

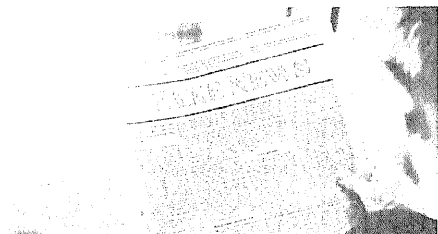
THE BANNER

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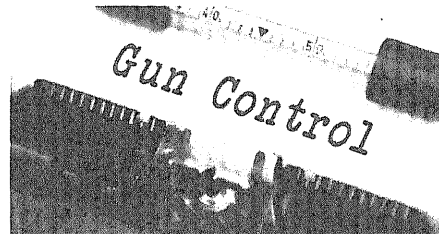
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Memphis Man Overcomes Drugs, Crime, & Homelessness for Education

College Changes the Life of a Comic Book Artist

BY: LUCIA ROSSI

At 13-years-old, Memphis, Tennessee-born Ashshahid Muhammad was tried as an adult for committing robbery.

He was then sentenced to eight years in a juvenile facility.

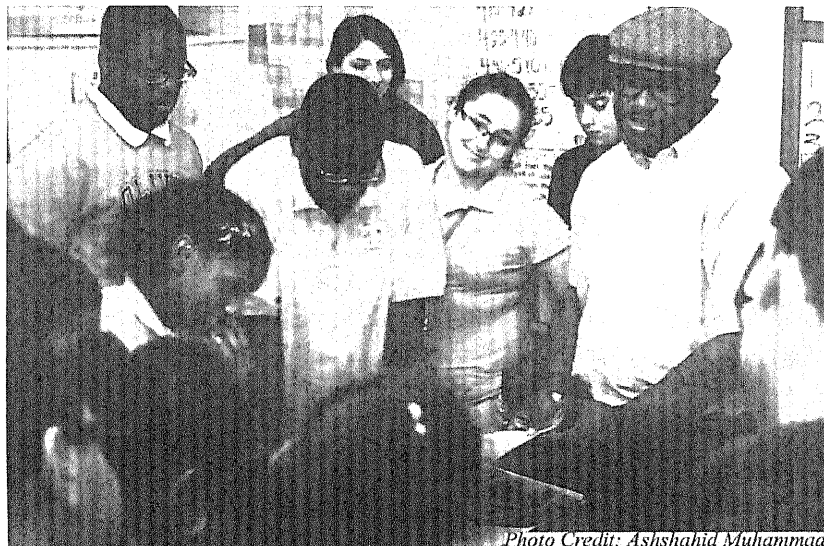
Muhammad referred to himself as a "rebellious child" and said his mother tried her best but, "the streets had me." He was selling drugs, stealing cars, and breaking into houses.

As the years went by in the facility, he said, "I did not know what it felt like to be free no more."

It was there, however, that he started passing the time by drawing cartoons. This was his escape, as there was a lot of violence in the facility between gangs.

At 19 years old, he was released early.

"I was lost in time. Everything had changed," he said. "My friends was not riding bikes no more. They was driving cars. They was not living with their parents no more. They had their



Muhammad enjoys teaching youth about gangs, guns, violence, and crime but also art.

own apartments. My family was like strangers to me."

Although this was an opportunity for Muhammad to change his life for the better, he was back to selling drugs and stealing cars.

"After doing all that time, everyone thought I would for sure go on the right path, I did not," he said. "It felt like I never was there."

After some time, there was high gang violence activity and drive-by shootings became the norm during the day and night.

"I never really wanted to shoot or kill my own people," he said. "But selling dope and living in the streets... that comes with it."

On May 25, 1997, Muhammad and his friend Robert McCraney were shot multiple times.

Muhammad was left with gun fragments in his head, arm, and chest and became blind in his right eye. His friend's gunshot wounds left him paralyzed on his whole right side.

At the age of 21, Muhammad

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Hey, Watch Where You're Parking!

CSI Faculty Member With Disabilities is Blocked From Car in the Cold

BY: LUCIA ROSSI

Very often on campus, students can be seen creating their own makeshift parking spots, perhaps out of desperation.

Apparently, faculty members do this as well.

People who are guilty should know it is often illegal, and if it is over blue grid lines next to handicap spaces-- it is debilitating to drivers with disabilities.

Peter Galati, a faculty member who uses a wheelchair for mobility, has experienced this inconvenience on four to five occasions on campus since 2013.

One memorable incident took place on February 13, 2016, where Galati returned to parking lot 2 at approximately 6:30pm and found that he was unable to get back into his car. Because another vehicle illegally parked over the no-parking grid line, there was no room to open his ramp out of the side door of the car to get him inside.

"Unlike other times when this happened to me, I was alone and the campus offices were closed," Galati said.

After checking 1A, no public safety officers were found, so Galati called his coworkers to see if any were still on campus.

Another faculty member, Victor Miller, agreed to come to Galati's rescue in lot 1, but due to traffic on the loop road, he took nearly 40 minutes to drive there from lot 4.

Galati resorted to calling public safety and after speaking to the dispatcher, they arrived a few

Continued on pg #4

CSI Faculty & Students Speak about Sexual Harassment

MSW Candidates Comment on Rape and College Culture

BY: LISA VIVIANI GORIS

Sexual allegations are reaching incredible new highs in Hollywood as of late, yet it may be unclear as to what these allegations actually are.

Merriam-Webster online defines sexual harassment as "uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature, especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student)."

The question remains, though,

whether this definition may be subjective.

Since the story broke in the New York Times on October 5, the one detailing sexual misconduct allegations surrounding Harvey Weinstein, every morning seems to be met with more reports of allegations involving professionals from media outlets, as well as other industries.

Prompted by the online movement #MeToo, in which

Alyssa Milano encouraged anyone with personal experience of sexual harassment and/or assault to speak out, an outcry of unexpected proportions has swept the nation.

Initially, Milano prompted women to speak out, but men also used the hashtag in their Facebook and Twitter posts. The movement certainly brings to light the magnitude of this epidemic.

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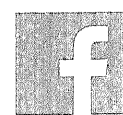
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BANNER POLITICS

Commentary: President Trump Retweets Fake News

The President is Sending a Clear And Dangerous Message

BY: HAZIQ NAEEM

On November 29, President Trump retweeted three tweets from a leader of the extremist group, Britain First, allegedly showing Muslims committing acts of violence.

One of the tweets, appeared to show a Muslim migrant beating a Dutch boy on crutches, which was later proven false by the Dutch embassy.

The other two retweets, which remain unverified, portray events in war torn countries without context, and have numerous other issues with the accuracy and content shown.

None of this has deterred President Trump from standing by the tweets and the messages they convey to Muslims around the world.

The President of The United States retweeting an extremist group is worrisome by itself, and this isn't the first time he has done so.

It is appalling that the leader of this country follows such groups, let alone endorses them through retweets on social media.

It should also be worrisome that much of what Trump has said or done, including this recent episode of tweets, has provided Nazis and other hate groups with enthusiasm and excitement.

The messages communicated by the tweets, however shocking they may seem, keep in line with Trump's past statements and agenda towards those of the Muslim faith.

The purpose of the retweets, according to a White House spokesperson, was to "promote strong borders and national security."

It is clear the authenticity of the videos do not matter, and that the videos do not serve to achieve the stated goals.

"The threat is real", according to the spokesperson. This statement provides



Photo Credit: Jim Bourg, Reuters

useful insight into what the White House, and those that support the administration, think of Muslims.

The message being conveyed is that what matters to Trump and his supporters is their own prejudice. They are willing to cause harm with their policies, regardless of whether it does anything to actually reduce the threat of terrorism.

Propagating the videos and implying the accuracy does not matter. It also serves to deliberately paint all Muslims as somehow complicit or approving of events in the videos.

The threat, according to the White House on numerous occasions, is not just extremists, but the Islamic faith, and therefore Muslims need to be dealt with.

This should be a terrifying prospect for everyone in the United States; not because the President is uncaring of actual threats or facts, but that he is willing to fabricate accusations to further act on his own prejudice.

Not only does the President have no understanding of where the actual threat of terrorism lies, but he is also targeting a group of people, many of whom are American citizens, on the basis of their religious, racial, and national identity.

This is a major cause for concern.

He is sending a message to Muslim Americans that he does not see them as Ameri-

In reality, his actions only serve to worsen the problem of terrorism, anger and distance our allies, and propagate a false and dangerous message.

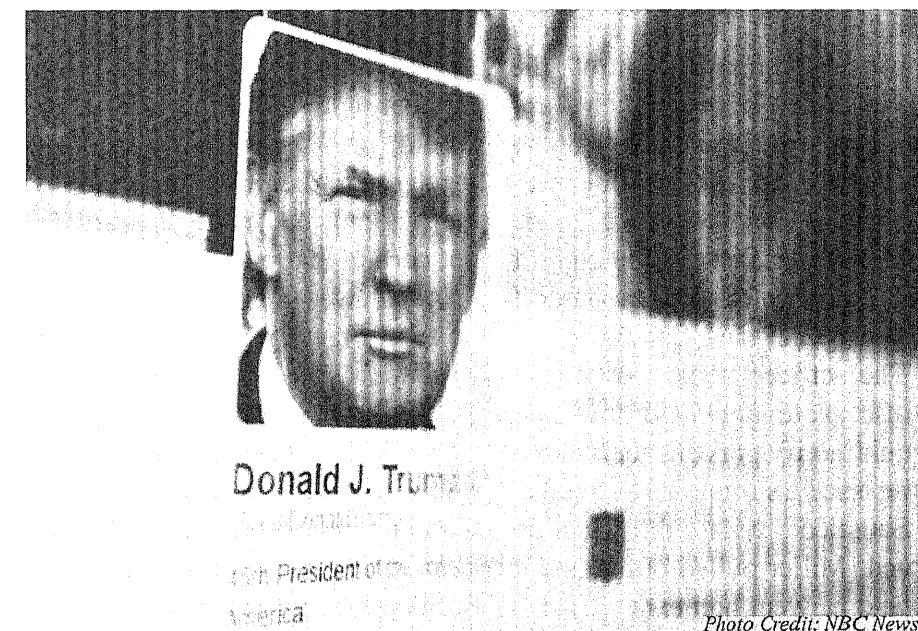
The retweets also serve to normalize such conversation and rhetoric about Muslims, which makes his proposed ban on all Muslims more likely.

The message being sent to people of the Muslim faith within the United States is harrowing. He has displayed that he does not represent them, that he doesn't want them within the country and will actively work to make their lives worse.

This strikes fear and resentment into the hearts of many Muslim American citizens who already feel as if they are being unfairly treated in the name of fighting terrorism.

Republican lawmakers have defended those tweets, showing that there is a much higher tolerance for hatred and bigotry within the halls of power than we would have previously thought.

Such beliefs and actions disseminated by the President of The United States and defended by our legislators should be reason for even the staunchest of Republicans to think about whether they want their country heading down this path, and how it would at all benefit them.



Donald J. Trump

President of the United States

Photo Credit: NBC News

BANNER NEWS

"Memphis Man"

Continued from Front Page

At the age of 21, Muhammad didn't realize that he was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression. Without this knowledge, he started medicating himself with alcohol and hardcore drugs.

"Things had gotten so bad I wanted to just die," he said. "People that knew me was devastated."

After attempting to get clean in rehab, the struggle of losing his eye became too much. Muhammad then decided to travel because he felt the need to get away.

In 2005, he came to New York, but was homeless and turned to crime, maintaining his drug addiction.

"This time I was far from home and knew no one," he said. "I slept in every borough. Staten Island was where I did the most drugs and crime."

After being in many rehabs and shelters, Muhammad was losing hope. After traveling to Miami and repeating the same vicious cycle, he landed back home in Tennessee.

In 2013, he entered rehab there, only to get out of the

cold, not knowing this was where his life would finally change for the better.

Muhammad went back to school to get his GED. He failed twice and was once again losing hope, but with the help of his teacher, Kenjila Hammonds, he passed two

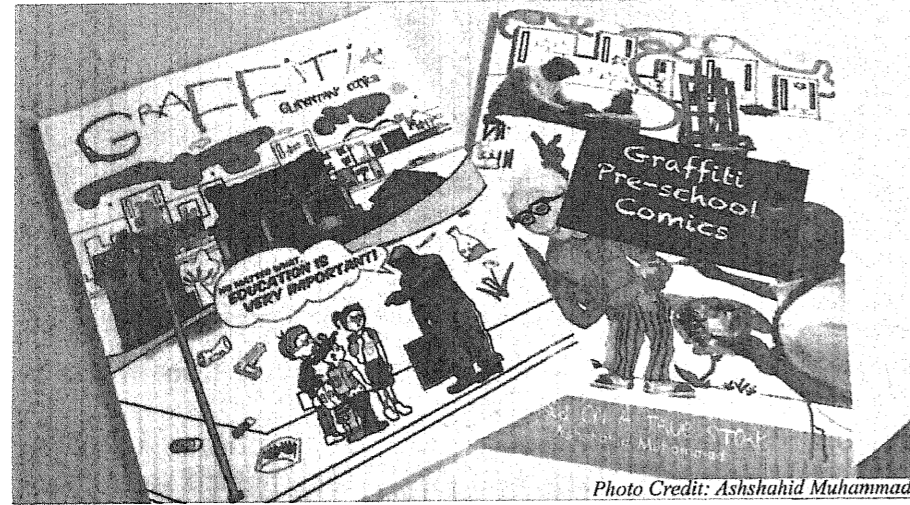


Photo Credit: Ashshahid Muhammad
Ashshahid Muhammad's books are "Graffiti Pre-school Comics", "Graffiti Elementary Comics 1 and 2", "Graffiti Elementary Comics Special Edition" and "Graffiti Girls Academy Comics".

weeks later. Muhammad was so amazed because he was so accustomed to failure, that he was in tears.

In 2014, Muhammad enrolled in the Nossi College of Art, where he became inspired and was given hope by Jean-Michel Basquiat's story, that was very similar to his

However, the next morning, Galati followed up with public safety.

"I followed up with parking services to verify that the summons was issued and they seemed unaware of the incident and said it did not appear that a summons was issued. I asked for one to be, and explained that I had photos, but was told that a summons could not be retroactively issued," he said.

"They took down the plate number and indicated that they would 'see if it was possible' to reach out to the driver and 'talk to them about this incident,' but I'm not certain that ever happened."

Galati was then referred to public safety faculty member, Donna Rosendorf, who also spoke with Robert Yurman, to which they decided that if Galati notified public safety of where he parks and his schedule, they would do their best to patrol the area and prevent this from happening again.

own.

"There, art was not just art," he said. "It was art that said something to the world."

While in college, Muhammad entered a mentoring program where he would go to schools and share his story. It was there that he decided to

create comics about his life and the people he knew.

"No one cared about homeless people. I wanted to speak for them through my art," he said. "No matter if drugs and alcohol had defeated them."

Muhammad wrote, designed, and published his own comic books. Five are pub-

"Although this is a very generous offer, it's unfair to both me, disabled drivers, and public safety," Galati said.

"I have mixed feelings about how public safety handled this. On the one hand, I greatly appreciate their focus on solving the incident in the moment and their later offer to patrol the area near my car in an effort to try and prevent future occurrences, but I'm disappointed that the ball was dropped and that nothing was done regarding the driver in question."

At this point, Galati's goal is to prevent this from happening to himself and other people with disabilities by raising awareness and encouraging students to make reports.

"It's important for the campus to know, because it impacts the lives of the disabled population on campus. It impacts their ability to come and go as other members of the community do, and because it's preventable," he said.

lished and are based on true stories.

"Through my books, I educate the youth about drugs, gangs, guns, bullying, and jail," he said. "I want the youth to have a guide that can help them see through other people's experience."

Muhammad moved to New York two years ago and is currently living on Staten Island. He took up digital art at Bronx Community College and has a goal of producing animated films based on his books.

"Creating art for me is where I find peace. It's my outlet for every emotion that I deal with," he said.

Muhammad's comics are available now at the LuLu Publishing Company, Barnes and Noble, and Amazon. He is also currently working on new comics that will be out later this year.

"I'm not struggling with drugs no more. I go to Narcotics Anonymous meetings and hang with drug-free people," he said.

"I thank God I am no longer a slave to drugs."

Although it may seem extreme, Galati debated if having a vehicle towed would be an appropriate action. A ticket may send a message, but it doesn't provide a solution in a dire situation, like the one he experienced at night.

He acknowledged that he was lucky to have someone move his car for him, but other people may not be so lucky, especially if they have a different type of car created for people with disabilities.

"We all face the struggle of parking and the frustration of not finding a spot, and many people may not be aware that parking in places, like the wheelchair grids, can seriously hamper someone else's ability to utilize the spot," Galati said.

"So, I think education and awareness are primary. I think part of this may be the postage of additional signage in front of the grids indicating that they are no parking zones."

BANNER NEWS

"Sexual Harassment"

Continued from Front Page

This issue can be translated right here, at CSI.

Lara Halwani, a student in the MSW program, says she feels that society is "finally holding devious men accountable for their misconduct in the workplace," and that if women continue to empower each other, we can resolve the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Halwani agrees that harassment can be subjective and states, "I do feel that some allegations must be thoroughly investigated, though, because of the subjective nature of the topic."

In a research study exploring rape culture, MSW candidate

"Education is key to understanding the importance of sexual harassment and rape culture."

Nicole Rufo focused on rape myths and culture amongst undergraduate and graduate social work students at CSI.

Rufo surveyed approximately 70 students utilizing a questionnaire based on a peer-reviewed survey.

Rufo said her work examined beliefs surrounding rape myths. An example of one of her survey questions was, "if a girl is dressed 'slutty' she is asking for it."

The questions were scored on a scale from zero-to-five: scoring a zero meant not believing in rape myths, whereas a five meant a strong believe in rape myths.

According to Rufo, "the majority of the questions had a score of one to three, which

on the surface looks great—that our student body doesn't believe in rape myths—but my feeling is, that if you even have any sort of belief, that there is an issue."

Based on her research findings, Rufo believes that college students may be somewhat unaware of what harassment is.

"While my study focused on rape myths and culture—based on the findings and the research that went into the project—I would assume that there is a lack of understanding of consent and rape culture as a whole, which could imply that their [awareness of] harassment is lacking as well," says Rufo.

At the University of Connecticut, professor of English and Feminist Theory and accomplished author, Dr. Regina Barreca, clarifies the subjectivity surrounding harassment.

"Harassment is when there is an uneven distribution of power within the relationship and that the person with the power is using to get what they want without acknowledging the response of the other person involved. I hug my students when they look sad or when they just got into grad school, but I ask if they'd like a hug before I do it," Barreca said.

To any professor for whom this may be unclear, Barreca offers, "And here's why

"Flirtation is different from grabbing; making a pass is different from someone in a position of power who is using that power to coerce or demand satisfaction of their appetites;"

it's not okay for professors to sleep with their students: the students think they do well because they're sleeping with the professor while what they should understand is that professors only sleep with their A students. The students end up feeling as if THEY are the ones who are 'getting away with something', and it compromises their understanding of their own abilities and excellence."

Barreca translates this explanation to the workplace. "It's the same with bosses having sex with people who work for them. People who are on the same level—who are not gaining or losing professional power or negotiating transactional payoffs based on sexual favors—are in a different arena," explained Barreca.

Barreca also explained why the recent allegations are not threatening to innocent flirtations.

"My own worry is the there is a danger of false equivalencies being made: flirtation is different from grabbing; making a pass is different from someone in a position of power who is using that power to coerce or demand satisfaction of their appetites; exposing yourself is not the same as asking if someone with whom you work would like to meet for a cup of coffee or a drink. You can flirt in public, in a group, in a crowd

"An example of one of her survey questions was, 'if a girl is dressed 'slutty' she is asking for it.'"

and not be worried—the rest you can't. Do only things you wouldn't be ashamed of having somebody say you did."

So, how do we ensure we are all on the same page?

Rufo says education is key to understanding the importance of sexual harassment and rape culture. She attributes students' ideologies to learned gender roles dating back to childhood.

"From a young age people are taught 'if a boy likes you, he'll be mean to you' or 'if you like a guy, you need to play hard to get.' While it may seem silly, these ideologies follow us to adulthood and can bleed into our workplaces making for very unfortunate situations."

Rufo points to a need for a combined educational effort, with seminars educating college students at the start of each semester on campus, and education at home in which young people are taught to respect themselves and others.

In addition to educating college students, victims of sexual harassment need to keep speaking out.

"The mores stories that people allow themselves to tell, with courage and a sense of conviction that they did not "deserve" this or bring it on themselves, the better," said Barreca.

"Voices raised in unison amplify each other, not drown each other out."

LIFESTYLES

'Tis the Season for Springtime Trends

A Breakdown of the Latest Fashion and Beauty Fads

BY: JESSICA SCARIMBOLO

Here it is yet again - the time of year to trade in the fall and winter fashion choices for bright and exciting springtime beauty regimens.

The beauty and fashion trends change as quickly as the seasons, but keeping up is easier than it seems.

Fashion trends in the winter tend to include dark and neutral colors: black, grey, brown and dark green. This could make it seem difficult for some to transform their style to the lighter, more pastel colors that are trendy during the spring.

First, it could be helpful to know that some winter wardrobe pieces help to ease the transition into spring fashion.

In the winter, you can layer an outfit with a zipped up bomber jacket or a denim jacket with a scarf. As for the spring, you can wear the same stylish jacket unzipped with a light colored shirt underneath.

It may seem scary to switch out Ugg boots for gladiator sandals, but the change does not have to be that drastic just yet. While

a staple for the winter is wearing boots, looks can be transformed for the springtime with shorter-styled ankle boots.

When it comes to accessories, some people love wearing scarves during the winter. This trend can remain throughout the spring if you switch out your heavier scarf for one that is lighter and thinner.

Choosing a bright colored scarf with a more neutral outfit is yet another good way to slowly introduce spring trends back into your wardrobe.

While clothing trends are quick to shift, people also choose their nail polishes based on the time of year. Typically, winter is filled with glitters and darker colors such as red, purple, blue, or black.

Once the weather starts getting a little warmer and more comfortable, it could be time to change that nail polish to lighter pastel colors. These could be lavender, yellow, baby blue, and even a soft pink.

Makeup trends, much like the wardrobe trends for winter, predominately revolve around darker colors. As spring gets closer,



Photo Credit: pinterest.com
Three beautiful ladies sporting bright, springtime fashion.

makeup artists are ditching the darker eyeshadows for much a more natural look, incorporating beautiful colors like orange or aqua.

Artists specifically suggest trying natural eyes for those who look for spring makeup ideas.

Typically referred to as "barely there" eye makeup, you can pair this subtle look with a bright red lip for a pop of color.

Some people take seasonal changes to an even further extreme by dying their hair based on the time of year.

Though this is completely

subjective, Marie Claire suggests that people dye their hair darker with cooler tones for the colder months; this means sticking to chestnut browns and ashy blondes. Spring is typically a time to brighten your look up with lighter hair colors, such as blonde or platinum.

Though some people choose to live by the word of Cosmopolitan or Vogue magazine, others decide not to let the media tell them when to wear certain colors or fashion pieces. Therefore, it is important to take the words of this article lightly and fit them into your own style.

Whether a person wears black when its trendy, during the spring, or year round - all are perfectly fine.

While many people find inspiration from the celebrities featured in these fashion magazines, personal and unique trends can be created as well. You can even become the model that your friends look to for trends.

You may not be featured in Cosmo with your new looks, but don't let that stop you from expressing yourself through fashion.

Hard-Working Man Fights Hard to Join Music Industry

CSI Student Targets Big Goals in Music Career Pursuit

BY: TAMAR BELFON

Walter Nieto grew up in the era where hip-hop and R&B music was considered good music. Today, the music industry is very different, and as an aspiring artist, it's difficult to make adjustments just to get noticed.

Nieto developed a passion for music when he was a little kid. He always wanted to be a part of the music industry as his second career, after graduating college with his bachelor's degree.

"I was born around Jagged Edge, 112, DMX, Biggie Smalls, but when we talk about modern music, I listen to PartyNextDoor and The Weekend. Wu-Tang was probably the best since they are from Staten Island," Nieto said.

"I wrote over thirty songs in my lifetime and I even performed for DJ Drewski at a HOT 97 showcase."

Walter Nieto wasn't a shy kid when it came to performing live in front of hundreds of people. Therefore, he knew he could fit in well in the music industry.

He had his first big performance on the Hot 97 radio station, which gave young artists, like Nieto, a chance at fame and

a new life.

Hot 97 had a showcase in New Jersey called Blue Room, where they listened to new artists, or anyone whose voices wanted to be heard.

Nieto decided to go with his friends to take a shot at showcasing his writing and music skills to everyone.

Although Nieto didn't win the competition, he remained grateful that he had the chance to perform.

Nieto performed three of his favorite songs, including "Lonely Stoner."

While taking a year off from school to focus on building an income, he set aside time for his music.

When he had free time, he put all of his energy into crafting his music and lyrics.

He absorbed ideas from every genre, as he wasn't a picky listener. Nieto listened to rock, jazz, afrobeats, metal, etc.

After taking a jazz class at the College of Staten Island, Nieto decided to give jazz a chance.

For one of his assignments, Nieto had to attend a jazz spot in Manhattan, where he surprisingly enjoyed the experience.

After graduating college with

his bachelors in communication, Nieto plans on taking his degree into the radio and television industry to help him build a brand for himself and his music.

Besides attending the jazz spot for his class assignment, Walter Nieto has never been to a concert in his life.

For someone obsessed with music and writing his own lyrics, Nieto has never actually been to a concert featuring his favorite artists.

He said if he could, he would



Photo Credit: Tamar Belfont
Nieto has now infused jazz in his new music.

attend a PartyNextDoor or The Weekend concert, since he "vibes out" with their type of music.

Writing music and recording was his escape from life. If he did not take the year off from school to focus and improve himself, performing at Hot 97 would never have happened.

If DJ Drewski chose him during the showcase, Nieto made it clear he would've put school aside for a few more years if his career took off.

Nieto wanted people outside his friends and family to hear his voice, and as a result, he made his own Soundcloud called, "IamWaltPhrazer".

Nieto does a lot of promoting to get his voice and music heard. He hopes that one day, someone like Jay Z or even an artist from the 90's, will happen to hear his music and give him feedback.

"Music is my escape from reality, out of all the things I love in my life, music is the greatest love after God," Nieto said.

LIFESTYLES

A Pink, Pot-bellied Pet

Are Pigs the New Dog?

BY: TARAH MAURICE

It may not cross one's mind to own a farm animal up until now, but get ready to consider sharing your home with a pig.

Originally meant to be put in a zoo and intended for display, these miniature pink pets were first imported into the United States from Vietnam in 1985.

Pigs became a massive fad; the first potbellied pigs sold for up to a whopping \$25,000. Despite the decrease in cost and demand, these undeniable creatures are still a popular pet.

These adorable animals definitely have their pros and cons, just like any other animal. A pig could be a companion for life, but only for the right caregiver.

On the bright side, pigs are very intelligent, clean, and are generally non-allergenic. They are also odor-free, flea-free, charming, and inexpensive to feed.

Miniature pigs will effortlessly roll over for a tummy rub, as well as snuggle with you. But don't be fooled—their behavior is widely different from that of a dog.

While dogs are quick and eager to

please their caregiver, pigs take time to earn trust, respect and cooperation.

Pigs are quite trainable in ways similar to a dog. They can be house trained, leash trained, and will even learn a few tricks.

They can learn at a faster rate than dogs. These pot-bellies can learn to open the fridge, cupboards, and the pantry.

They are capable of learning to slam dunk a basketball, play a piano, golf, play soccer - even jump through hoops, dance, ride a skateboard and so much more.

However, their intelligence can make them a bit of a handful. Housebreaking comes very easy to pigs. They explore with their snouts and in doing so, may knock over items in the house and can damage the landscaping outside.

These pets are not only curious and playful, but also headstrong and sensitive. They will become easily bored, grumpy, depressed and possibly destructive if not provided with enough activities, enrichment, and adequate attention.

While pigs are generally gentle by nature, they are also territorial and emotional. Pigs are creatures that are easily

overfed and tend to become obese.

Miniature pigs should not be fed chocolate or salty foods. More importantly, try not to overfeed them, as the pig's behavior and health might turn south.

Believe it or not, pigs can become aggressive when competing for food or attention. Making the pig work for their food by putting it in a ball can remedy this.

From day one, the owner should set firm rules and enforce them. Consistent practice, praise for good behavior, and correction/redirection with lots of repetition and patience will help produce a well-mannered pig that has a good relationship with its family.

If you are looking for a little more love in your life, pigs become attached to their human families instantaneously. When experiencing separation, a pig may even become depressed.

Make sure a pig is truly the right fit for you and your family members. Many pigs become abandoned by on the roadside by owners who could not keep up. So, research must be done when seriously considering having this adorable farm

animal as a pet.

Each city and county has its own zoning codes about pet pigs. Many cities in fact prohibit farm animals from the area.

On the other hand, many places have revised their codes to allow pot-bellied pigs to be adopted since miniature pigs are considered companion animals. Thus, before getting a pig, a check of the city, county and homeowners association to determine the exact code is needed.

Though dogs will never stop being the number one companion, these miniature pigs have a big personality of their own.

A curious pig roaming around your house, doing extraordinary tricks and showing you undeniable love is a life filled with never-ending adventure.



Photo Credit: pinterest.com

An Introvert in an Extrovert's World

Quiet People with Powerful Minds

BY: VERONICA PISTEK

Living in a culture booming with personality seems fulfilling and exciting...until you realize that you constantly have to prove your worth amongst strangers.

Being the loudest person in the room draws in the most attention; being the first to introduce an idea in a group sets you as the leader and appearing confident equates to success.

Though it is definitely not a negative characteristic to be an extrovert, the western world seems to be dominated by assertion and charisma.

Since the Industrial Era, being a man of action has always been valued greater than being the man of contemplation.

Introversions, most typically stereotyped as shyness, is rather defined by a specific reaction to stimulation. An extrovert, though, craves and thrives in a social environment with hyper-stimulation; an introvert succeeds in a more relaxed, low-key environment.

Picture the greatest influencers of our generation. The most popular leaders and creators in the media all are defined by sociability, self-promotion, networking and most importantly, extraversion.

Meanwhile, there are ideas that could just as well change our world that are currently residing within a mind not "loud" enough to make a mark.

The introverts of our world con-

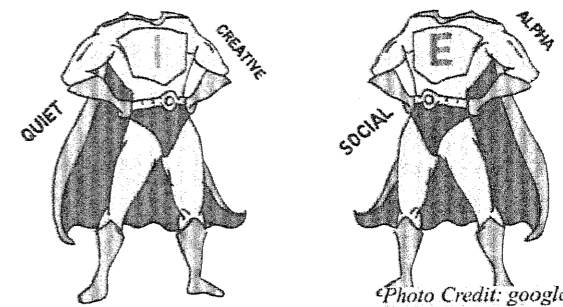


Photo Credit: google.com

Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, you are powerful.

tribute more to our society than previously imagined. About a third to a half of our population are introverted.

Let that sink in. One out of every three people are defined by inward characteristics that society is constantly directing outward.

History's most famous introverts have set themselves apart boldly: Abraham Lincoln, Bill Gates, Albert Einstein, Rosa Parks—just to name a few.

These influential leaders have left a footprint on humanity, which is why we should take a moment to appreciate the quiet ones who use their solitude as an ingredient for creativity.

If we had institutions that were tailored to each person's specific zone of stimulation, introverts and extroverts both would potentially feel at their greatest.

For instance, we are now seeing a universal belief system in schools marked by extroverted education.

are particularly careful, open to ideas different to their own, and are driven to be successful.

If we did not have people that spend years studying sciences and medicine, people who dedicate their lives in a studio creating art, or people who take their time to write novels for others to get lost in, our culture would be missing the richness that it has.

The power of solitude for an introvert is the key to having transcendental ideas. Expressed throughout many religions and spiritual practices, the founder sought higher intelligence through practicing with the isolation of the "self."

With self-contemplation and the open sharing of revelations, the collaboration of ideas between introverts and extroverts is more likely to have a profound impact on our world than ideas only heard by extroverts.

Overall, we all can learn an important lifestyle technique from natural introverts: deep thought.

To be able to feel at ease within your mind without having to be constantly stimulated by others or tangible things is a healthy practice for a human being to grow and develop individually.

Whether you define yourself as an extrovert, introvert, or somewhere in-between, we all should encourage the introverts out there who have not yet shared their voices to do so, because we would not be the culture of personality without their existence.

BANNER ARTS

“Black Panther” Breaks Box Office Records & Cultural Boundaries

African Americans Finally Get the Superhero They Deserve

BY: KENNY VELEZ

“Black Panther” is a movie that combines superheroes with Afrofuturism.

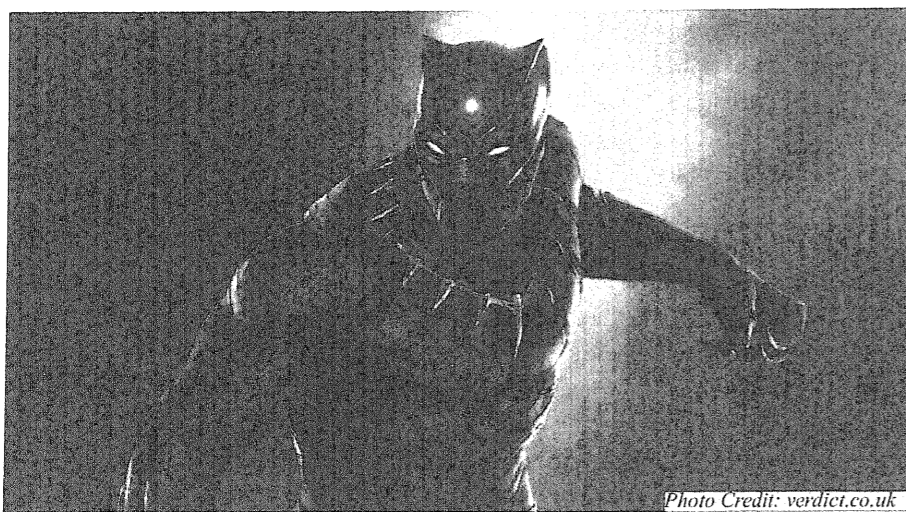
It is the 18th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, based on the Marvel comic book character of the same name.

After the events of “Captain America: Civil War”, T’Challa (Chadwick Boseman) succeeds his late father as the king of Wakanda. However, things are never as easy as they seem, and enemies rise to threaten the safety of Wakanda and the throne of the king - one of them being T’Challa’s cousin, also known as Erik “Killmonger” Stevens (Michael B. Jordan).

This movie is absolutely gorgeous. Several locations, such as vibranium underground, are beautiful to look at and you can tell that a lot of care and effort was placed into them.

The costumes and the designs for this movie are solid. The look of them are distinctly African, with several characters having ritualistic tribal marking on various parts of their body.

It makes sense that this movie has a predominantly black cast because in the comics, Black Panther and the majority of his supporting crew are African. It feels more natural than the likes of “Spider-Man Homecoming”, changing the races of multiple supporting cast members to non-white.



“Black Panther” was released on February 16.

The action sequences for the most part are solid, though there are some moments where the camera needs to stop shaking, so the audience can see who is doing what to whom.

The music, during some parts, was also great as well, and helped to amplify the mood of scenes. This was mostly thanks to Kendrick Lamar.

T’Challa is more complex than you would expect a stoic king to be. He jokes around with his sister Shuri when he’s not in “King mode.”

He also gets teased by his strong female general, Okoye, played by Danai Gurira, but not to the point of belittling the character.

The movie does a better job at making T’Challa more effective than “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” did with its male characters. It is he who kills the villain, and not one of his female warriors.

The villain of this movie, Erik Killmonger, is also complex - more than you expect a superhero movie villain to be. He doesn’t want to take over the world because he is evil.

Rather, he wants to take over the world so that he can end the racism and oppression towards black people that he lived with.

He continues the goals of his father but with a more extremist approach to it. The film does a fine job of making him sympathetic, while at the same time still having him

be a villain that needs to be stopped.

There is definitely a political agenda in this movie, specifically an inclusion and diversity agenda.

Our society collectively values equality, for the most part, and wants to forget the “dark past” of oppression and mistreatment that has afflicted everyone who is not a straight, white male.

To the credit of the movie, it doesn’t shy away from this. During the post-credit sequence, T’Challa says he wants the world to be united, as he reveals the existence of Wakanda technology to the United Nations.

He also says, “The wise build bridges while fools build barriers” which alludes to the presidency of Donald Trump. It also refers to the wall that separates Wakanda from the outside world.

For every action in life, there are both positive and negative consequences. With that said, it would be interesting to see the consequences of Wakanda opening its doors to the world get explored in sequels.

Overall, “Black Panther” is a more enjoyable movie than “Thor: Ragnarok” and “Spider-Man: Homecoming”.

It’s more controversial and more successful, and with all the records it’s breaking, it clearly shows.

Exciting Board Games for the Whole Family

Entertaining and Engaging Modern Games Minus the TV

BY: MARK DEUTSCH

With virtual reality, Netflix, and game systems, it can be easy to forget the classic board and card games as a way to entertain friends and family.

However, playing games with other is important because it helps to facilitate conversation and a level of interaction among people.

It’s also somewhat relaxing to focus and engage in something that requires a certain level of skill.

There are some great, entertaining games that have only come out a few years ago that could change up your family nights.

Quite the opposite of ordinary games like Monopoly or Risk, these

“Seven Wonders” is a game that revolves around the seven wonders of the world.”

games vary in rules and gameplay.

The order that the games are listed below has no bearing on how good the games are. The games mentioned are mostly card games and the first is one that involves superheroes from a famous comic book giant.

The “DC Deck Building Game” involves elements from the DC universe, including both heroes and villains. The goal of the game is to beat super villains, along with having the highest score among the other participants.

It ends after the deck is finished, or if all of the supervillains are beaten by the players.

The game is decent and fair when it comes to rules, although some of them are vague. There are also many expansion packs and games to go along with the original game itself.

“Seven Wonders” is a game that revolves around the seven wonders of the world. The rules and gameplay take an hour to learn, but half an hour to play. The game has everyone taking a turn at the same time, with a capacity to play with seven people at maximum.

The gameplay and rules are con-

“Catan”, based around building settlements and gathering resources by the roll of the dice.”

fusing at first glance, although it’s easy enough to learn right away. The game is fun for everyone playing, although things could get confusing in a second.

“Dominion” is a card-based game that features a gameplay where the playing field is never the same twice. The rules are easy enough to learn and the cards are always changing every game, so it’s always different.

The game comes with twenty-six different card types in total, minus the expansion packs.

This game comes with at least ten different expansions and two different base sets in total. That’s a lot of combinations to play around with.

The next game is “Catan”, based

around building settlements and gathering resources by the roll of the dice. The game has a few expansions to play around with, although the expansions can be a pain to put together.

The rules are easy enough to learn with few misunderstandings along the course of the game.

The game itself is fun to play with, but it costs 20 to 40 dollars to purchase. The gameplay also features a piece that allows any player to steal from another player.

Finally, Machi Koro is a game about buying properties and building four different construction sites. The maximum number of players that can play is about four and the game costs about eighteen dollars. It has a few expansion sets to play around with at the moment.

The game’s rules are easy to learn, although some of the cards can be confusing. The expansions aren’t that good actually, but the main game rocks.

These are some of the most exciting games to play with your family, great for building relationships and have a little fun along the way.

BANNER ARTS

Before Summer Ends: “Improving” Platonic Male Intimacy

The Summer Road Trip Story Showcasing Platonic Male Friendship and Intimacy

BY: LAUREN L MCKENNA

“Before Summer Ends” tackles many themes: dislocation, homesickness, and camaraderie.

None, though, shined as bright as how it displayed platonic male intimacy, a depiction scarcely seen on Hollywood screens.

The film’s stars, Arash, Hossein, and Ashkan, three emerging talents, break down the walls of toxic masculinity and show the world the true value of friendship.

The film recounts the refreshing road-trip narrative that is so often at the heart of stories that reach beyond the screen and into audience’s souls.

In “Before Summer Ends”, three 30-something year-old friends embark on their dream road-trip through the south of France, something of a melancholic voyage, since one of the friends will soon return home to Iran.

After several years of studying in France, Arash has found it difficult to adapt to French culture. As the trio drive from Paris, and across the French countryside, they stop along the way, where it is clear that each location serves to record lasting memories.

Hence, each stop is something of a vignette, like, a village parade, a fun fair, and a local campsite where our three protagonists rendezvous with several female campers.

Shot in documentary style, the film toggles between documentary and drama. With most French cinema, it is wise not to get too comfortable with the director’s improvisational style.

The original concept was a documentary based on the leads shot across a three year span. After a change of heart from the direc-

tor, as well as enthusiasm from the actors, previous footage was scrapped and the improvised road-trip film was born.

The relaxed and naturalistic performances suggest and ultimately reveal something more complex. For instance, the actors play versions of themselves. Their characters’ names, for example, are the same as their own.

What is striking about the men is their deft ability to move between serious moments, humor, and then with ease, return to moments of deep thought. The subtlety of

wardness involved in not only romance; moreover, the sequence points to the hyper-charged moment men and women are currently negotiating.

In effect, the film offers a touching depiction of male friendship. The more traditionally rendered macho ways associated with mainstream Hollywood, where men rarely talk about feelings, is challenged in this movie.

Here, men take the time to regularly communicate, engage their sentiment for one another, and do not shy away from showing

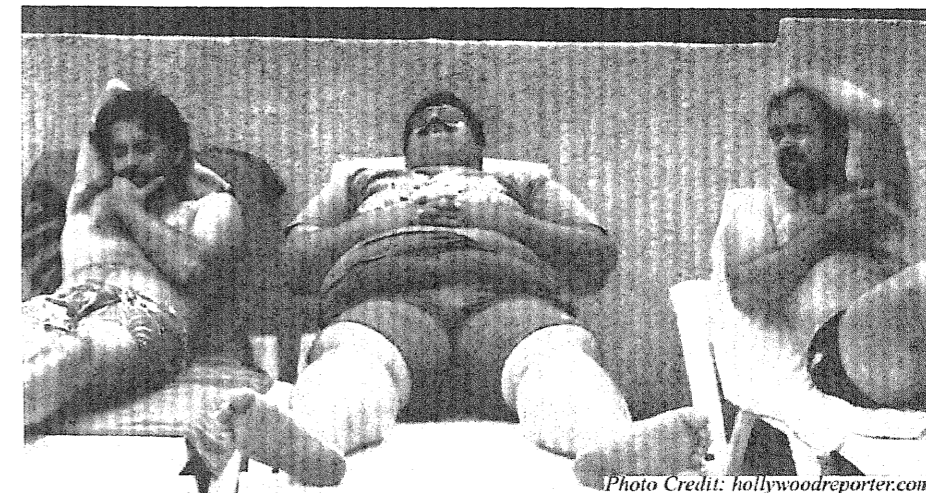


Photo Credit: hollywoodreporter.com

the performance is remarkable, and it has as much to do with the direction as it does with the actors themselves.

Therefore, the film intermingles and finesses the complicated emotions that the men share. At the same time, it explores the awkwardness of masculine heterosexual expectations.

At the campsite, for example, the men immerse themselves in the action of chasing women. The exchanges point to the awk-

they care through intimate physical contact.

Working knowledge of the production may be needed to truly appreciate the on-screen performance. Director, Maryam Goormaghtigh, spent three years prior working with the cast and trusted their ability portray themselves honestly.

No dialogue was scripted, with only the plot of Arash returning to Iran and the road-trip entailed to the actors.

Many of the stories divulged in the film

are true to life, including the tale of Arash gaining significant weight to avoid military service. The honesty that is portrayed on camera clearly comes from a very strong connection and working relationship with Goormaghtigh.

Goormaghtigh is also responsible for the superb cinematography. Her use of light and shade filters, the film’s colour cinematically, revealed the nuanced relationship between the men.

Beginning her career in documentary film, Goormaghtigh demonstrated a strong ability to grab moments between the dialogue, the looks, the silences, and the introspection that both characters and spectators are invited to explore.

She captured 70 hours of footage in two and half weeks of filming for “Before Summer Ends”, yet she brought a precision to the film that evokes the unease of living in a different country, whilst yearning for one’s homeland.

The result is that “Before Summer Ends” is amusing and affective. It is a docu-drama that brings you home, as it were. It contains the very real feelings that arise with dislocation, homesickness, and camaraderie.

“Before Summer Ends” is screening during the 23rd edition of Rendez-Vous with French Cinema on March 8-18 at the Lincoln Center.

The festival will host for the first time a “Salut les Jeunes” day on Monday, March 12, featuring four selections from the lineup that focus on the experiences of young people.

Special passes and perks are available for French film lovers under 40 who watch all four films. Tickets are available at filmfinc.org.

“America’s Next Top Model” Defies Model Stereotypes

Models of All Ages and Shapes Have Been Given a Chance to Succeed

BY: BROOKE PRICE

After being away during cycle 23, Tyra Banks is back.

Banks returned to her role as hostess on “America’s Next Top Model”, relieving Rita Ora of her duties.

Along with Banks, the judging panel consists of plus-size model Ashley Graham, Paper magazine chief creative officer Drew Elliot, and celebrity stylist Law Roach.

The judges help shape the models to become more well-rounded, and gain a deeper understanding of the modeling world, and what it means to be a model.

Banks announced on “ANTM” that she would be eliminating weight, height, and age restrictions. Models of all different shapes and sizes can now compete in the competition.

Fifteen models are currently competing for “America’s Next Top Model.” The winner receives \$100,000 cash courtesy of Pantene, a fashion spread in Paper magazine, a contract with Next Model Management, and a feature avatar on the new America’s Next Top Model mobile game.

Erin Green, 42, is one of the oldest to ever compete on the show. She doesn’t let her

er appreciation for life and was grateful for the chance to be able to model. She embraces her scar and sometimes nicknames it her “battle scar.”

Ivana Thomas struggled with her body image because she is somewhat overweight and did not fit the ideal model body type. She had gained weight after her father’s death, and did not think that she could succeed in the modeling field.

Without the restrictions in place, Thomas was able to make her dream a reality. She has learned to embrace her body and not be embarrassed of her full figure.

Coura Fall dropped out of college to pursue a modeling career. When she went to

After Summers’ surgery, she had a deep-



Photo Credit: toofab.com

that her appearance was too masculine. She has since felt insecure about her appearance.

When Fall went on “America’s Next Top Model”, the judges were fascinated with her beauty. When the models went to get makeovers, the judges felt that Coura’s own look suited her the best, and nicknamed it “the Coura”.

Banks wants models to embrace their unconventional beauty. Banks revoked these restrictions to enable models to admire their true beauty and self-worth.

“We celebrate beauty in all of us, all shapes, all sizes and all colors. ...The fight continues to show you that you are beautiful, that’s why I’m back.” Banks added.

Models have to be comfortable enough in their own skin, since they participate in various types of photo shoots including maternity shoots, music videos, lingerie shoots, and walk runways.

Banks wants models to embrace their true selves and not be ashamed of how they look.

Now viewers are able to see models that look like them on TV, competing to be “America’s Next Top Model”.

BANNER OPINIONS

Another Tragedy Sparks Debate on Gun Control

Lax Gun Laws in Many States Allow Mass Shootings

BY: Haziq Naeem

On February 14th, Nikolas Cruz set off the fire alarms at his high school, luring hundreds of his fellow students out of their classrooms.

He then opened fire on them with a semi-automatic AR-15 rifle. Seventeen people died, with multiple others injured.

The heartbreak felt throughout the country is ineffable and insufferable.

This event sparked a recurring debate on gun laws and gun ownership around the country; the horror of the tragedy fueled a debate with greater urgency and need for resolve.

It is important to have some context on gun laws and gun ownership in the country in order to positively participate in that debate and come to a reasonable, effective solution.

The United States is home to a large number of guns. It consists of less than five percent of the world population but is home to 35 to 50 percent of the world's civilian-owned guns.

In 2007, it was estimated that the number of guns owned by Americans was 88.8 per 100 people. That equates to more than one gun per adult in the country.

In multiple states, including Florida, where the most recent mass shooting occurred, fingerprints, a waiting period, and a special permit are not required. You can walk into a store and walk out with a firearm in a matter of minutes.

In thirty-three states, background checks - federal or state - are not required.

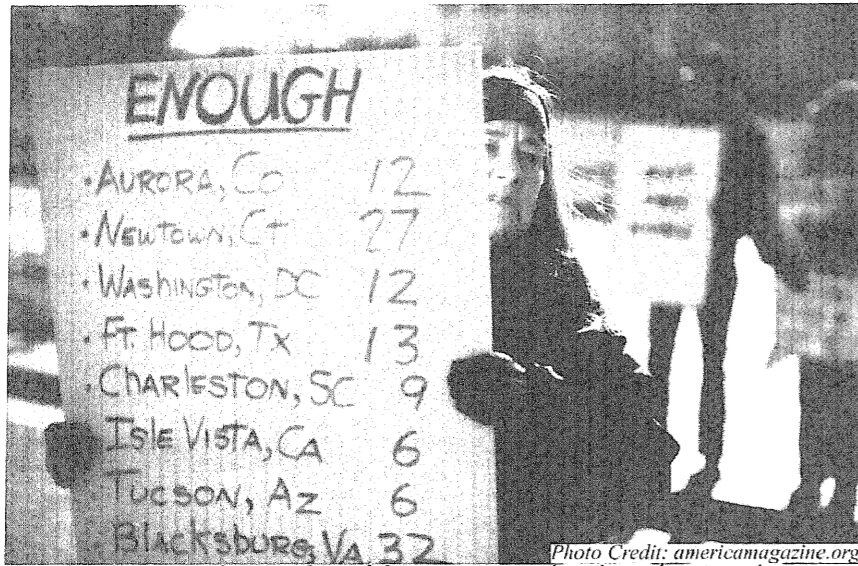


Photo Credit: americanmagazine.org

Despite the outsized ownership of firearms, the United States does not have the highest firearm murder rate, as those titles belong to Honduras, El Salvador, and Jamaica.

According to The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, only 1.49 percent of gun related deaths occur due to mass shootings. Mass shootings aren't strictly defined, but generally they mean shootings in which four or more people are injured or killed.

In 2013, there were 33,636 deaths due to firearms, most of which were due to suicide, and only 502 of those deaths occurred due to mass shootings.

The majority of gun related deaths in the country occur in poor, black, and urban communities, but these shootings do not garner national attention and debate on gun control, or even a general debate on how to prevent this violence from happening.

When a mass shooting within the country occurs, there is a common thread of the shooter being labeled as mentally ill - unless the shooter happens to be Muslim.

In fact, a study done in 2015 by Michael Stone of Columbia University determined that only 52 out of the 235 killers that year had mental illnesses. That's about 22 percent of the shooters, which leaves the vast majority of them mentally sane.

If our legislators continue to frame the issue as a problem of mental illness, it will not prevent the vast number of shootings from occurring.

occurring.

Many of the mass shooters have been male and white, but there's almost no other common underlying thread that runs through between these shooters suggesting a common cause for the mass shootings.

Researchers have found that the same factors that would lead someone to commit domestic violence are the ones that will also lead them to commit mass shootings, but not all mass shooters have histories of such violent behavior.

In 1996, Congressional Republicans passed the Dickey Amendment, which pressured the Center for Disease Control away from studying gun violence. But despite this political pressure, the Justice Department has continued to fund important studies related to gun violence.

Experts have estimated that passing an assault weapons ban can prevent 170 mass shootings a year, raising the age limit for purchasing firearms could prevent 1,600 homicide and suicides, and having universal background checks could prevent 1,100-gun related deaths.

Issues of gun ownership and gun control are very divisive. Recently in Pennsylvania, the worshippers in a church attended with AR-15's and crowns made of bullets.

Despite the divisiveness of the issue, we need to come to an effective solution. It is inexcusable that children aren't safe in schools.

If gun control and regulation are impossible, we need to start searching for other avenues of preventing gun related deaths.

Get the Facts, Not the Flu

Should People Be Getting the Flu Shot?

BY: GABRIELLE SILVESTRO

It seems that all of a sudden, it is that time of year once again, flu season.

Winter is that time of year where people hear horror stories of kids, and even adults, getting this virus that has no cure.

In the upcoming weeks, getting the flu shot is a decision people will be contemplating. Most doctors are advocates of their patients receiving their yearly flu shots, in hopes that it will prevent many people from becoming very ill with different strands of the flu.

Schools and drugstores have provided the opportunity to receive the flu shot to make it more convenient for millions of people.

Just like everything else, the flu shot has been known to affect each individual differently; some people actually get flu like symptoms, become severely sick and even get the flu itself. Some are not even affected at all.

If you are one of the unlucky people to contract the flu, the medication prescribed today is Tamiflu; this is the only medication that can be provided to help subside these flu symptoms.

However, this medication can have some serious side effects, which, again, vary depending on the individual.

Receiving the flu shot has some negative connotations associated with it,

whether it's actually getting the flu or just the idea of having a virus injected into a person's body, which many do not feel comfortable with.

The medicine prescribed for the flu can cost up to \$150 and could have negative effects on small children, such as vomiting.

If this occurs, the guardian of the child should consult a doctor, and in some cases, must stop the medication. The money spent on this prescription is ultimately wasted and cannot be returned.

If one of your family members has recently come down with the flu, you will see first hand what it is like to experience this terrible illness.

Witnessing with your own eyes and

realizing what that person suffers with is an eye opening reality check. It will end up making many people wonder whether or not they will get the flu shot that year.

Symptoms like chills, fever and body aches can end up being so bad that some may not be able to move. Children, though are primarily the ones who are affected.

Schools are breeding homes for different viruses and when not taken care of properly, the illness can spread like wildfire.

Carrying germs from school to the home is where it can make the situation even worse.

The flu has been a serious epidemic throughout New York and the tri state area, but a vaccination may not be the answer to the problem.

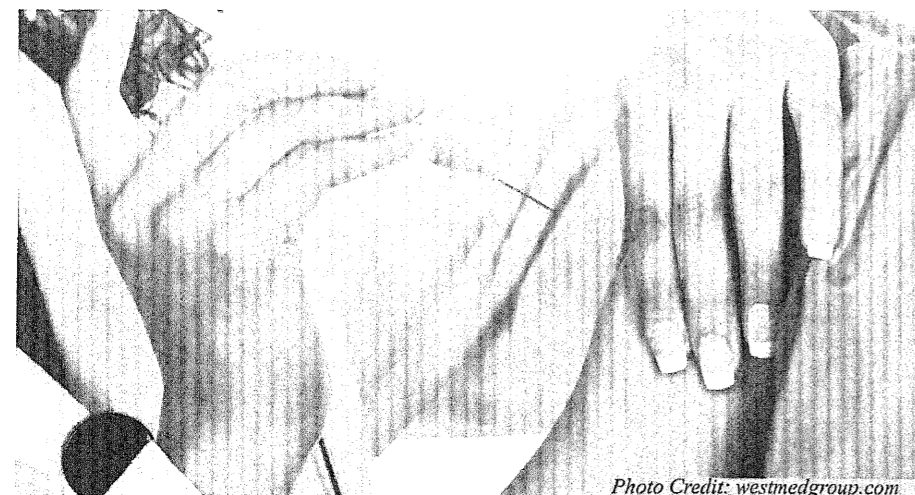


Photo Credit: westmedgroup.com

Many people have different opinions on this idea and whether to inject the virus into their bodies, or put it in their children's bodies. Some like to take the natural approach and let the virus go through their body and run its course.

Others have suffered through this virus before and want to take the preventative measures they think they need.

The issue with the flu and getting the proper shots is the many different strands of the flu virus.

When receiving a flu shot, it is imperative to understand that the patient only receives one strand of the virus, which does not protect you from the many other strands that have yet to be discovered.

The other downfall of getting the flu vaccination is the risk of you actually getting sick from it.

This is a risk with any vaccination, because it depends on the individual and how well your body can fight off the virus.

Injected, it is merely a small dosage of the virus into your body, so that it builds up a resistance to the virus. When a virus is presented, the body is ready to fight it off to prevent you from getting sick.

The debate of whether getting the flu shot or not is right for us will continue to be a debacle due to just how much it can affect everybody individually.

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

Shacking Up May Be Shaking Up Your Sex Life

Studies Reveal Side Effects of Living With Your Partner Before Marriage

BY: CLARA PEREZ

A fairly new view on relationships, seen in many millennials, is the idea that living together prior to getting married is the only true measure of compatibility before taking the plunge.

This idea has led to a doubling effect of cohabitation in the last 15 years for young, unwed couples.

While testing the waters before going for a life-long swim may seem like the most responsible and logical path to take, research suggests some serious cons when it comes to cohabitation before marriage.

Living with your partner can lead to an array of negative effects for a variety of reasons. Cohabiting with someone is often considered more stressful than being married, since finances for rent and bills becomes a priority in the relationship dynamic.

It can also lead to poorer relationship quality since fighting and violence tends to occur more often, leading to significant unhappiness by one, if not both partners.

This unhappiness also causes cohabitating couples to have higher levels of depression and substance abuse as opposed to married couples.

All these negative factors come into play in the bedroom as well.

Couples who live together before engagement and marriage will likely see a steady decline in the frequency of sexual encounters with their partner.

Many women begin to see sex as a switch from a passionate experience, to a more compassionate or empathetic endeavour with their partner after living with them for over a year.

This change from passionate and primal relations can have significant effects on men in a relationship, seeing as men never lose the passionate part of sex.

Couples who plan to get married in the near future may suffer as well.

According to statistics from The Spruce, if cohabiting couples decide to get married, which just over 50% will, it is less likely they will stay married for a long period of time.

Couples who are shacking up are also more likely to get divorced, or experience infidelity in the marriage by one or both partners.

This may be caused by what is referred to by The Spruce as the "inertia and sliding effect."

This states that couples who live together have a greater investment in their relationship with their partner due to sharing a space and financial

responsibility.

This investment makes it more difficult for these cohabitating couples to break up, which leads to the sliding effect.

This is defined as when couples who live together "slide" less consciously through major relationship moves, while couples that don't live together tend to be more deliberate and conscious of these important transitions.

This sliding often leads to the unintentional, but seemingly obvious next step of getting married to the person they have been living with - even if it may not be in the best interest of their relationship.

This may lead to questioning if it is at all worth it.

Good news has arrived, as even newer studies have been released regarding the issue.

A post included in an article from TIME magazine says that the Journal of Marriage and Family suggests that cohabitation and its effects on marriage success is all "situational."

Couples that have a strong bond and agree to marry prior to cohabitating show no increased risk of divorce or depression than couples that don't live together.

In fact, it appears the only mea-

sure of unsuccessful cohabitation comes from the maturity levels of both partners involved.

If you or your partner are not mature enough to choose compatible partners or conduct yourselves in ways that can sustain a long-term relationship, then the reason becomes evident that living together before marriage would be unsuccessful.

While there are suggested ages to wait before cohabitating with anyone, no earlier than 23 years old, there is no magic number to guarantee success.

Research can't tell us the perfect equation to a happy cohabitation with your partner and a long, successful, marriage. But some self-reflection may have the answers.

Before making the decision to shack up with your loved one, take a good look at yourself and whether or not you are ready for that type of commitment and responsibility. Communicate with your partner about their feelings as much as possible.

If both parties in the relationship decide to be together for the long haul, then happy shacking and shagging!

What Pornography and its Stars May Want You to Know

Settle Down for Porn 101!

BY: VICTORIA IFATUSIN

People who watch adult entertainment may actually have a head-start on better sex.

With this, there are certain things that the adult entertainment industry wants you to know as a viewer.

Some porn just looks like a terrible play with bad actors and actresses - this is because it comes from a script.

Tori Black, an adult entertainment star, explained that most of the elements are known before the shoot is scheduled, such as how much talking is done between the two pornstars.

Emotions in porn are not expressed the way it would be in real-life sex. In fact, the stars may not know who they're working with until the day of the shoot, proving that the passion you see and hear is complete fabrication.

Another strange but possibly reassuring fact is that the positions you see online are not meant to be recreated in real life.

Most of the positions that are seen are way too uncomfortable for sex, yet intercourse is supposed to be

pleasurable. A number of people get sent to the hospital because of trying out the positions they see in porn.

"All of these positions are done for the sake of a good camera shot," said Buzzfeed. However, it's one of the ways they keep viewers watching it.

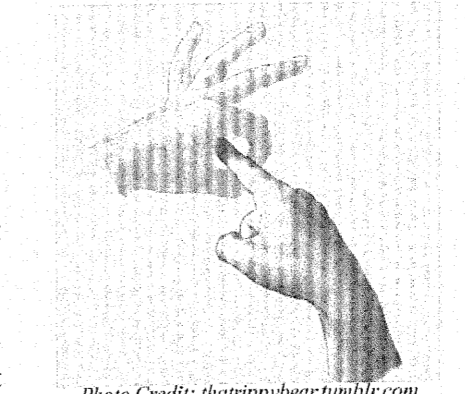


Photo Credit: thatrippybear.tumblr.com

The only viewers of your act are you and your partner, and being comfortable is key.

Good sex has nothing to do with penis size; it's a matter of how you use it.

A lot of men are conscious about the size of their penis, which may hinder a number of them from having sex.

The majority of penises are neither big nor small; rather in-between. Utilizing what actually is there is what's most important.

There are many resources available aside from pornography that one can use to step up their game. Communication between partners is an excellent example.

This is key in all relationships, and sex especially.

A person may be try to do an awkward position with their partner, and it becomes uncomfortable or even harmful. There's nothing wrong with trying, but don't be afraid to say it isn't working out.

Going too fast when the other wants it slow is another common fallacy, and this occurs with both guys and girls.

First-timer or not, speak up. For everyone, there will be times of rejection- this is perfectly normal.

It's one of the main ways one can become a better partner in sex and in a relationship, especially with the desire to take it to the next level.

It's most important to be comfortable and have fun rather than have "perfect sex" - it's just unrealistic.

Even though pornography portrays "perfected sex," there are scenes, just like in regular movies, that have been cut. The sex can be too loud, too messy, or even funny; these parts are edited out, yet they still occur.

Though people feel like they need to perform flawlessly during sex, sometimes the silly moments are the best, as they can make for the most enjoyment. This shouldn't ruin the mood between you and your partner.

The final important thing to note is that despite how crazy the sex looks, porn stars have safe sex, and so can you.

There is usually a disclaimer shown before the action is seen, normally stating that the actors and actresses are tested before a shoot. Most porn stars are included in scenes with various other stars, which makes sense for why they are tested.

Not only is it a matter of being honest and true to your mate, but also using everyone's favorite contraceptive tool- the condom.

So, get tested, use condoms and play it safe.

SPORTS

Mets, Yankees Motivated for Promising Seasons

Spring Training 2018 is Underway

BY: ERIC RANSOM

Nothing puts an end to the cold, harsh winter better than just two simple words - Spring Training.

The time of the year has arrived again to shake the rust off and begin another glorious season of baseball. For both the Mets and Yankees, the playoffs could be on the horizon - for both teams.

For the Mets, their season last year couldn't end fast enough. After an abysmal 70-92 season full of injuries and disappointment, a breath of fresh Florida air is just what the Amazin's need.

Putting the 2017 season behind them was paramount this past winter, and many areas of concern were addressed by the likes of General Manager Sandy Alderson. A new look Mets team, complete with a new manager, Mickey Callaway, look to instill a new culture and work ethic with the club.

New pitching coach Dave Eiland also joined the coaching staff, as well as a brand new training and medical team.

The Mets have also acquired a bevy of new players, including the likes of former Yankee 3B Todd Frazier, 1B Adrian González, and RP Anthony Swarzak, along with re-signing INF José Reyes.

Most notably, the Mets brought back RF Jay Bruce on a 3 year, \$39 million deal after being traded to the Cleveland Indians last August.

Bruce, 30, had a career year last season between the Mets and Indians, posting a personal best 36 home runs and 116 RBI.

Another former Met returned to the team in free agency, that being SP Jason Vargas, who pitched briefly with the Amazin's in 2007. His signing ensures depth and another reliable left-handed pitcher to join a talented but seemingly cursed starting rotation.

With such names as Noah Syndergaard, Jacob DeGrom and Matt Harvey, "cursed" doesn't seem to fit the mold of these once elite Mets starters. With the six-foot-six Syndergaard sidelined for most of the season, as well as underperformance all around the pitching staff, the Mets team ERA ranked 27th in the National League last year.

Only DeGrom held his own, finishing with a career-high 15 wins



Photo Credit: Youtube.com

and 239 strikeouts. He looks to build off of last year's stellar season with a full cast of characters to support him this year.

The biggest question mark in the rotation (other than health, of course) is the fading Harvey, aiming to reclaim his dominance from earlier seasons. Unlike the terrific 2013 and 2015 seasons, Harvey had the worst year of his career in 2017. With his 6.70 ERA, he ranked highest among qualified starting pitchers in the MLB, and allowed a career-worst 21 home runs.

Callaway, though, has high praise for his starting pitchers. An experienced pitching coach with the Indians, he has quickly shown just how awestruck he is at their level of dominance.

"We have seven guys that can pitch in any rotation right now. I've never seen talent like this in one spot."

Left-fielder Yoánis Céspedes, now ditching the golf clubs and dumbbells for yoga, aims to put his injury-plagued 2017 far behind him. His focus on stretching and conditioning his body this past offseason were in efforts to preserve his physique for the long haul of a baseball season, hoping to avoid any more costly injuries.

Finally, All-Star OF Michael Conforto will miss the first month of the season recovering from shoulder surgery, ensuring more playing time for Juan Lagares and Brandon Nimmo in center field, until his targeted

return on May 1.

In the Bronx, the Yankees are ecstatic with their new look heading into 2018.

Led by hiring a new manager in former Yankee Aaron Boone, The World Series is on their radar - and the rest of the league knows it.

The 2017 season was to be a year of rebuilding and starting fresh - but don't tell them that.

After finishing with a surprising 91-71 record and winning the Wild Card game against the Minnesota Twins, the Yankees shocked the baseball world. Taking on the defending American League Champion Indians, the Yankees defeated them in five games, and faced off against the Houston Astros, unfortunately losing in seven games.

New manager Boone had encouraging words regarding the lofty weight of World Series aspirations.

"We understand the expectations. Last year was great, but one of the things that stands out about being in that room right now is that each guy I've spoken to, that hunger is there."

The biggest acquisition of the offseason belongs to the Bombers, who acquired National League MVP Giancarlo Stanton from the Marlins last December. Stanton joins AL Rookie of the Year Aaron Judge, creating a duo of sluggers that led the Major Leagues in home runs last year, with 59 and 52 respectively.

The Yankee's offense is poised to be a powerhouse this season, supported by players such as Gary Sán-

chez, Didi Gregorius and Greg Bird.

Along with their potent lineup, The Yankees also have maintained the best relief pitching in baseball, mostly through trades during last season's trade deadline. With closer Aroldis Chapman, pitchers like Dellin Betances, Chad Green, David Robertson and Tommy Kahnle will lead the charge.

Last year's bullpen finished with a 3.34 ERA, placing 3rd in the American League.

Starting pitcher Luis Severino enters Spring Training a much different pitcher than he was at this point last year, after finishing 3rd in the Cy Young voting with 14 wins and a 2.98 ERA. Other All-star pitchers like Masahiro Tanaka and Sonny Gray hope to round out a rotation now led by Severino.

Veteran starting pitcher C.C. Sabathia also agreed to a contract to remain with the Yankees, signing a 1 year, \$10 million dollar deal to pitch in his 18th MLB season.

Recently, the Yankees acquired INF Brandon Drury from the Arizona Diamondbacks to sure their starting infield after trading Starlin Castro to the Marlins for Stanton. Drury will play third base, along with a combination of Tyler Wade and Ronald Torreyes at second, Gregorius at shortstop and Bird at first base.

In all, the Yankees have a team capable of capturing it's 28th title - and at the very least - New York baseball as a whole is set to be entertaining this year.