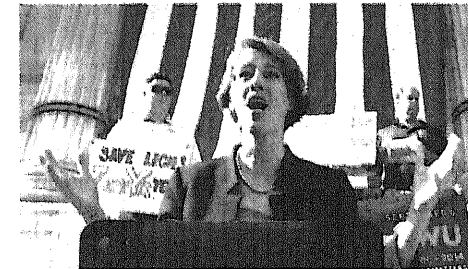


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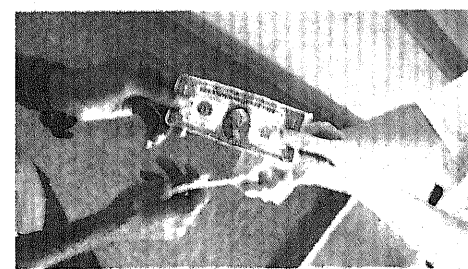
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Thor Gets a Sex Change - Page 9



Nicki Minaj Shakes Her ASSets - Page 10

A Hidden Treasure at the Center of the Arts

Filmmakers and Other Artists Welcome at The Cage



College Lab Technician Lori Hiris enjoys the time she spends each day working at the Department of Media Culture

BY JEAN-CLAUDE QUINTYNE

At the far end of a corridor, in room 122, often passed by students entering the Center for the Arts 1P building, lies an area where filmmakers and other artists share their ideas for upcoming projects. It is nicknamed "The Cage."

The Cage doesn't quite look as its name-sake suggests, but it holds a collection of CSI's most expensive equipment—state of the art digital cameras, mono-pods, lighting and sound gear, available to students enrolled in

production classes. Assistants there are a colorful collection of students and faculty under the direction of John Szeluga, the senior College Lab Technician, who take pride in having the opportunity to be a part of the atmosphere.

"The Cage is where I started my filmmaking," said College Assistant Artem Golub, who helps students reserve equipment and troubleshoots issues students may have. "It's where I took out a DV tape camera that I used to film my terrible Batman Begins re-creation scene and learned how much goes into film-

ing."

The equipment sits in open-faced sections, tightly secured in bags appropriate to their size and accessories, which are constantly serenaded by air conditioning and the ringing of busy telephone. Students and faculty can come to reserve and retrieve film equipment and can call the office if they need help.

Students can edit their films by making an appointment in one of the editing suites, where they'd have access to Adobe Premiere Pro and

Continued on Page 5

City Council Reinstates Merit Based Scholarship

Millions Alloted to Students with At Least "B" Average

BY CLIFFORD MICHEL

Members of the City Council announced on July 8 that New York City has budgeted \$11.1 million to aid approximately 13,000 CUNY (City University of New York) and FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology) students with the restoration of the CUNY Merit-Based Scholarship Program.

For high school graduates who maintain a "B" average and are enrolling into a CUNY college this semester, the scholarship will translate to \$800 a year.

"With the constant increase in postsecondary education this financial assistance will

increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rate of our hardworking students who aspire to attain a CUNY college degree. The City Council restoration of a scholarship fund to assist students in bearing the cost of attending CUNY is representative of the city's awareness of the importance of a higher education degree in these challenging economic times," said Higher Education Committee Chair Inez Barron, a Hunter College alumna.

"I see this as a step towards returning to the era when the city was a tuition free university that was available and open to residents. This City Council initiative, in conjunction

with Mayor de Blasio's STEM initiative for CUNY students, better supports and enables students to be prepared for success in the 21st century."

New York residents now pay an average of \$6030 a year to attend CUNY's senior colleges and \$4,500 for CUNY's community colleges. While tuition has risen over the years, financial aid programs, such as TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) have stopped increasing.

The City Council aims for the program to help cover the cost of textbooks, tuition, transportation, and childcare for many students.

Continued on Page 4

Surveillance Equipment Quietly Installed at the Campus Center

Safety Upgrades Supplement Fall Semester Renovations

BY AMANDA CELEK

Changes have been implemented following a break-in that occurred over the summer in 1C's cafeteria. The incident was described as two student residents entering the cafeteria during after-hours to steal food. The security concerns in building 1C, have Public Safety and the Administration hoping to make the College of Staten Island more secure in order to deter any future crimes.

Public Safety is enhancing security on campus by installing surveillance cameras and speakers in major areas including the Campus Center and the WSIA radio station.

The new equipment will record and archive video, which can later be reviewed by the Office of Public Safety to investigate any reported crimes on campus. The cameras will be directed at building entrances and exits to ensure the best view for security. Sound speakers will be installed in the buildings so that announcements can be made for possible emergencies.

"I think its great that the college finally put cameras in," said Kristina Gorczynski, a student resident at the Dolphin Cove. "Surveillance cameras to monitor crimes on campus are needed."

Another incident that may have motivated the changes occurred after an unidentified person entered the WSIA office and damaged the radio station's equipment. Damages included water spilled on a keyboard in the on-air studio.

"At first we thought it was just an accident," said Phil Masciantonio, General Manager of WSIA. "But then a week or two later it happened again."

The new equipment is intended to catch blind spots that leave room for vandalism. The effectiveness of the cameras have yet to be determined. The upgrade is under review. Past studies show that cameras don't deter crime but only catch criminals after the fact.

"We should have had these monitoring technologies a long time agoost high schools have them so a college definitely should," said Pinar Usted, a Junior at CSI. "If you are not committing any crimes then you shouldn't be worried about the extra safety precautions."

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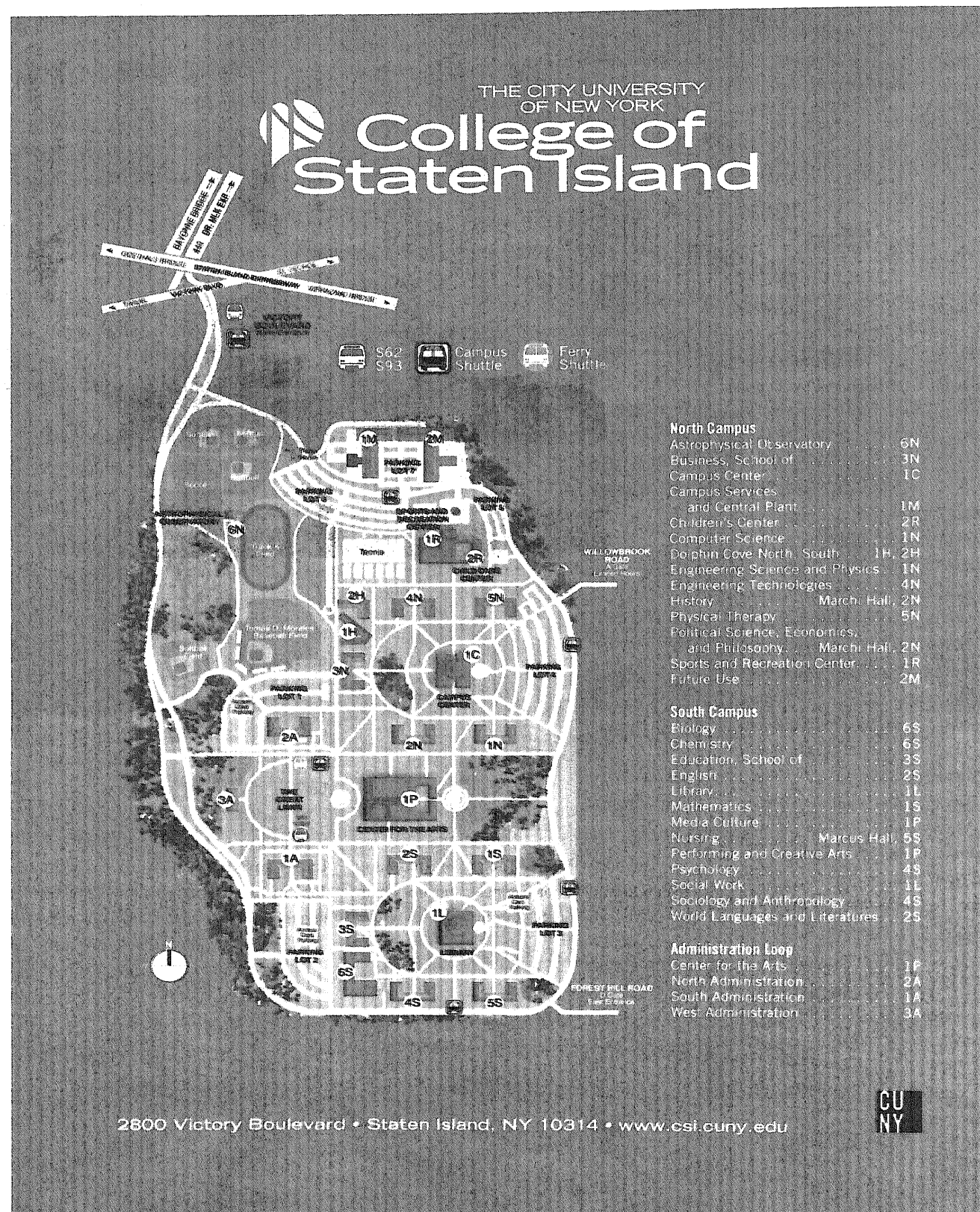
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COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND CAMPUS MAP



The Banner is now offering INTERNSHIPS to CSI students. Internships last one semester and give students the opportunity to learn about media. Interns will work a minimum of 12 hours per week, and can focus on:

- Blogging • Editing • Photography
- Graphic design • Layout & production
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BANNER POLITICS

The Banner Breaks Down the 2014 Governor's Race

The Hopeful Conservative, the Centrist, and the Underdog Progressive

BY CLIFFORD MICHEL

With 244 total races, 2014 will prove to be a decisive year for New York. From the Governor's race, down to a clamor for vacant state assembly seats, September 9 showed the direction candidates wished to take New York for the next four years.

Officially, there are eight candidates running for Governor this year, but a poll conducted by Siena College shows that only Governor Andrew Cuomo, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, and progressive newcomer Zephyr Teachout are the only candidates truly in contention as of now.

The poll of likely voters concluded that Cuomo leads his GOP opponent by 32 points.

"Cuomo continues to be liked by voters and a majority are still inclined to want to reelect him," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "Astorino remains unknown to more than half of voters, with only a slightly net positive favorability rating."

Voters may not know much about Astorino, who is the only republican running, but the candidate offers a stark contrast from Cuomo's centrist beliefs and can attract those who are either displeased with Cuomo or hold more conservative voters.

If elected, Astorino has pledged to vitalize New York's economy by making the state more business friendly. According to Astorino's campaign, the economic agenda will focus on growing jobs, reforming New York's tax code, cut state spending, and reduce the cost of doing business in New York.

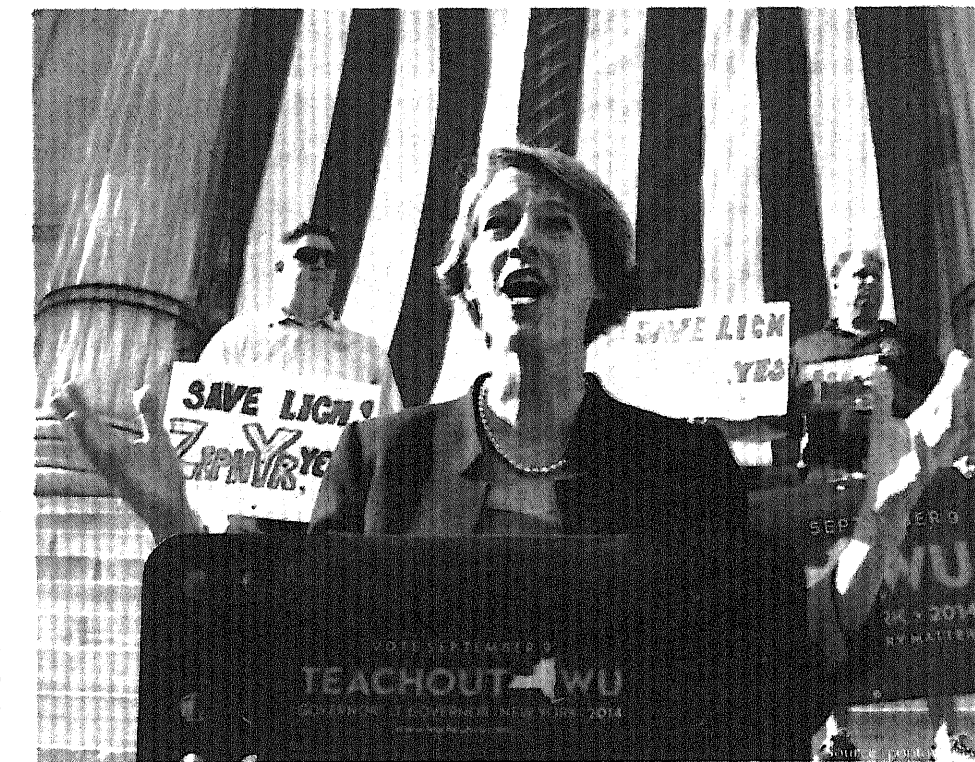
Astorino has also openly opposed the Common Core State Standards Initiative, and while he hasn't made public an alternative program, he has said that he will replace Common Core with "better standards" controlled at the local level.

Lastly, Astorino has set up a strict outline of how he would stop corruption in Albany, a front page issue for the state capital for almost a decade. Astorino's clear and strict plan includes limiting statewide elected officials and legislators to eight years, limiting the legislative session to four months, establishing an Independent State Commission on Public Ethics, and strengthen transparency for online records.

The GOP candidate also wishes to curb political perks such as stripping taxpayer-funded pensions, prohibiting personal use of campaign money, and replace the states Per-Diem System.

While some of Astorino's campaign promises wouldn't yield a major difference in the state's budget, which was in surplus for the 2014 fiscal year, they may resonate with voters who are experiencing corruption fatigue—especially in light of Governor Cuomo's Moreland Commission controversy.

The Moreland Commission was established by Cuomo shortly after his election to combat corruption in the state legislature, but



Fighting tooth and nail to be heard, Teachout has challenged Cuomo directly

recent reports showed that the Governor and his staff interfered with the Commission's work before Cuomo disbanded it. According to Siena College's poll likely New York voters are overwhelmingly anti-corruption, but only 32 percent are familiar with the Moreland incident.

The scandal was especially disappointing to voters who chose Cuomo in 2010 due to his campaign promise to "clean up Albany."

This bodes well for Cuomo, who has raised over \$35 million for campaign finances compared to Astorino's \$3.4 million.

In 2014, Cuomo pushed extensively for legislation that would once again win him the votes of democrats, while attempting not to alienate conservative voters. Shortly after Bill De Blasio's inauguration and Governor's annu-

al State of the State address, the two political heavyweights began to debate how funding for universal pre-kindergarten should be carried out. De Blasio wanted a permanent tax on wealthy New Yorkers (who made over \$500,000) to fund the program, but Governor Cuomo only allotted room for it in the state budget.

Changing his stance on medical marijuana was another change for Cuomo, the Governor finally gave momentum to legislation in early June by agreeing to sign the bill if it had strict enough policies. The state lawmakers were able to pass it at the very end of legislative calendar in June.

Teachout, a Fordham Law professor, offers a substantial challenge for the Governor's office. The little known candidate, whose cam-

paigned was born out of many of the same ideals Cuomo campaigned for in 2010, forced the Governor into agreeing to progressive reforms required to win an endorsement from the Working Families Party, a growing progressive political organization.

Announcing her campaign in June, Teachout burst onto the scene with a populist attitude. Her views are to the left of Cuomo and holds many of the beliefs as liberals such as supporting the eventual legalization of recreational marijuana use, and opposed to fracking and Common Core.

"The short-term win was Gov. Andrew Cuomo agreeing to a suite of progressive reforms in response to my candidacy against him for the Working Families Party nomination for governor this year," said Teachout in POLITICO Magazine in early June. "On some issues, like freeing municipalities to raise their own minimum wage beyond the dictates of Albany, the governor made a notable switch in position. On others, like passing a DREAM Act that will extend state financial aid for higher education to undocumented students and pushing for public financing of elections, the governor re-committed to positions he previously failed to fight for."

Addressing the Governor's failure to live up to many of his original campaign promises has helped Teachout gain attention. While Teachout is a longshot with virtually no chance of winning the primaries, due to lack of engagement of voters at this time, Governor Cuomo has provided the former Howard Dean campaign aid more publicity than she would ever be able to garnish on her own.

After forcing Cuomo into taking up promises set by the Working Families Party, the Governor tried to knock Teachout off the ballot, claiming she was not a New Yorker. After a Brooklyn judge ruled against the protest, Cuomo's lawyer's immediately filed another appeal, which was once again shut down.

Gathering tons of media attention from Cuomo's political bullying, Time Warner Cable's NY1 publicized a debate between the two democratic candidates. Teachout, needing all the attention she can get has already agreed but Cuomo has been silent on the matter and will most likely ignore the offer.

The traction is most likely postponing the inevitable. Teachout, who has under \$1 million in campaign finances, was unknown to 88% of voters according to a recent Quinnipiac poll. The poll didn't ask the likely votes what they thought Teachout's chances were against Cuomo because she was so unknown to the general public, the pollster told Capital New York.

Astorino is still set for a November face off with Andrew Cuomo, and will address the Moreland Commission scandal and other Cuomo failures repeatedly. To stay on the ballot, Teachout will need somewhere between 300,000 to 350,000 votes in the primaries.



Astorino has voiced ambitious plans during his campaign for Governor

CFA Presents on Campus Concerts and Comedy

Theater, Music, and Loads of Laughs at a Discount

BY JEREMY L. PASKER

Every season, beginning over the summer while students and faculty are soaking up the sun, the Center For the Arts (CFA) has the unfortunate task of bridging the culture gap between the Island's elder, senior, more stubborn residents and the youthful, more outgoing ones. Not an easy task, in the slightest.

The stress that must go into trying to satisfy both the generation that grew up watching *I Love Lucy* and the generation that grew up watching the *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. The CFA must consider students, campus staff, parents, their children, and Seniors when deciding on theater shows.

"This process is neither random nor easy," explained Michele Walsh, CFA's Marketing Manager, acknowledging how months of preparation, negotiating artist fees, and scheduling goes into creating a cohesive final product. "It would be much easier if I had an endless budget for acts like Beyoncé, The Counting Crows, and Katy Perry—however this is not the case."

Given the limited public university budget that the CFA runs on, a pittance compared to arenas like the Apollo or Barclays Center, the marketing team in IP starts with certain artists in mind than narrows the field from there because not every act imagined will work out.

"You don't go to the artist directly unfortunately; [we] have to book through their agents and management," Walsh said, after joking about how great it would be if artists contacted the CFA first. "It's a long process but it's very exciting when you finally receive that phone call stating someone like John Leguizamo, Aisha Tyler, or Olympia Dukakis wants to do the show."

Even the CFA's "Children's Series" for instance, like the yearly showing of *A Christmas Carol*, have crossover appeal. Early on in the show season, CFA's theater stage hosts *Alice in Wonderland*. The New York Times called it "a polished and knowing theater company and a felicitous event." And the year before CFA hosted stage acrobatics and a laser and light show where the performers dressed in animal costumes.

Given their lean toward stage spectacle, CFA may have unintentionally attracted the local hallucinogenic aficionados.

The vast disparity in the CFA's demographics from young to old has forced them to fiddle with their marketing plan. A strategy that leaned too far in one direction, whether toward the older crowd or toward the younger one, would risk alienating the other side.

"Older people aren't always computer savvy, so placing a Facebook/Twitter post may not get to that specific audience [when] we are looking for them," Walsh said. "Again, I try to have a specific 'group' in mind when booking a show. It makes it easier to create a 'target marketing plan'."

Michele Walsh actually graduated from CSI. Back then she was a theater major, performing the Black Box Theatre, also in IP. Between her time as a student and marketing manager, Walsh has worked for different theaters along the way, even dabbling in stage management.

Over that time, and even before it, CFA has built up a loyal fan base, a base the returns year after year, some even donate extra to preserve signature Staten Island entertainment. They cannot be forgotten, despite CFA's new found access to younger campus residents.



Aisha Tyler: comedian, actress, author

When asked if the she would consider shifting her attention from the older acts the CFA tends to gravitate toward to more modern acts, Michelle, initially, laughed at the use of "older acts" to describe them.

"I know this may blow your mind but people really love those acts," she assured. "They bring them back to an era that we don't appreciate. I remember when Davy Jones came to the CFA, I can't tell you how many women were giggling and blushing while meeting their teenage idol."

Honestly, my mind was blown. I had initially forgotten who Davy Jones even was. Then I recalled the times spent watching Nick at Night, way back when.

For those of you who don't know (and no one would blame you if you didn't), Davy Jones was the frontman for The Monkees. The Monkees, basically, were a Beatles esque version of the 90's MTV created boy band 2gether, only way back in the 60's.

CFA has, and probably still will, consider students of all ages while booking future performances. "Any suggestions are always welcomed and taken seriously, except for deceased people. I had someone ask for Johnny Cash one year [then] had to break the bad news to that person...." A young market, new to collegiate life, so willing to experience live shows, like the residents at CSI are a flush market for the CFA. The performers will still need to be good enough to peek interest though.

"Listen, who wouldn't want to see Rihanna in concert?," Walsh rhetorically asked right before crossing herself off the coveted 'I will be thrilled to see Rihanna' list. Undoubtedly, because the lack of such a sufficient size budget, CFA will use other tactics to attract the disposable income of their younger audience. "I'd like to create a local 'indie' music night in the future. I'm a big fan of local performers and hope to utilize their talents more."

She went on to admit that her goal at CFA is primarily to bring as much diversity as possible to IP, not just one genre of entertainment, going as far to shout out CSI's Got



John Leguizamo performs stand-up

Talent performers as potential future acts to grace the building IP stage.

So adamant about attracting diverse, younger crowds, CFA has sought advice from CAB. In the past, CAB has helped seek out events students would enjoy. CAB will partially fund some of the events this year, allowing students to purchase them at a discount. All events at the CFA are Clue Credit certified.

"I am working on bringing a younger 'vibe' to the CFA [and] am excited to bring Aisha Tyler and John Leguizamo this season," believing them to be "edgy", "intelligent", and "talented", enough to do just that.

Sooner or later, she wants to extend the performance season to include a Great Lawn musical performance, provided more students are willing to attend them, allowing for CFA to increase their budget (probably not to Rihanna proportions though).

She's also, unsuccessfully, been trying for some time, to add a speaker series, and a theatre residency. "I'd like to say 'it's a work in progress'."

The Center For the Arts has big dreams and aspirations regardless of their lack of notoriety or a big pop star size budget.

"You don't see me too often because my office is hidden but pay no attention to the woman behind the curtain. That's from the Wizard of Oz in case that falls into the 'older act' category. In the end, [though], I think I've spent more than enough time here at the theatre to say, it's a great place to be."



The CUNY Chancellor's Office affords bringing new Financial Aid to CSI

"Merit Scholarship" Continued from Front Page

"By restoring the merit-based scholarships for CUNY, the Mayor and City Council are doing their part to ensure that some of New York's best and brightest can afford pursuing higher education," stated Aileen Sheil, Queens College student and NYPIRG chairperson. "By making this investment into higher education, the City is really investing in New York's future."

The merit-based scholarship provided \$6 million a year for CUNY students in the past before it was completely defunded in 2011, under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former City Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

"With Bloomberg, it was all about helping out businesses. But this new progressive movement is all about helping the people so I'm really happy with them even though it won't affect me directly," said Gabriela DeVito, a sophomore at the College of Staten Island.

The budget for the Fiscal Year 2015 also

marks the return of the Creative Arts Team, CUNY Prep and the Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies. The City Council also budgeted funding for the Center for Puerto Rican Studies and the Dominican Studies Institute was more than doubled. The final budget also included additional funds to support and to expand CUNY's Citizenship Now and STEM programs.

"It's a major step, merit scholarships are extraordinarily important to CUNY students. In the past the city council has fought to restore it but the last couple of years the city council gave into the mayor on this issue; which is something that has been perplexing, given how many of their constituents go to CUNY colleges," said Ken Sherill, a Hunter College political science professor emeritus.

"These are their voters and the children of their voters, so it's very surprising that that the last couple of years the city council didn't allow that to go forward and it's very encouraging that they have restored it."

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Fall Semester 2014

BY JEREMY L. PASKER & LARRY ZAKHARENKO

As the Editors-In-Chief of the campus newspaper, The Banner, we, Jeremy L. Pasker and Larry Zakharenko, are looking forward to supplying the CSI community the most relevant and current campus news including Politics, Arts & Entertainment, Lifestyles, and Sports.

This academic year is proud to follow after

"Welcome to The Cage" Continued from Front Page

Final Cut, which they can use to bring their content to life or request help to be tutored on how to do so.

"I like to think of the 'Cage' as a kind of portal, which it is to the classrooms and edit rooms here in the Performing Arts building," expressed College Lab Technician Lori Hiris, who has been with the Department of Media Culture for one year and who bikes to campus each day from St. George. "It is also a place to meet other filmmakers, to get information, to find support."

Not just a hub to reserve equipment, the Cage is also a place where film students can inquire about internships, discover film festivals to submit their work, and obtain the latest information about degree requirements.

The Department of Media Culture has existed since the 1970s, around the time CSI opened, and has given film students across the decades an opportunity to share their unique visions of the world with classmates and col-

leagues.

Over the course of a week in June Ms. Hiris, Mr. Golub, and other college assistants helped put together "Then and Now", a film exhibition featured at the annual "Art by the Ferry" art show, in which a collection of student films from 1970 to 2014 were screened on a loop.

One short film, Letter to a Lady in Paris, shot in the 1970s, documents a man composing disturbing pleas to a mystery woman, but is thwarted each time he reaches an emotional breaking point by vomiting a rabbit. Films the nature of Letter to a Lady express that the Cage isn't simply a pit stop for information and equipment, but a place where art is made.

"Art and filming are interchangeable," Mr. Golub explains. "You create something out of nothing and see the many steps that occur before it's complete."

There's a bountiful educational experience that the Cage offers, but not many students know about it. Ms. Hiris plans to get the word out during the semester to those interested.

We work for the the student body as a whole, commuter and dorm resident alike.

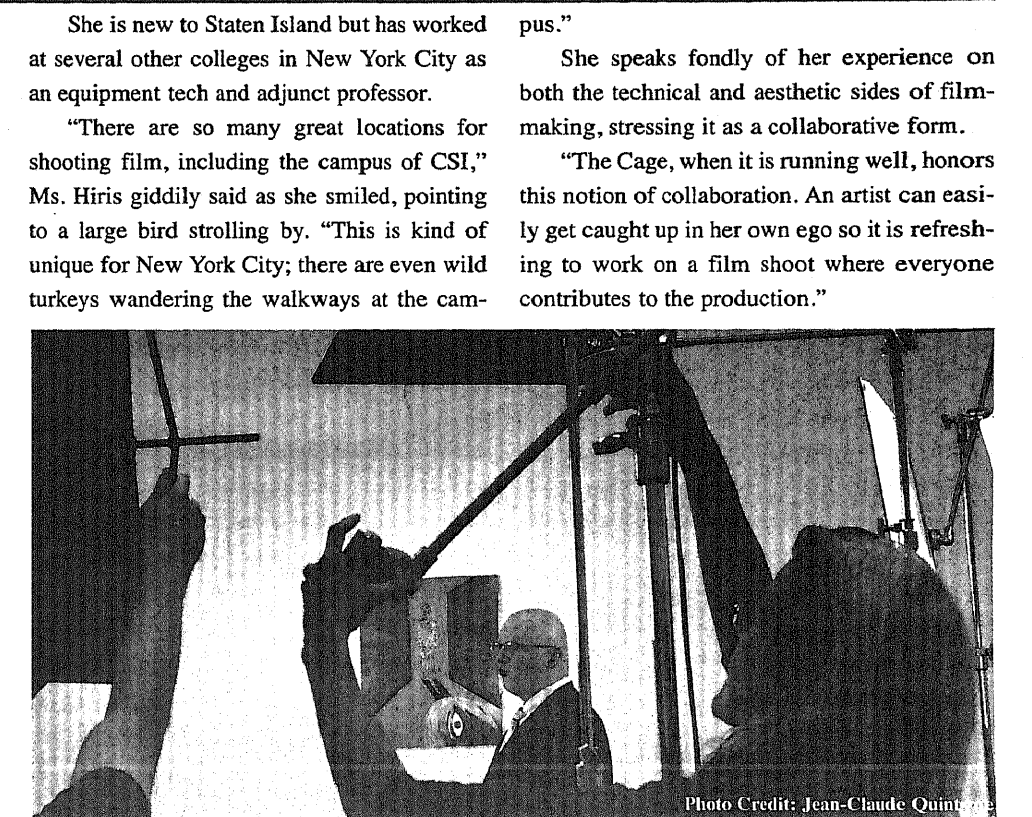
Anyone can email or call the office with issues or campus complaints. Shotty campus infrastructure, bogged down administrative bearocracy, academic unfairness are but a few of the stories brought to our attention in the past by students and professors.

We've covered sports scandals and county drug abuse. Each story got so big that one was

then picked up by SiLive and the other by the New York Times. We will continue with these traditions, traditions that have garnered our newspaper success and accolades in the past.

Reporters and photographers don't want to let past contributors for the Banner down. We especially do not want to let our readers, the students and faculty of CSI, down.

You have all held us to a higher standard, a standard we refuse to relinquish.



Fighting tooth and nail to be heard, Teachout has challenged Cuomo directly

Loose Cigarettes, Public Safety, and the NYPD

The Mixed Opinions of the Community

BY FRED ALVAREZ

Over the summer Eric Garner, a 43-year-old father of six from Port Richmond, Staten Island, verbally resisted arrest in Tompkinsville. Police insist that the altercation wouldn't have escalated if Garner hadn't resisted the officers' demands. They've alleged he was a criminal. That crime being the sale of untaxed loose cigarettes.

Patrick Lynch and the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) inferred that instead of a chokehold, Garner died due to a "lack of respect" for authorities.

Media outlets analyze Eric Garner's crime of selling untaxed cigarettes while loose cigarette transactions here on campus continue to be a common practice among smokers.

When seven CSI students (three smokers and four non-smokers) responded to a questionnaire asking if they'd ever witnessed or played a role in the sales of untaxed cigarettes on campus, six out of seven respondents said they had witnessed such activity more than once.

When Junior Business Major, and smoker, John-Paul Keiser, was asked if he had ever purchased or sold a loose cigarette, he chuckled, and responded saying "Obviously I have. I smoke."

Given the amount of times this happens does a man deserve to die for it? Despite this fact, opinions about the incident vary from student to student.

"He was a big guy and he didn't want to get arrested," said Brian Sills, a Senior Biology Major at CSI, who agrees with Mr. Lynch and the PBA. "What were they supposed to do? Just ask him nicely?"

Although some students agree with the way the police handled the situation, others were not so convinced.

"[Eric Garner] died because he was not detained the proper way," says Trevor Spisto, a junior history major that disagrees with the way

police handled the situation. "He was put in a chokehold and it killed him. The police are breaking their own rules and it's scary."

Considering the commonality of cigarette sales among CSI's smoking community along with the CUNY-wide tobacco ban, CSI students are not prone to the same type of treatment as Eric Garner.

All six of the students who said they've witnessed cigarette sales on campus also said that they never witnessed anyone undergo pros-

ecution for it or undergo unnecessary force from public safety.

Does this mean that CSI's Public Safety Department doesn't believe paying any mind to the safety and well being of the students depends on forcefully policing the crime of selling untaxed loose cigarettes?

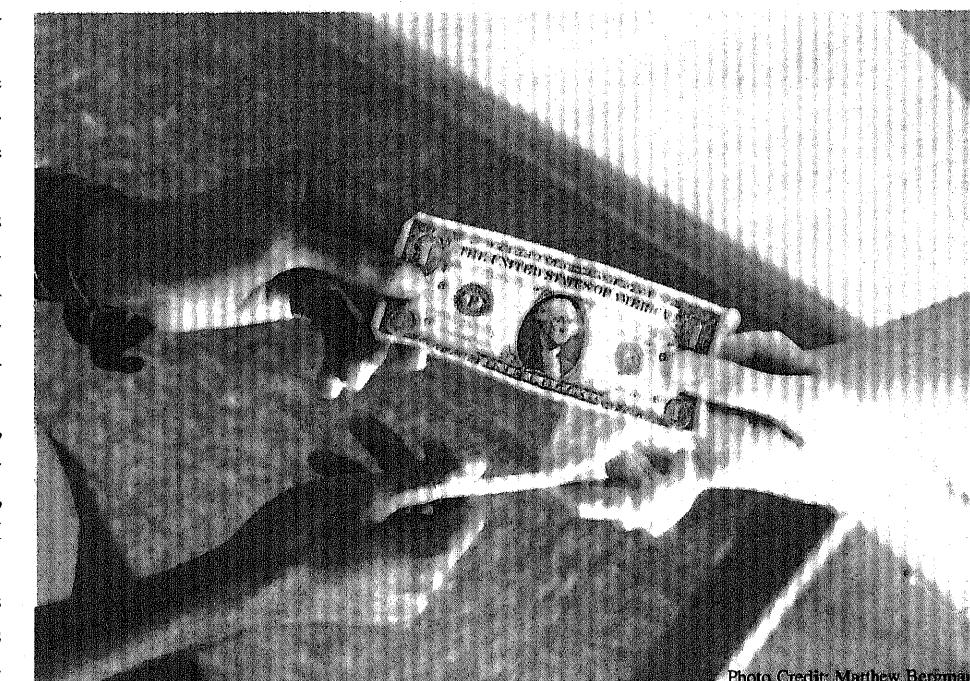
CSI's Code of Conduct, found in the Public Safety Annual Security Report on the CSI website, lists rules and regulations, along with penalties, for specific offenses on campus.

Burglary, sexual misconduct, and sales of alcohol or controlled substances were among the infractions listed. Although the report said that all who "violate New York State or Federal laws...will be subject to arrest", it does not appear that policing cigarette sales is one of Public Safety's top priorities.

Public Safety declined the Banner's requests for comment.

Even though Public Safety does not forcefully police cigarette sales like the NYPD, they tend to the safety of students and faculty through policies meant to protect the well being of everyone on campus. Selling cigarettes are obviously not a terrorist offense.

Considering that the only victim of Eric Garner's crime is the state losing a few cents in sales tax and that the crime of selling untaxed cigarettes is a commonality among all smokers, was the amount of force used on Eric Garner truly necessary?



Innocuous cigarette sales on campus frequently go unnoticed by campus security

LIFESTYLES

The Essential Survival Guide for Every Freshman

The What-is-What for the College Experience

BY VICTORIA PRIOLA

All the city tests and stresses you have endured have led to this moment, becoming a collegiate student. College is the place your parents and teachers have been preparing you for your entire life.

Getting to college is one step closer to becoming an independent person in society. Making it here is easy; the trick is getting through it.

Once you arrive on campus on the first day of the semester, you will face the leading complaint students who drive have: limited parking. Getting a parking pass is one thing, finding a spot is another. The easiest advice to give is the same as that old saying, "the early bird gets the worm."

If you want to find a parking spot relatively close to where you need to go, arrive to campus at least an hour before class time. From noon through two in the afternoon, it is extremely difficult to maneuver through campus.

The prime time to head to school would be around 10 to 11:15AM. Forget about getting a spot in parking lot one, it will never happen. It is best to park in lot three or four. Prepare for a lot of walking.

Another thing to prepare for is class. RateMyProfessor.com is said to be a helpful source of information on professors. Students can search for their professor and read the eval-

uations of previous students. While reading the reviews for professors, remember to incorporate your own judgment.

The CSI Bookstore in the Campus Center and its website are great for finding the books needed for classes. When it comes to selling



books, other websites such as Chegg and Textbooks R Us can be useful.

After you have sorted out what you will need for your classes, you will then be able to make some time for activities. The College of Staten Island is very involved with their students.

Every year the Campus Activities Board holds a "Back to School" week where incoming freshmen can become acquainted with the clubs and organizations on campus. Most of the events are held in and around IC. Hanging

around there is a great place to mingle with people of different interests.

"Internships and participation in campus clubs and activities are extremely important. Do well in class, but also do well outside of class and make it matter," said CSI Alumni Tori

for long nights at the library and frequent trips to Starbucks located inside building 1L, the library. College is not about coddling and it will not get any easier.

Some students don't know what they're doing with their lives in or after college. Those who go in with a plan ultimately change it a few times come graduation. It is completely normal to have no idea what to study.

Sometimes in college such as life, one needs to grow into what she is meant to do. College is a time to have the freedom to make your own choices. The College of Staten Island offers a wide variety of majors--the newest addition being Geography.

Geographer Peter Kabachnik said, "In social sciences and humanities, the specific major someone has is not as important for most employers as people assume. I encourage students to major in what excites and interests them over what they feel (or a parent feels) sounds like a 'better major.'" As long as you utilize the tools and real life skills college experience provides, your time in school will be worthwhile.

College will be whatever you make it. The best time of your life or the worst, it will be a wonderful experience.

CSI student Ruth Li believes that having a positive mindset will enable anything to be accomplished. "When learning something new, set your pride aside."

Brand.

Do things you've always wanted to but never had the chance to. If you already know what you want to get into then go for it. Four years go by in the blink of an eye, make yours count.

Although getting involved is advised, discover your limits. Prioritizing what can fit into your schedule without a mental breakdown occurring is a hidden skill that college will teach you.

Don't spread yourself too thin. Be prepared

The Best Styles of Last Year



Fall
Jonathan Nevels



Winter
Damaris Figueroa



Spring
Loujain Charif



Summer
Ngaitik Cxung

LIFESTYLES

Follow Your Spirit Guide Overseas

The College Travel Manifesto

BY LARRY ZAKHARENKO

Trust No one, Be Kind to Everyone.

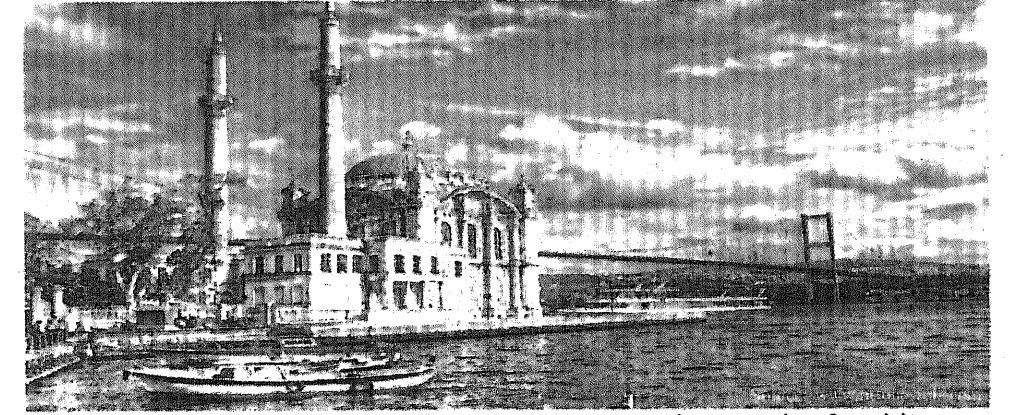
Istanbul is the City of Seagulls. I think the reason there are so many of these birds is because you need wings to survive in a city of thieves and criminals. Say what you will about the Turkish people but any civilized inhabitants of Istanbul have all but long fled to Europe, America, or the outskirts of Turkey. I won't bore you with the elaborate mugging I nearly survived or how I was charged "gay tax" for meals that came with uncomfortable glares. Instead I will simply tell you that Istanbul has taught me to trust no one. It was very fortunate that I went to the polar opposite of Greece right after that because I learned that an environment can have an impact on your beliefs. My first piece of travel advice to you is to trust no one, but be kind to everyone. There are more kind hearted people in this world than there are criminals. Don't believe the news or your parents, these are perspectives corrupted with emotion and ulterior motives.

Sex is a 19 year old's kryptonite. At 19

"The mystical white witch in Ukraine once told me, 'you must always be hungry, have a glimmer in your eyes, and be (romantically) potent.'"

all you think about is sex, sleep, and food. It did not help that I was a young guy in countries that boast about having the most beautiful women in Europe. While it's all fun, the chase can blind you from enjoying your travels and you can miss out on great opportunities to meet wonderful souls or see beautiful landscapes because you were too horny. The chase can also lead you to some terrible places that make you want to wake up in the morning and consider joining sexaholics anonymous. Don't let your hormones get in the way of your happiness.

Be Hungry. Try Everything. As Valentina Petrovna, the mystical white witch in Ukraine once told me, "you must always be hungry, have a glimmer in your eyes, and be (romantically) potent." To be potent is to be in love with the world, with people, with yourself, but to reserve yourself -- to not spend your seed, to choose wisely but love wildly. Only when you reflect the beauty of the world in your eyes will they glimmer. See and be seen. And foremost but not least, be hungry. Hunger for knowledge, for success, for happiness, for more. Starve yourself if only to see that your



Turkey, rich in culture, in the Mediterranean, is an exotic attraction for visitors

gut knows best, and that you should heed its advice.

You're Too Young to Die in Serbia. Live outside the box. Decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong, and your choices will decide what kind of person you are. If on your travels you have the choice to do something different with your life, to take an unfamiliar path, or experience something new, now is the time more than ever. You are traveling! You are out of your habitat, forget about doing what you can to survive -- do what you can to live. Hitchhike across Albania, speak to that beautiful girl in a Czech bar, climb the Green Bridge in Belgrade Serbia. Because the only thing in your way is fear and fear is bullshit, you are too young to die in Serbia.

Find Your Happiness at Home. At the

end of your travels you will notice an afterglow of enlightenment and happiness, which may last for however long depending on you. If this feeling starts to fade and you find yourself miserable then you cannot blame your environment. You may have been happy on your travels but it is not just because of the location you were in. You have to find your happiness at home as well.

Any shorthand advice I can give you is to always befriend the locals and ask them about the best food, sights, bars, and attractions. Ask them about the other locals, what the men and women are like. They are always glad to guide you and you learn something about their culture along the way.

Celebrity Fitness Guru Shares His Secrets

Local Islander Introduces Fitness Revolution

BY ANTHONY FERRARA

The Banner recently caught up with Sean Kuechenmeister, who is an athletic trainer at Kean University and a trainer at FLO Fitness in Westfield, New Jersey. At just 23 he has already made waves in the fitness community because of his innovative workout techniques. He's been a personal trainer for many people, the most notable were Senator Diane Savino and rapper Clifford Smith (better known by his stage name, Method Man). He offered insights into physical health and why a new fitness movement may end up changing traditional workout routines for the better.

The Banner: Thanks for taking some time out of your schedule to meet with me today. I'll get right to the point. In regards to fitness, tell me what Sean Kuechenmeister is all about.

Sean: Well, I've been into fitness since I was in grade school, and I was always a student of the game. It's the same as anything else; school, a sport. If you want to be good at something you have to obtain knowledge on it first, and then perform what you've learned. I've put in a lot of time trying different types of workout routines over the last ten years or so, but I feel as if I've reached a peak in my training ever since I adopted the idea to combine a mix of gymnastics, calisthenics, and dynamic yoga into my work.

Those are my specialty areas.

The Banner: So, you're basically creating your own brand of fitness?

Sean: You could say that. Right now I work for a relatively new organization called FLO Fitness. We are incorporating different types of workout routines for athletes with an emphasis on performance training that includes intense focus on mobility and individual joint health rather than solely focusing on strength training or a specific size being attained. We are all about long term workouts for general health. What people tend to forget is that there is health and strength that can be gained by movement. Clean, well functioning body movement can work as a vitamin and, while the logistics of movement in different body part can get specific, this type of training will bring about a more natural and distinct overall fitness to the body. Thus, it will make athletes more well conditioned and healthy both on and off the field.

The Banner: Sounds intriguing... but what would you say to a person that has no athletic aspirations and just wants knowledge on how to be in better shape and/or health?

Sean: You see, that's what I think the majority of us don't understand about ourselves. What made human beings the dominant species to begin with was the fact that we developed into these multi-faceted creatures who could climb, sprint, throw things, swing from things, etc. And

anybody who can do those things has the ability to be an athlete. So, in theory, we are all athletes. All injuries, unless you're shot or attacked, are athletic injuries. It doesn't necessarily have to happen at a game or a practice. It could happen while you're walking around your job. It could happen in your kitchen. You don't really have to be into sports or playing sports in order for movement training to help you get into shape or maintain good health. Body types are genetic. What works for one person might not work for another. Gyms and traditional training can be dangerous if not done correctly on a consistent basis and really don't offer any real world carry-over in regards to natural body movement; therefore placing unnecessary limits and restrictions upon us in regards to fitness.

"Oh, he has big biceps; he must be so strong". "Oh, she's so skinny; she must be in great health". Not necessarily."

The Banner: There always seems to be a new fad in fitness. Do you think that the general population would be willing to catch on to what you are explaining? And if so, do you think that society will take this type of training out of context?

Sean: I actually believe that the next fad will be minimalist movement training. People really

seem to be taking a stance towards the natural approach of living with diet and lifestyle. Why can't it catch on in a fitness sense? And as far as people taking this new movement out of context goes, I think that that's always going to happen with anything. It's a societal thing. But any word that spreads about this approach is good because, at the very least, it's going to expose people to another way of thinking about things fitness related. Maybe it will up the ante and put more of an emphasis on performance rather than aesthetics, which most people find appealing because they assume that there is some kind of performance quality associated with being big or small. 'Oh, he has big biceps; he must be so strong'. 'Oh, she's so skinny; she must be in great health'. Not necessarily. At some point, life is your game. At some point, life is your battle. You want to be well prepared all around physically and minimalist movement training is the way to do that. Even with all of the evolving we have already done as a species, more can still be attained. People just have to open their minds to new, interesting, and challenging kinds of ideas. It would be a nice breath of fresh air for most and a lot of the techniques are very hands on and fun. Double that with the fact that this type of training works as a way to minimize the risk of an injury and maximize recovery time post-injury and we have basically struck gold. Hopefully we will see this movement take off soon.

BANNER ARTS

Night Film: A Hypnotic Modern Day Novel

Prepare for a Scotch Drenched Investigation

BY JEAN-CLAUDE QUINTYNE

The latest reel of drama inserted into the projector of Academy Award Winning film director Stanislas Cordova's life begins when his daughter, the musical prodigy Ashley Cordova, commits suicide by jumping down an out-of-service elevator shaft. It is this incident that jolts the story's protagonist, Scott McGrath, into action.

"A whirling, glittering, multifaceted marvel... An irrepressibly smart and flamboyant new voice."

- The New York Times

Set in 2011 New York, Night Film, by Marisha Pessl, follows McGrath, an award winning investigative journalist, as he begins rebuilding his life, recovering from a divorce and a million dollar lawsuit filed against him by the estate of Mr. Cordova, as he investigates the suicide of the director's daughter.

"Mortal fear is as crucial a thing to our lives as love," Marisha Pessl stated. "Will you curl up with your eyes closed and die? Or will you fight your way out of it and fly?" Such functions as one of the themes of this novel; McGrath embarks on a treacherous journey that shifts between clarity and absurdity, caus-

ing him to question his motives and his sanity, cloaked by ominous shadow of Stanislas Cordova.

Information about Mr. Cordova, the antagonist who has not made a public appearance since a 1977 interview with Rolling Stone, is accumulated throughout the novel as we read the evidence that McGrath gathers during the investigation. The information paints a haunt-

ing, disturbing, and mysterious image of the cult film director that blindly encourages us to turn the pages.

Throughout the novel Pessl incorporates articles from the New York Times, slideshows from TIME.com, select pages of McGrath's files on Cordova, screenshots of the Blackboards, a website made by extremist fans of Mr. Cordova, called Cordovites, and many other interactive features to keep readers up to pace with and participate in the investigation.

Readers know everything that McGrath knows and become just as paranoid, frustrated,

and confused.

McGrath's journey is filled with so many twists and turns that one often forgets what he's trying to accomplish and it doesn't let up, he never gets a break. This continues all the way to the end, where the illusion that things may have a logical ending becomes an investigation itself.

Just as Mr. Cordova is a haunting presence in the story, his deceased daughter is also. Ashley's red coat, a flickering red color that McGrath is rattled by in the rain and scotch-drenched prologue, serves as a veil that readers aren't aware they're wearing.

Her presence guides McGrath, but whether or not it is there to tell him to stop the investigation or continue it, can only be answered at the end.

A jarring sequence begins when McGrath enlists the help of a psychic, one of the people Ashley visits days before her death. He discovers that voodoo, a practice he knows nothing cares about, may have played a factor in Ashley's suicide.

And when McGrath's young daughter gets wrapped up in the magic, he is thrown into a mental frenzy in which he questions his lifelong sanity.



Pessl meticulously creates a very familiar New York, where readers see McGrath jogging through Central Park and chasing perpetrators down Fifth Avenue, and captures a world where one's motives and skepticism are put to a mentally disturbing and exhausting test.

Impractical Jokers to Go Wild on Primetime

An Interactive Perspective from the Studio Audience

BY LUCIA ROSSI

Since television viewers can't get enough of Impractical Jokers, The Tenderloins comedy troupe are getting their own six episode comedy spinoff series called: Jokers Wild. The Jokers will consist of Staten Island's own Brian "Q" Quinn, James "Murr" Murray, Joseph "Joe" Gatto, and Salvatore "Sal" Vulcano.

Jokers Wild is unlike the Jokers usual filming style. This show is studio based rather than the constant use of hidden cameras and includes taped field pieces, in-studio games and special guests. It's an improvisational show with comedic skits and a live studio audience, one of which I was lucky to be a part of.

Tickets for the show were either bought or won in contests on The Impractical Jokers Twitter. The film location was temporary. They rented a catering hall in Gowanus, Brooklyn that was transformed into a comfortable living room setting with couches, chairs, cameras, bright lights, television screens, props, and wires.

Before the audience could enter the hall, however, on that June 18th afternoon, everyone had to wait outside on a long line beneath the blazing sun. The backstage crew required audience members to wear wristbands, sign waivers, to maintain secrecy, however, they were not thorough with the process because many people, including myself, did neither.

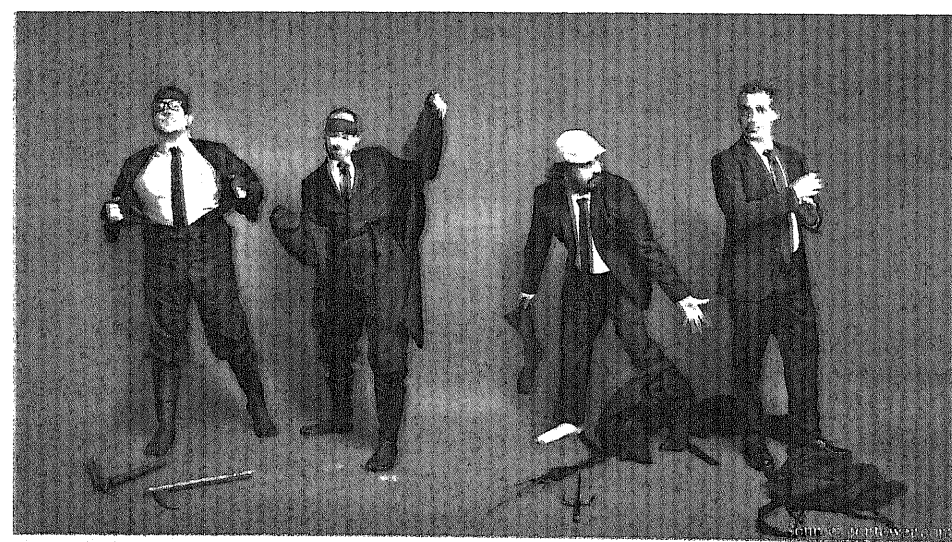
When it came time to go through security,

all outside drinks needed to be thrown out, bags checked, bodies felt for weapons, and scanning done with metal detectors. Security was friendly with the crowd as they checked us one by one.

Once inside, the backstage crew tried to seat everyone with the ones they arrived with, but seats were limited and groups had to separate. Free pictures, a booklet, and small water bottles were left on each seat for the audience but needed to be kept out of sight for filming. Everyone was asked previously to not wear white for the show, but this rule was not enforced.

There were four large cameras placed in and around the audience. The director encouraged the crowd to laugh loudly and to bring energy because that is what would encourage the Joker's performance. While still preparing to start the show, comedian Nick Turner was hired to entertain. He asked audience members where they were from and what they did and improvised jokes based off of that. In between scenes, Turner, also, came out to keep us laughing and in a good mood.

Finally Sal, Q, Murr, and Joe were ready to go. Although this is an improv show, most of the show was scripted, but that didn't make it any less funny. Every couple of lines, the Jokers had to redo the lines just done from one camera into another so different shots could be taken, they called it the one shot camera and four shot camera. As the studio audience, we were required to laugh as though we just heard



The jokers bring their absurdity to prime time television

the joke for the first time even though we heard it several times.

"It's called acting," Sal said jokingly as he told the audience what to do after a certain line was said.

During filming, the Jokers would stop and change lines or actions to different things they were funny until the director picked which he liked best. The director would say what he liked or didn't like, for instance cursing wasn't tolerated because of the TV-14 rating. Joe seemed to be the Joker to lead the troupe during filming, he would direct and speak out the most on what and how they were to run things.

Two advantages to being in the crowd was being able to see pre-taped sketches on their television screens before they air and seeing

surprise guest stars such as comedian Steve Byrne and Man Vs. Food star Adam Richman. Since two episodes were filmed during this sitting, one guest star played the mailman that delivers fan mail in each episode. They even pulled out an audience member to be in the show because of his much admired afro.

When filming was over, audience members waited outside for pictures with the Jokers. Everyone in the building needed to be out before a certain time so closing was a rushed process. The Jokers were heading out as well so only they had a few minutes to spare for pictures and autographs but they were glad to see their dedicated fans.

Jokers Wild will be on the TruTV network starting September 25 on Thursdays at 10PM.

BANNER ARTS

Marvel Upsets Comic Fans With Sex Change

Thor Gets a Shocking Makeover

BY JEREMY L. PASKER

Given the subtle (read: rampant) misogyny of my beloved US of A, it is only natural that the first person to comment, for the Banner, on the newest gender alterations for the Norse God would be a writer with a penis.

The female Thor has seen a fair share of criticism from feminists and non-feminists alike. Feminists write that it's only an appeasement to avoid more substantial gender equity in comic books. Non-feminists indignantly harp about authenticity and staying true to comic book roots.

Whether or not Marvel is copping out is interesting in particular. For sure, this move is definitely the easy way out, certainly easier than inventing a brand new character from scratch and hoping audience's latch onto her. Or highlight a less popular (read: mainstream) already female character within the Marvel Universe. The argument against that is, of course, with a character already established there's no need to promote the character from scratch and that there is already a bulk audience waiting to buy copies of the newest issue.

But in a way, choosing the easier of the two options, they've shackled themselves to a pre-written narrative. How far will the writers be willing to sway from the essential properties inherent to a character? A gender change, no matter how innocuous, is still a radical change.

It's the same with the shift to a Black Captain America or a Muslim Ms. Marvel. As a

woman, Thor would experience, see, and interact with the world differently than a man would.

Will there be references to societal misogyny and sexism? Will there be realistic lady banter, and or hobbies when Thor isn't slaying villains? How often will they illustrate issues specific to women?

Female identity is very complex like all identity is, male, Black, Italian, Greek, Iraqi, or whatever. The tropes and clichés shown on the Hollywood projector are but the tip of a Titanic sinking iceberg. There is so much still drifting beneath the surface, more dynamics waiting to rise, be seen and be heard. Not exploring the abundance of other issues that explain what it is to be female during modern times would do the character a disservice. It shouldn't be a female



Thor that just punches ice giants.

From my vantage point, that is exactly what this next wielder of Mjölfnir will wind up becoming, simply a male Thor with breasts rather than a female Thor with a female personality and female traits.

Jason Aaron, the writer for the newest Nordic thunder God, commented after breaking the news to the public that "This is not She-Thor. This is not Lady Thor. This is not Thorita. This is Thor."

I can picture him grunt and scratch himself as he said it. No offense to Marvel and the new artists that will continue the story as it evolves for a more diverse audience but that was so condescending. Thor won't have a beard or a chiseled square jaw but don't worry fellas, Thor will still be masculine. Wink. Wink.

Not everyone is as cynical as me though when it comes to the newest addition to Marvels leading lady protagonists.

"Changes like the one being made to Thor are not about creating new exclusionary measures that erase older models," wrote Samantha Langsdale for a piece in the Guardian. "Rather they are about broadening our field of observation. Geek culture is made up of, and enjoyed by, all kinds of people and our norms should reflect that."

The prominence of a diverse comic nerd culture is illustrated by a recent Graphic Policy study. It showed that 47% of comic fans are female, and women made up 62% of the Facebook fans of female comic characters (including Black Widow, Elektra and She-Hulk). Not a scientific sample size but informative nonetheless.

The transition from male to female genitalia on Thor may have a bigger impact on readers regardless of the impression some may have that it's disingenuous. If nothing else comic books will need to adjust or fear the ire of organized feminists, which won't help sales.

During promotions for the new character, Marvel cryptically posed the rhetorical questions: "Who is she? Where did she come from and what is her connection to Asgard and the Marvel universe?" The audience was left to ponder amongst themselves.

I guess we will have to buy the comic when it comes out in October to find out. Or read the spoilers on Twitter.

Avengers Step Aside for a Hip New Team

Guardians of the Galaxy Embark on an Interstellar Journey

BY LUCIA ROSSI

To put it simply, Guardians of the Galaxy is like Star Wars meets Spaceballs. It is an epic galactic adventure that fills viewers of all ages with tears of joy, laughter, and sorrow.

This new Marvel installment has been long awaited by fans since it was announced in 2012 San Diego Comic-Con by Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige. With a total

worldwide gross of \$313 million, the wait was well worth it.

The story of the Guardians begins with the charismatic human Peter Quill aka Star-Lord, played by Chris Pratt, who discovers more than he bargained for while on his bounty hunt for a mysterious and powerful orb. Ronan the Accuser, played by Lee Pace, is the main villain who plans on using the orb for an all-

powerful and merciless takeover of the galaxy.

Along the way, Quill obtains some unlikely friends who fight by his side to save all the inhabitants of the planet Xandar. This band of misfits include: Rocket Raccoon the genius weapon engineer voiced by Bradley Cooper, Groot the innocent tree-like humanoid of few words voiced by Vin Diesel, Gamora the beautiful yet deadly green assassin played by Zoe Saldana, and Drax the Destroyer driven by revenge played by David Bautista.

Throughout the film, viewers are reminded how human Peter Quill is by the constant playing of his 26 year old Walkman in which he listens to music from the 70's and the 80's. Guardians has been continuously praised for its soundtrack through Star-Lord's "Awesome Mix Vol. 1" cassette tape. Besides the trailer's theme "Hooked on a Feeling" by Blue Swede, the film also plays hits such as "Come and Get your Love" by Redbone, "Go All the Way" by The Raspberries, "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)" by Rupert Holmes and "Cherry Bomb" by The Runaways.

The film was fast paced but without plot holes and questions of character. Every minute of Guardians was enjoyable because of

its diverse cast with their clashing personalities, tragic backgrounds, and loveable humor. What made the film such a success was that it could be relatable to anyone and people could connect to the strong acts of friendship and family rather than romance.

What is most commendable about each actor's performance is all the sacrifices that were made for their roles. Chris Pratt lost 60lbs in six months for the role of Peter Quill, Karen Gillan shaved her head for the role of evil villain Nebula, Vin Diesel invoked Paul Walker's death to help bring more emotion to his performance, and director James Gunn actually met with live raccoons for the film to get a better feeling for Rocket's character. Their actions showed real dedication and their contributions made Guardians all the more merrier.

Before Marvel even knew how well the film would do, they announced at the end of the Guardians film that there will be a sequel. The return of the Guardians is scheduled to be released on July 28, 2017 with James Gunn who will write and direct again. Gunn admitted at San Diego Comic-Con 2014 that there is a possibility of an Avengers crossover in the next film. The fans can only hope.



Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, and other stars trample through the universe

SPORTS

Women's Soccer Sets High Bar for New Season

Lady Dolphin's Looking to Shift Focus on Defense

BY MICHAEL PAPANDREA

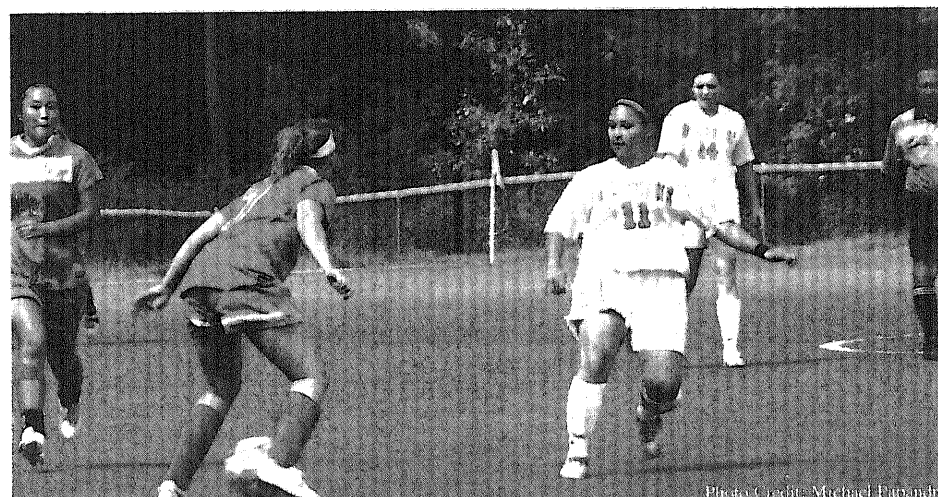
After being upset in the CUNYAC Finals by Brooklyn College last season, CSI will look to take a more balanced approach with all-time leading scorer, Demi-Jean Martorano, having completed her final season.

Last season, CSI was one of the biggest offensive threats in and out of their conference. They scored 80 goals on the season and only gave up 16 goals on defense. While 16 may not sound like much, it is a lot to head coach, John Guagliardo, who enters his eleventh season with the Dolphins.

"Offense was never our problem," said Guagliardo. "We were sixth in the nation in scoring last year. On defense we gave up 16 goals. We haven't given up 16 goals in most of the years I've been here. The primary concern is defense."

Kaitlin Russo, Adrianna Parello, and Stefani Rivera are newcomers that Guagliardo expects to play an important role on the defensive side. Danielle Smith makes her return after she was injured in the second game last season.

Smith is a junior who transferred from Clinton Community College who were two year national champions. Guagliardo predicts



Smith will be a sleeper for teams to deal with, since other schools didn't get to see her play much last season.

"She is probably the biggest key because she is a defensive machine," said Coach Guagliardo.

Some key players making their return for the final season are goalie Victoria Donegan, defenseman, Nina Chaiken, defenseman, Alyssa Colasurdo, and forward Samantha Wysokowski.

Wysokowski, who scored 26 goals in her sophomore year to break the school record for

most goals in a season, comes back for her senior year. Last season, Demi-Jean tied her record with 26 goals while Wysokowski scored 22.

The third best scorer on the team was Danielle Alexandrini with five goals. It will be interesting to see who steps up along side Wysokowski to be one of the top goal scorers on the team.

"Keep in mind we had Demi who got 25-30 goals a year," said Guagliardo. "[This year] I might have 10 girls that get 5-6 each. It actually may be a better team. Not because Demi is leaving. Demi is a great player, obviously. Best

one we've ever had. But the reality is, could we be a better team well-rounded? Yeah, because there's more parts coming in."

Donegan, who holds the second most saves in the program's history, will come back for her final year after she was red-shirted last season. With her as the goalkeeper, and the stress Guagliardo is putting on the defensive play, the team is primed to blank opponents.

"Last year we were one dimensional. We could score on anybody," said Guagliardo. "It was who outscored who. This year we are gonna be able to shut you down."

The Dolphins start the season with their third annual Fall Classic against Illinois I.T on August 30 at home. They will go on to play seven more games at home until they see their first road game.

Six of the eight teams they face to start the season will be tough out of conference matches. Coach Guagliardo, who made the schedule, did not try to make it easy on himself or his team from the start.

"It's the toughest schedule we've seen in my 11 years," said Guagliardo. "The idea is to play a tough out of conference schedule so when we go into conference I don't wanna just beat teams, I want to annihilate them."

NBA FREE AGENCY & NFL PREQUAL

BY ANDREW LIBERATORE

As the NBA Free Agency period begins to wrap up (it wasn't short of drama), lets take a look back at some of the biggest signings of the offseason thus far and where some of those teams stand right now.

In possibly the biggest sports story of the year, LeBron James is heading back to his old team, the Cleveland Cavaliers on a two-year deal worth about \$42 million. After going to four straight NBA Finals and winning two of them with the Miami Heat, LeBron has announced in a letter to Sports Illustrated, "I'm coming home." This changes the landscape of the Eastern Conference as the Cavs now look to be one of the favorites after adding the best player on the planet and with two All Stars, Kyrie Irving and the newly acquired Kevin Love. Anything less than the Eastern Conference bid will be a disappointment for this trio of superstars to anyone covering the team over the season.

After flirting with the Chicago Bulls and the Los Angeles Lakers, Carmelo Anthony has decided to stay put in New York on a groundbreaking five-year deal worth \$124 million. The Knicks did their job, inking their star player as they try to get back into the picture in the Eastern Conference and make the Playoffs after missing it last season. Knicks President, Phil Jackson has been busy this offseason. He also traded Center Tyson Chandler to the Dallas Mavericks for two draft picks and Point Guard Jose Calderon, a position where the

Knicks struggled mightily last season. Now that Carmelo has secured his riches, the ball is in Stoudemire's court to play well enough to deserve his next year. Carmelo posted slimmed down pics of himself over Instagram, paving the way for Stoudemire to man his preferred Power forward position. Stoudemire has said he is 100% fit so there are no more excuses.

After losing the best player in the world, the Miami Heat found a way to make some noise in free agency by keeping All-Star

"I never said I had to have the top corner in football," said Coach Ryan, referencing Darrelle Revis, who he coached from 2009 to 2012. "My defenses work, period. I don't care what anybody thinks. We take what we have and we work around it."

Forward Chris Bosh and signing him to an incredible five-year deal worth \$118 million (Kudos on that heist by the way; way to fleece a desperate team, Chris Bosh). The Heat also kept their other main piece Dwayne Wade by signing him to a two-year contract worth \$31 million. By keeping 2/3 of their Big Three, then adding Luol Deng, Miami should definitely stay more than relevant in a still ordinary Eastern Conference (especially given the tragedy that to the Pacers and their superstar Paul George).

The end of NBA Free Agency signals the return of the billion-dollar behemoth the NFL for those salivating at the bit since the end of the Prowbowl. To true NFL fans the draft is a

mere tease. It's like getting to first base with the most attractive person in class.

Live football is what we've all been waiting for, to see what good teams from last year have done to build on their success, and whether the bums from last year have done enough to redeem themselves. Given how often the NFL sewer dwellers jettison to the mountaintop over the course of one offseason, every fan is hopeful their team could be next.

The Giants are coming off of a season where they struggled as much as anyone in the

league at times last year. They made a couple of pretty good offseason acquisitions, though, on both offense and defense. On offense they signed running back Rashad Jennings to a four-year \$14 million contract, who's expected to come in and start right away. They then drafted Wide Receiver Odell Beckham Jr. from LSU, in the first round to give Eli Manning another weapon to work with, after losing Hakim Nicks to the Colts.

On the defensive side of the ball the Giants made two really nice signings. They brought in Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, from the Broncos to a five-year \$39 million contract. He is expected to shadow the opposing teams number one receiver all year long.

They then signed Walter Thurmond away from the Seahawks, to a one-year deal worth \$3.5 million, who's expected to man the nickel position, easing the responsibilities thrust upon Antrel Rolle every year since he's arrived in Big Blue. Rolle will now exclusively play safety, taking advantage of his ball hawk skills. Though the Giants will be a better football team in 2014, as always, they will have a hard time competing in the always-tough NFC East, where the Eagles will have another year to master Chip Kelly's prolific offense and the Washington will have a healthy RGIII and the added speed of Deshaun Jackson on offense to couple with that sack happy 3-4 defense.

The Jets will start the 2014 season after shocking a lot of people with an 8-8 record last year. The Jets needed to go out and get a lot of help on offense this offseason and they did their part. They signed former Broncos Wide Receiver Eric Decker to a five-year contract worth about \$36 million and former Titans running back Chris Johnson to a two-year deal worth \$8 million. The Jets also drafted tight end Jace Amaro from Texas Tech. The Jets really didn't touch the defensive side of the ball too much, nor did they need too. They drafted Louisville safety Calvin Pryor to help with their secondary that struggled last year and to help take a little pressure off of one of the league's best defensive lines. The Jets should be a better team in 2014, but Geno Smith has to take the next step for them to seriously contend with New England in the AFC East.