep end. Lopez says that their opponents will not have an easy time.

The CSI men's varsity volleyball team traveled to Ramapo College on January 25 to build a name for the Dolphins in the introductory season.

The dual away match featured Ramapo College and City College of New York. Both teams swept the CSI Dolphins in a three-set match.

Though these games did not count towards the regular season, the losses tasted bittersweet to the CSI players who, nonetheless, arrived and left the courts with lingering hopes.

Ramapo College, the Dolphins' first competitor, rose to the top and didn't look back, boasting winning sets of 25-13, 25-10, and 25-9.

According to Coach Lopez, who described Ramapo as a "volleyball-oriented school" whose players stood out in height as well as in skill, the opening game against Ramapo was intentionally significant for his team.

"Playing Ramapo as first game of the season was a wake-up call for the guys," said Lopez. "I wanted them to see what else was out there outside of conference."

However, rivaling against a seasoned college was overwhelming for the starting players, who reluctantly handed over their momentum to City College in the next round.

"We need to learn how to shut these schools down," said Lopez. "CCNY was a sneak preview of the upcoming conference."

Albeit the mass number of serves that CCNY aced and those that CSI failed to receive, the Dolphins were neck-and-neck with the Beavers whose scores ultimately rounded out to 25-19, 25-22, and 25-15.

All-around hitter Song Shin Low further explained that the team did not interact enough on the court nor did they play solid defense--both techniques that are considered essential in the team sport. Here, Lopez emphasized the importance of teamwork.

"With other sports, you can kind of shine on your own," said Lopez. "In vol-



Men's Varsity Volleyball huddles for a pep-talk before game time

leyball you can't pass, set, or hit a ball on your own."

Appearing frequently in the early season, a lack of confidence in each player's ability during practice and games chipped away at the team's overall performance.

Despite the opinion of starting players like Brandon Lei, Brandon Ng, and Dewayne Stewart who promoted chemistry, leadership, and optimism as top three qualities of a strong team, they believe that their team's full potential has yet to be discovered.

"We need to be more aggressive," said Lei. "Players are still afraid to get the ball, especially in the back row,

where the ball is being served to."

Captain Brian Sheydvasser acknowledged the team's insecurities that leave them second-guessing their decisions during practices and games.

"Sometimes we communicate throughout," said Sheydvasser. "Sometimes we get down and don't communicate at all."

The hushed communication was evident in the much-speculated first home game of the CSI men's varsity volleyball team against NJ City University.

The Dolphins experienced a close call in the third set but failed to follow

Despite the proud moment in CSI history, Captain Sheydvasser revealed that Coach Lopez was disappointed in the team's consistent absence of energy on the court.

In the previous match, Lopez's team lost to a more determined Baruch College. CSI's setter Song Shin Low admitted to having bad judgment when he set to the wrong people at the wrong time.

"We played down to our competitors," said Sheydvasser. "Coach felt that we should have beat CCNY in three sets."

The team captain credited a post-discussion of the CCNY team's individual tendencies and weaknesses, which guided the Dolphins to make wiser decisions during game play.

CSI's Low praised CCNY's setter, Anthony Reyes, who was not present during the non-conference game but was an optimal choice opponent in the conference match. Captain Sheydvasser added that the middle hitter of CCNY opted to survey the court then tip the ball instead of taking the full shot.

Two days after the team's pivotal win, CSI men's varsity volleyball defeated St. Joseph's College (Brooklyn) on the Dolphins' second home game.

CSI began on a high note with a 25-19 win in the first set, a 25-21 brush in the second set, and a 25-15 victory in the third set which lifted the Dolphins' overall record to 2-4 alongside their two-win streak.

Despite the rocky start, CSI men's varsity volleyball looks forward to building even more waves in the following conference games against Lehman College, Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn College, and what could possibly be a successful rematch against Baruch College.

"This is a new program, so winning every game is kind of unrealistic, but we learn from every match that we play," said Coach Lopez. "We want to be the best that we can be for CSI."

Originally tied at 2-2 sets apiece, CSI prevailed in the final fifth set with a close score of 15-10.