

Third Rail

The Award-Winning Political Arts Magazine

NY

Fall 2010

ATTACK AMERICA

U.S. Day of Infamy
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JACK
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MICHAEL MILEY
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EARL GATCHALIAN
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JESSE YU
Contributor

JORDAN ISAZA
Captain of Industry

EDWARD PEPPE
Illustrator

JANUARY KAYSER
Editor of Some Sort!

ANDREW OPPENHEIMER
Contributor

LAYOUT & DESIGN

CHUN HOM
KATIE SELUGA

RONALD B. MCGUIRE, ESQ. &
THE CUNY EMERGENCY LEGAL
DEFENSE FUND
Legal Department

PROFESSOR JOHN WING
Faculty Advisor

CONTACT

E-MAIL:
thethirdrailmag@gmail.com

SNAIL MAIL:
Third Rail Magazine
c/o College of Staten Island
2800 Victory Boulevard
Campus Center Room 207
Staten Island, NY 10314

MAGAZINE OFFICE:
Room 231 on the 2nd floor
of the CSI Campus Center

TELEPHONE: 718-982-3105
FAX: 718-982-3104

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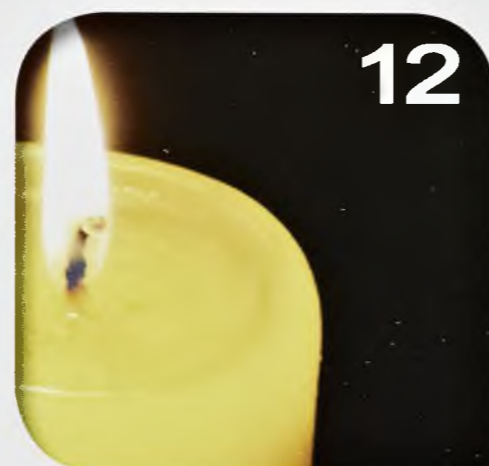


A discussion on the building of
the "mosque" by Ground Zero



An Open Letter

Michael Miley clairfies
on last issue's open letter



**CSI Stands Up
Against Hate
and Violence**

The GSA hosts a candle light vigil
against hate and violence



I think we are fucked,
The unemployed get paid more.
Where is my bailout?

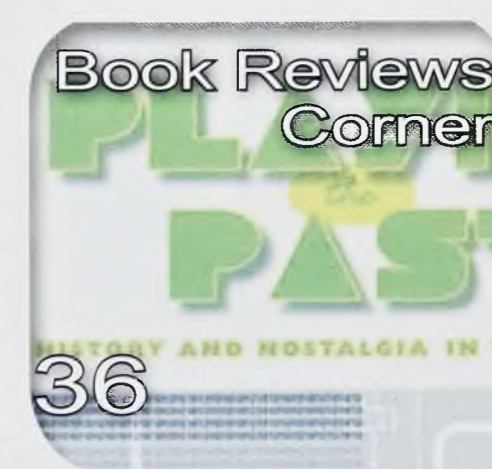
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Reflections



**Sometimes,
I Wonder**



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Dedicated to the memory of
Professor Sadrul A. Khan, Ph. D.

“On life’s journey
Faith is nourishment,
Virtuous deeds are a shelter,
Wisdom is the light by day and
Right mindfulness is the protection by night.
If a man lives a pure life nothing can destroy him;
If he has conquered greed nothing can limit his freedom.”

- Buddha

Third Rail

EDITORIAL

An Open Letter to the
College of Staten Island,
and to its' Student Government



To Whom it May Concern;

I would first like to welcome everyone back, and to welcome our latest class of Freshman to College of Staten Island. For those of you who may not have read Third Rail before, my name is Michael Miley. I am the Non-Fiction Director of Third Rail Magazine. That job requires me to gather submissions and check them for factual accuracy. Sadly, I must admit that my last letter had a few inaccuracies in it. I would like to start out by correcting them.

As well as being the Non-Fiction Director of Third Rail, I am also employed by the Office of Student Life here at CSI. I claimed in the previous issue that my fellow workers and I had received a \$1/hour pay cut. The truth of that statement was called into question. Student Life's employees are paid out of a grant that has not increased. However, we continue to hire more employees and hold more events that all must be paid from this unaltered grant. This has led to some employees barely working nine hours per week.

This leads to serious quality-of-life issues for those of us who have been unable to find a second job to supplement the meager income generated by working for Student Life. I have had to miss class because I could not afford a MetroCard. I was forced to choose between getting to class or getting to work. I urge the powers-that-be to increase the grant that funds the Office of Student Life, so we can live with dignity; so that we don't have to continue to make these choices.

Most likely, this is a pipe dream. Third Rail has documented how CUNY and CSI have a long "proud" history of employing non-union labor and under-paying staff. I wonder if the only solution is for the employees of Student Life to organize.

The next thing I would like to discuss involves my questioning of the procedure that reversed a Student Government vote. The vote in question would have left SG with the same level stipend they already received instead of increasing or decreasing it, but it was reversed at the next meeting. But, other votes at the same meeting did not need to be re-taken. This left me, and several other members of Third Rail, wondering why that was the only vote that needed to be recast.



Carol Brower, the Director of Student Life, was kind enough to explain the reasons why;

“At the Dec. 3, 2009 meeting of SG, student government approved maintaining of the stipends from the '08-'09 year. . . Between that meeting and the meeting of Jan. 28, 2010, I had several conversations with CUNY Legal Affairs. . . I was told clearly that SG must abide by both the Open Meetings Law and the General Construction Law. What this means is that quorum (a gathering of enough members to pass a legitimate vote) is half plus one of the total seats of the senate and that all motions can only pass if the majority of the senate seats vote in the affirmative. . . This. . . needed to [be] instituted from the day the new constitution was approved. . . Nov. 29, 2009, so the Dec. 3, 2010 meeting needed to conform. This is why we had to revisit the quorum vote. The other motions from the Dec. 3 meeting all passed by at least 11 votes, so they did not need to be revisited.”



I'd like to thank Ms. Brower for her time in helping to set this matter straight. I would also like to apologize for the mistakes I have made. I will keep a stronger eye out in the future, as to avoid any further incidents like this. With this in mind, I would now like to move on to the current topics of this letter.

It might come as a shock to people that I do not have anything to complain about. We have a new Student Government, and my hopes are high that this session will be better than previous Student Governments.

Right now, the crises facing us are budget cuts and the tuition hikes facing all of CUNY again. The problem facing New York State is not a budget deficit, but in fact a revenue gap. If we reverse the tax cuts that upper income brackets have received, we would have more than enough to make up for the shortfalls New York is facing. Just to put this in perspective; the upper brackets have had their taxes cut from 16.4% to 6.5%. Meanwhile, the poorest New Yorkers (those earning \$15,000/year or less) are paying a rate of 12.6%! So, while you hear people rant and rave about how they're "taxed enough already," we have a situation in New York State where those who fall under the poverty line, those people hardest pressed just to get by, are having a larger chunk of their income taken than the richest New Yorkers!

I'm sure many of you disagree with me. Let's face it; who likes paying taxes? No one! But it is important to remember that taxes are not "punishment from the government for being successful." They are the fee we pay to live in a civilized society. That is why we pay taxes; to enjoy the privileges that come from living in the modern world.

This has become a problem at the local, state, and federal levels of our government, and is a condemnation of the Laffer Curve. If one still wants to hide behind Neo-Liberal economic policy like a voodoo safety blanket, the Laffer Curve is an impractical source of revenue at the level of taxation Republicans and conservatives want to see.

We have seen our tuition balloon over the last decade. One of the targets of the "starve the beast" reactionaries is always education. This is to the detriment of every American, including the capital class who will eventually have to import an educated work force to make them rich. As always, the poor and working classes will be devastated by the lack of access to higher education.

Think of it this way; could you, or any of your friends at CSI, afford \$30,000/semester for tuition? I

remind everyone that CUNY schools used to be free. Yes, free to attend from its' inception in the 1840's up until 1975. There was only a modest registration fee. During the Great Depression, it was free to go to college. During the frequent depressions in the later half of the 19th century, it was free to go to CUNY. Today it is not. We should all wonder why that is.

This leads me to call out the many, many conservative Republicans; the Ron Pauls; the Randian Libertarians; and particularly the "Teabagger" population of CSI. If all of you are so opposed to any form of government assistance -- which you have idiotically mislabeled "socialism" -- then why are you coming to CSI? Are you secretly socialists? This also goes to any professors who espouse conservative ideology; if you want to shrink government so badly, why are you working on the public dole? Why are you benefitting from the same social spending programs that you profess to hate?

More to the point, do any of you realize that the end result of your push to privatization would be the end of CSI? The end of CUNY, and SUNY, and any other state-run university or public school? Do you even care, or would you rather just make your meal ticket, climb the ladder, and pull it up behind you? If confronted with this reality before you retire, will you suddenly rail against it? Will you spout some nonsense about education being "too entrenched" to get rid of?

It is downright hypocritical for someone to say the government is always wrong no matter what, then get their education provided by that government. If you really believe the government is never right, I would urge you to go to Columbia, or NYU, or Wagner, or any of the other fine private colleges in the area. If nothing else, the debt you accrue will be a sign of your principles.

While I'm on the subject of students I dislike, I'd like to point out that I am a bit of a misanthrope. More than one person has asked me if it's ironic for a socialist to be a misanthrope. As I enjoy telling them, being a socialist means recognizing that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. That doesn't mean I actually have to like anybody. I bring this up because I have noticed lately that many of my fellow students, for lack of a better word, suck.

By this I mean that there are more and more people coming to CSI who don't care about their education. I haven't observed this alone, either. I've heard similar stories from other students as well, so I'm willing to suppose it may be a trend.

First off, night classes have become increasingly insufferable. This is the first semester of my academic career at CSI that I have not taken a night class. Generally, night students used to be older, more mature people who have returned to college to further their education. In my opinion they are being replaced by the worst kind of students; the kind who don't care enough about their education to get out of bed before 3:00 PM! The most disgusting thing I have ever heard a student say was during a night class last semester. He said that he didn't care how he did in the class because his parents were paying for it, and that he didn't care about his education at all. I was horrified! That, and I use the term loosely, person was quite literally wasting a seat in that class that would have been put to better use if it were left empty.

We will always have people like this in the CUNY system, especially as a college education becomes



more necessary in the future. However, I have noticed a sharp increase in this kind of student since the economy bottomed out a few years ago. It's as if CSI were some sort of place for lazy people to hide from the real world for a while! College is an institution of higher learning, not a day care for 18-24 year olds.

I'm convinced we need proper vocational schools in the U.S., akin to what is done in Germany. College isn't for everyone, but everyone does

need job training. It would be in the best interests of our country to make more avenues to success available to the next generation.

As I come to a close, I'd like to focus on some of the problems at CSI. In previous letters I have asked Student Government to take positive action, and I'd like to continue that tradition now.

To our new Student Government; I congratulate you on your election, and look forward to the com-

ing year. I'm sure that you are aware of many of the shared grievances of the student body.

Academic advisement is a sick joke. Many students have had their graduation set back a full semester or more by a failed interdepartmental communication system, and over-reliance on an imperfect technology.

Textbooks are still over-priced. The Book Store still holds a near-monopoly on the information we need to succeed.

The quality of food in the commissary has improved, but the prices are still quite high. Many students have to make a ~2 mile round trip to 7-Eleven to afford a slightly cheaper lunch.

Adequate night lighting on campus is a lovely idea, I hope we get some soon. As someone who frequently leaves this campus after dark, I can tell you that picking a path across the cracked, uneven sidewalks that lead to the front gate is tricky business.

The Campus Center leaks like a sieve whenever it rains. I have witnessed more than one person slip and fall on wet floors in that building.

There are many problems facing CSI, and that's ok. It's ok to admit that there are problems. As soon as we know something is wrong, we can work to fix it. I want to see our problems fixed. In the end, I do love CSI. It's given me many opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise. But I'm also disappointed. The way we treat the students like a piggy bank to break open and fix our fiscal problems is wrong. The way that common-sense solutions, like fixing a leak in the ceiling, seem never to be made is wrong.

I do believe that we can be better. We don't have to be mocked as the "College of Stupid Idiots" forever. We can make CSI worthy of respect. We can be an institution that treats everyone, from the President to the incoming Freshman, with fairness and respect. If this is just the fever-dream of a madman, then I hope the fever doesn't break. I would not choose to dream of anything else and I do not know why any of you would either.

As ever,
Comrade Miley

The Great Debate On "Anchor Babies" And Immigration Status

By: Erin Cavorley

There is a great deal of debate in the news about immigration, and how people come here to have what is called an "anchor baby." An anchor baby is a child born in America to foreign parents. The child has automatic American citizenship, so can come and go in America as he or she pleases. The Federation for American Immigration Reform estimates there are between 285,000 and 365,000 children in the United States that are classified "anchor babies." That indicates a huge number of people who have immigrated here and had children. But, what is the real issue that turns Americans against these immigrants?

Some are against people who migrate here, especially when they are already pregnant, just to gain the status of being American. It's true; a lot of people do come here for a better life, a new start in a land where they can be free and accepted unconditionally. This is guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

Some Americans are against the 14th Amendment. They claim that immigrants "they come here take up our jobs, abuse our system for welfare and money, and drive prices up for housing. In Staten Island, I have found most of this to be true. In Port Richmond, for example, to rent a normal apartment or house is more expensive than renting a house in Willowbrook, but Willowbrook is, by far, a better neighborhood. Do you know why this is true? Most poor American families can barely afford a apartment in today's economy. Meanwhile, immigrant families come here and rent a house in Port Richmond. They sometimes put 12 or more people in a single apartment, so the landlord is guaranteed to get the rent -- even if they all work off the books -- due to the amount of people who live there, and are splitting the rent. Unlike in the impoverished American household; only four or five people live in the house, and usually only one or two have jobs.

It is said that "anchor baby" citizenship does not pay off until age 21. Why is this? A parent who has a so-called "anchor baby" cannot sponsor their child to be an American citizen until the age of 21. Even though these immigrants come here and have "anchor babies," they don't realize that they can still be deported; they are still illegal immigrants, and have still broken our laws.

Our 14th Amendment states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States..." This was written in 1868, but this amendment has now become a battleground on what exactly is true about American birthright and citizenship.

Many politicians and court cases have raged over this issue. The great argument about the 14th Amendment and what it states is this; this amendment was written after the Civil War, and was intended to ensure that the states provided former slaves equal rights. What should that Amendment mean to us now? Our forefathers wrote it in a different time; how do we interpret this to make it useful in today's society? That is still yet to be seen, and the battle rages on; not only among our most important leaders, but among ourselves as well.

Americans also have to see the flip side of this. Immigrants are people who come here and "take jobs from us" usually, they take the jobs Americans will not do; mowing lawns, digging trenches, washing dishes, picking fruit, and so on. Most work for much less than minimum wage, and work long days; sometimes 12 hours or more. They come to America, use what money they need to live on, and send a lot of their money to their families overseas to help improve their lives.

Is that really so wrong?

Many Americans are outraged, but they refuse to work some of these jobs. If we won't take these jobs, why should we get angry at these immigrants when they do? We as the American people have to think about that. Also, not all people come here to abuse our system.

The debate will rage on both sides of the issue, and nobody will be able to foresee the outcome. We have to think about the big picture. We have to be the great country we always have been, and unify in order to come to a fair decision on this subject; not only for the sake of our immigrants, but also for our own people. We need to come up with a way to not only be fair with our rights and equalities, but also come up with a way to protect our system from abuse, to protect the hard-earned money we Americans put into our system. So I leave you, with this thought...

Where do you stand?

CSI Stands Up Against Hate & Violence

By: Marty Clifford

“We are very honored to be able to speak out to college students and to show support. Anything we can do to help spread awareness we are honored to do so.”

~Richard & Luis Vieira

Staten Island has always been a place where lifestyles collide. It's well-situated geographically, with convenient access to New York and New Jersey. This provides people with great flexibility for employment options. Consequently, there has always been a pronounced immigrant population on Staten Island. Since the Verrazano-Narrows bridge was opened in 1964, the population has exploded.

More people often means more tension, and that tension seems to be coming to a head in 2010. At the time of this writing, there have been more than a dozen hate crimes reported this year.

In June, a Port Richmond man was beaten for being Latino.

In July, Richard and Luis Vieira were attacked and beaten by a group of young men for being gay.

This tide of bad will seems to be taking place on the national scale. Political movements are becoming more recognizable for their angry rhetoric than for their policies. People are angry, and that anger is spilling over. It is beginning to affect those people at the edges of society, those people most easily victimized.

Through the month of September there was a string of suicides. Young people all over this country ended their lives because they could no longer face a life of bigotry, bullying, and alienation.

On the evening of October 7, 2010, the Gay-Straight Alliance at the College of Staten Island hosted the CSI Against Hate Candle Light March. In coalition with many of the organizations at CSI, the GSA brought the community together to declare “Enough is enough!”

The rally was led by GSA President Jeremiah Jurkiewicz. He reminded the assembled crowd that America was founded on the principles of religious freedom and equality, and wondered why society is continually allowed to contradict those values.

“When you see someone committing [an act of] hate against another, then speak up,” Mr. Jurkiewicz urged the attendees, “The time for silence is over! Get a little angry at the circumstances in our country right now! Because out of anger comes action and dialogue. And out of these comes change and understanding that has been all too long deprived in this great country.”

The Rally was a part of the I Am Staten Island campaign. “I Am Staten Island (IAMSI) is a campaign

to promote the idea that we, as residents of Staten Island, are all members of a shared community, and that we must all take responsibility for ensuring that the Island is a safe and welcoming borough for people of all backgrounds.”

Coming together as a community was another theme of the evening. Mr. Jurkiewicz went on to say “If I am not willing to defend someone or something that has nothing to do with me, then how can I expect someone to do the same for me? It's time to say that any form of hate, regardless of its' target, is not ok! Let's care for each other as if we were blood-related.”

It was in the spirit of this statement that participants at the rally were encouraged to share their stories, and urged to “End the hate.” Many speakers shared their personal experiences with intolerance of all kinds, ranging from racial and religious persecution, to their struggles with identity.

Katie Cumiskey is the faculty advisor to the GSA and Chair of the Psychology Department of CSI. She shared her insight on the meaning of community, “Communities come together for each other. Communities go beyond the front gate. . . We need to be responsible as college students, faculty, and Staten Islanders. We can be about love and tolerance.”

Laura LoBianco Sword attended the rally as a representative of Assemblyman Matthew Titone, who was unable to attend due to a another speaking engagement elsewhere on the topic of marriage equality.

In the most poignant moment of the evening, Luis and Richard Vieira, who were victimized on Bay Street on the night of July 7, 2010, were invited to share their story with the audience.

“We are tax-payers and responsible citizens,” Luis explained, “We have the best neighbors, they've given us so much support.”

He went on to say that, as college students, “You alone have the ability & power to make changes in this world. Learn the facts. Don't rely on others to inform you. The real truth about things is out there. . . If you think this [hate] has nothing to do with you, you're wrong. It has everything to do with you! If nobody stands up for anybody, who's going to be left to stand up for you?”

Richard then took the microphone, and spoke to the crowd with deep emotion. “I didn't think of myself,” he said about the attack, “I thought of Luis. I never fought with anyone in my life! I don't hate anybody. I don't have the patience or the time to hate.”

The demonstrators then lit candles and marched peacefully to Victory Boulevard. The rally was attended by approximately 75 people.

By: Katrina Hannan & Daysi Manzano

Eight CUNY campuses are participating in recycling plastic bag efforts. Is your school one of them? The Ernesto Malave Leadership Academy, formerly known as CUNY Leadership Academy, is responsible for this. The Malave Leadership Academy is composed of 25 student leaders throughout CUNY. "The Academy is where students come together with faculty and other leaders to develop the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to become global as leaders." The year long program allows participants to grow together as leaders and create a strong network across CUNY, while doing service.

The 2009-2010 Malave cohort successfully established the CUNY Green Fellows project, aka; "Banlastic." We had phenomenal leaders who guided us in the right direction; former Executive Director, Dr. Joe McManus, Coordinator for Special Programs and Professional Development, Christina Joseph, and Program Coordinator Julie Agosto.

The Malave leaders collaborated and created the CUNY Green Fellows project to raise awareness and increase recycling in CUNY. Under the leadership and guidance of Julie Agosto, the Malave fellows met once each week to discuss the implementation of this project. We diligently researched the importance of recycling plastic bags, and learned that they are extremely detrimental to our environment.

Did you know that plastic waste kills thousands of marine animals each year because they confuse the plastic with their food? According to PlasticBagRecycling.org; "Plastic bags can be made into dozens of useful new products, such as building and construction products, low-maintenance fencing and decking, and of course, new bags."



This is the plastic bag recycling bin in building 1C on the ground floor

The U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually, but we recycle very few of them. We decided that as CUNY leaders, we needed to step up and make a difference.

We met with Buildings & Grounds and the Sustainability Committees of each school, and they agreed to have these recycling bins on their campuses. We were also successful in getting recycling plastic bag efforts into the sustainability plans at most of the schools.

Helix Poly, the largest manufacturer and recycler of retail bags in the United States, donated plastic bag recycling bins to the Malave Leadership Academy to be used on the 8 campuses participating in the bag recycling program. The bins are currently in use (or soon will be) at the College of Staten Island, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia Community College, New York City College of Technology, Queensborough Community College, Queens College, and York College.

The Vice President of Marketing & Environmental Affairs at Helix Poly, Mark Daniels, stated "Through education programs like the recycling initiative undertaken by CUNY, this market will continue to grow adding valuable green jobs throughout the nation. The participation by the students at the CUNY campuses is greatly appreciated, as we recognize their environmental stewardship towards a sustainable future."

The 2009-2010 Malave Leadership Academy cohort worked vigorously last year to get these recycling bins onto the 8 CUNY campuses. We sincerely thank Dr. Joe, Christina, Joseph, and Julie Agosto for their support. Now it's time for you to start recycling plastic bags at your CUNY campus!

Katrina Hannan is a CSI student, and Daysi Manzano is a Baruch graduate student, 2009-2010 Malave Leadership Academy fellows.

Sometimes, I Wonder

By: Marty Clifford

When I was in the third grade, I was entered into the school Science Fair. To this day, I couldn't tell you why. All I had done was paint nine Styrofoam balls to look like the planets -- in those days there were nine -- and stuck them on Styrofoam disks with some wire. Half of them didn't even stand straight, although I was fairly proud of the cardboard ring I made for Saturn.



My goofy model solar-system was put in competition against the usual assortment of volcanoes, microscopes made from mayonnaise jars, and kit-built radios that picked up nothing but static. The only interesting thing I saw that day was an experiment called "Gravity Doesn't Work." The idea was that the theory of gravity states 'what goes up must come back down' could be easily debunked using a magnet; little things like pins and paper-clips jumped from off the table and on to the magnet. They never came 'back down.'

I thought that this was marvelous! The scientific applications were limitless in my 8 year old mind; with a big enough magnet you could lift a dog, or make an airplane that never crashed, or even fly to the moon!

The judges interviewed me about my dumb planets, and I answered their questions as if they were asking what I wanted for my last meal. Then they all trotted off to interview the brilliant kid with the magnets -- surely a formality, since anyone could see his project was going to rewrite the fundamental paradigm of technology -- and I sank into my chair and sulked.

Turns out that my petulance was for nothing, the kid with his magic, gravity-defying magnet didn't win a single prize. I couldn't comprehend that! Had these judges no vision? Couldn't they see the limitless applications to which this marvelous new device could be put?

I had to know, so I walked over to the brilliant magnet-kid and asked him if they told him why he didn't win, and adding that I thought he should have won. He said it was because the judges said he didn't show that he understood gravity or magnetism, and because of that his experiment failed to support the hypothesis.

At the time, I had no idea what he was talking about.

* * * * *

Minding my own business is a hobby of mine. Like almost anyone who was raised in a big city, I'm pretty comfortable with not going out of my way to find out what kind of trouble I can get into.

Let's get this out of the way up front; I'm an atheist. There, I said it. The dirtiest word in the American vernacular, and I willingly self-apply it. Look, I'm not one of those raving lunatics who rants about how



Charles Darwin 1809-1882

stupid religious people are, or how the Pope is secretly creating a clockwork army of Golden Pedophiles to rid the world of innocent children and thereby bring about the Apocalypse. All it means is that I don't believe in any gods, nor do I put stock in any holy book that any of those particular gods authored as dictated but not read.

Despite what I've heard about myself from others, I live a perfectly happy, well-adjusted, morally centered life. I might not care who fed which apple to whom, but this is America and you can tell whatsoever version of the story you please; there's this little thing called the First Amendment that guarantees you that right.

I'm a fan of the First Amendment. I believe in it. I think it represents the best of what America is. In part, the Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . .," which basically means that government can't force religion on the people, and that people can't force religion on the government, or on each other. There's a bunch of boring Supreme Court cases to back up that point; *McCollum v. Board of Ed*; *Kiryas*

Joel Village School District v. Grumet; Sherbert v. Verner; City of Boerne v. Flores; I'm getting drowsy just listing them! Everyone has the right to be who they want to be.

Another of my core beliefs is in education. The depth of human knowledge is truly amazing, and passing that knowledge to the next generation is important; how else are they going to have time to figure out new things unless we teach them what we already know? It may seem silly to say it like that, but this is the why you don't carry around a portable CD player anymore. We realized it could be better and turned it into an iPod Touch!

Sometimes, my belief in these two things puts me in a unique position. For example; there are a multitude of groups that recognize themselves as Creationists. They are folks who believe that, despite all evidence to the contrary, the Earth (and consequently, everything on it) is only about 6,000 years old. Therefore, it must have been created in its complete, modern form.



Crocoduck

Creationists will go to great lengths to reconcile this belief with the world around them. They have been known to use stories of Noah's Flood to explain everything from fossilized dinosaur remains to craters on the moon, but their greatest goal is to debunk Darwin.

The Theory of Evolution has been under attack by religious fundamentalists for almost as long as it has been considered credible by the scientific community; some people find it unthinkable that humans could have arisen from a 'lesser' species through natural processes. Accepting that would undermine their dogma, their faith in the superiority of mankind, and deny them their rightful place as special in the eyes of their chosen deity.

Unable to accept that possibility, Creationists attempt to disprove and lampoon evolution (which they often call Darwinism) at every opportunity. You may have heard of the crocoduck argument. It goes like this; if evolution can turn a crocodile into a duck, why has nobody ever found a crocoduck?

People who understand evolution are quick to point out that the existence of such a creature would actually be the clinching proof that the theory was wrong; an animal of one species will never give birth to a creature that is unrecognizable as a member of that same species. Evolution from one form to another is the sum total of changes to an animal species over a vast amount of time. It is not photoshopping a crocodile's head onto a duck. Scientific people do better work than that.

There's this group called the Discovery Institute, which sounds pretty scientific. Read a bit about them on their website and they seem a pretty reasonable bunch. In their words, "As a matter of public policy, Discovery Institute opposes any effort to require the teaching of intelligent design by school districts or state boards of education."

If you're not familiar with it, intelligent design (sometimes called ID) is the idea that the universe, and the living things that inhabit it, is too complicated to have arisen naturally, and therefore must have been deliberately, intelligently arranged. If it sounds suspiciously like the definition of Creationism to you, then you're right! ID was put forward as an alternate version of the theory of evolution; it's a theory that is more palatable to the Creationists because it allows for human beings to spring into existence at the behest of their deity in the relatively recent past instead of forcing them to struggle their way up to humanity from a demeaning start in monkeyhood millions of years ago. It's also a theory that has a better chance to worm its way into public schools, as the overt references to religion have been glossed over.



It seems pretty simple why the Discovery Institute would want to oppose ID; as a religiously inspired idea, teaching it in schools was ruled unconstitutional in the end of 2005; “[Intelligent Design] is not [science], and moreover. . . ID cannot uncouple itself from its creationist, and thus religious, antecedents.” (Judge John E. Jones III, *Kitzmiller v. Dover*).

The problem arises only if you read a bit further into the Discovery Institute’s website; “Attempts to mandate teaching about intelligent design only politicize the theory and will hinder fair and open discussion of the merits of the theory among scholars and within the scientific community.”

So, they don’t want to require ID to be taught, since it would be illegal to push their religious views into public schools; that might infringe on the rights of people to believe in other religious views. However, they do want teachers to voluntarily spread the idea, since that will squeeze the theory into the school system through a tiny legal loophole.

All this because the theory of evolution doesn’t fit into their world view. Which is a shame, because the science of evolution works; if it didn’t work, then there would be a slew of alternate theories slugging it out in the brutal peer-review process. In science, people have to agree that something works and it has to be proven to work. Nobody can simply claim something works and be accepted as correct. Moreover, the science of intelligent design doesn’t work; in order for it to be valid we would have to completely redefine our understanding of biology, physics, geology, cosmology, astronomy, phylogeny, even medicine!

Which brings me back to my third grade Science Fair. By attacking the theory of evolution, the Discovery Institute has only proved that they don’t understand it. By not being able to back up Intelligent Design as an alternate theory, they have failed to support their hypothesis.

I get it now.

O3LD

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My Thoughts on the Proposed Mosque at Ground Zero

By: Erin Cavorley

When I heard the news of a mosque to be built on the 9/11 site, honestly I was shocked. I have watched many interviews and debates and read many newspaper articles to gather all the facts. Why do they want to put it there? I wanted to see it from these people's point of view.



Feisal Abdul Rauf

Feisal Abdul Rauf, the Imam behind the Park 51 center, was in a TV interview, where he said that he wants the building to be an interfaith center, and a place for Muslims to branch out and be less shy. He also said that, since all this controversy has gone on in the national media, he feels if he builds the mosque the American people are going to revolt against it. However, if he doesn't, Muslim extremists in the international community are going to use this as ammunition against us; not only risking the deaths of more American soldiers, but also creating more resistance against America worldwide. To the Muslim extremist, it would seem that we are against Islam.

I know that I am not against any religion. The real reason why everyone is so shocked about where the mosque is to be built is that, to Americans, Ground Zero is a sacred site.

Why is this site so sacred to us? Well, obviously, not only did one of the worst tragedies in history happen there, and not only was one of the world's largest financial centers brought down to a million pieces, but, in those final moments, so were our families.

The world watched in horror that day as each plane hit the towers. The world cried as people jumped from windows to escape the flames. The towers fell with our loved ones trapped inside. Ground Zero may be just a piece of property to this particular independent company, but to us



World Trade Center Aftermath

Americans, it is a sacred place for those reasons.



Protest of Park 51 Mosque

I personally do not believe a mosque should be built on Ground Zero. Too many people of too many different religions died there. They all had their unique beliefs and thoughts, and placing only one religion on that ground is like favoring one person's memory over another. I honestly feel that is wrong; no one's memory should be disgraced. No religion should be more important than another.

America has built its foundation on trying to be

a democracy; a country where everyone is equal -- where no race or religion is favored over another -- why should this be any different?

I understand Feisal Abdul Rauf's concern over what might happen if he doesn't build the community center, but he should have thought about all of this before he decided to build a mosque on such a sacred space.

On another note, the company that is selling the property has had multiple offers. Most recently, Donald Trump offered to buy this undesirable location, just to put an end to the controversy. He said he could see nothing good coming from this situation. The offer was declined.

So, what is it that this company wants? War and bloodshed? We will never know but in this instance, it makes them look one-sided and shady. I believe in freedom of religion, but building a mosque on one of the holiest and most sacred sites in America sickens me.

I am not against it because the ones who bombed it considered themselves Muslims. Not everyone is the same, and their religion has nothing to do with such a case to me. The attacks on September 11 were decisions made by those individuals. I am against the mosque because everyone I know, everyone my friends and family know, even people I don't know lost someone in the towers that day. They should not be forgotten, and their voices should not be left unheard. Just because they are no longer here with us in this life doesn't mean that they should be forgotten, or that their individuality shouldn't be respected.



World Trade Center workers and volunteers

The day that everyone died in those towers, it wasn't just one of the most powerful financial centers in the world being destroyed. It was the meaning of the act. Radical terrorists intended to destroy our economy and dishearten us, and they only made us stronger. Our economy is still suffering from that blow, but we will keep pushing through it all.

Not only do our fears run high, but emotions run strong in every New Yorker, especially towards those who were there helping that

day. The impact of 9/11 was felt across the whole world. Putting a mosque on Ground Zero after all that can only be more of a tragedy. This is truly a lose/lose situation; whatever they decide to do will have bad consequences. I do not look forward to what any of those may be.

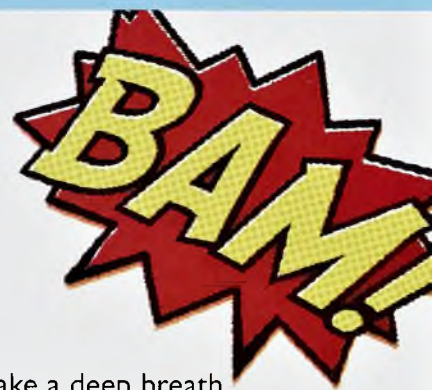
I believe that Muslims have a right to practice their religion, to worship in their mosques. But, honestly, to build one on that site -- such a holy site to us, a site of memories and so many deaths of different people -- is just wrong.

A memorial should go up to honor everyone, but it should be a secular memorial; a place for every American to come and remember all those people who were lost. We are a great and unified country, full of many privileges, but just like in Jerusalem -- where their holy land is revered, and is one of their sacred places -- they protect them.

I honestly believe we should have every right to protect ourselves as well.

How To Enjoy Life as an Adult

By Nadia Kader



First throw down your bag, take a deep breath
Marvel that your long day is finished
Now, take it out of your closet
Rub the glossy cover, smile big
And breathe in those dry, musty pages
Let the vibrant colors take charge
And escape from this listless place
Cleft chins, big muscles, blue hued hair, tights
They rush at you, these people with
Heat vision, Super strength, Spider Senses
BAM! SHRAK! KABOOM! KRAKOW! SHAZAM!
This is the part when you sit back
And wonder why we can't learn this in school
Don't think too hard, this is for fun
Don't think about loopholes or cop outs
Like the death penalty for Luthor
Or psychotherapy for Batman
Or how come they don't sweat,
hiding their costumes under those nice business suits?
This is the end now, the blank back cover
Your corny adventures are over
Shut the glossy book, change your costume
Take off those red tights, your green flowing cape
And put on your McDonald's apron



Building Bridges on Hallowed Ground?

By: Marty Clifford



Dwight Dunkley



Nadia Kader



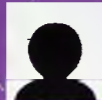
Michael Miley



Andrew Oppenheimer



Anonymous



Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, many Americans have an uneasy relationship with Islam. When an American Imam and a group of American Muslims announced their intention to build an Islamic community center “dedicated to pluralism, service, arts and culture, education and empowerment” at the site of 45-47 Park Place near the World Trade Center site (Ground Zero;) many Americans reacted with outrage and anger.

Being the hometown of many police officers, fire fighters, EMT’s, and emergency response volunteers, Staten Island suffered greatly in the aftermath of the attacks. Hundreds of families lost loved ones, and thousands more lost friends and colleagues. Tensions on Staten Island have been high in recent years, and Staten Islanders have never been shy about sharing their opinions.

Opinions on both sides of the issue are strong, which has led to a bitter and public

Third Rail Magazine, the political arts magazine of the College of Staten Island, invited an informed and civil discussion on the different perspectives on this issue. What follows are the results of this conversation, as well as some other thoughts and opinions collected on this controversial topic.

“I pulled a few quotes out of an online article that I think are appropriate. They seem to sum up the spirit on the street.

“The first quote is a very strong point made by a Muslim woman who lost her son on 9/11: “Why are we [Muslims] paying the price? Why are we being ostracized? Our loved ones died [on September 11]... America was founded on the grounds of religious freedom,” and opposition to the cultural center “is un-American. It’s unethical. And it is wrong.”

“From here on I confess I summed up and read between the lines a bit. (If you’d like to see the exact quotes, they’re available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100820/ap_on_re_us/us_nyc_mosque_families) The counterpoints seem to go as follows: (A) “It is unfair to persecute the {Muslim community}, however;” [we’re willing to overlook that.] (B) “We’re not telling them not to practice their religion [we’re just dictating where they can practice it.] (C) “The fact is that Islam does not coexist well with other religions, and you can’t separate that from Islam. If that sounds intolerant on my part, that’s too bad.” [I am comfortable being a bigot.]”



“You know, I wish I had something witty to say. Sadly, I don’t. The ‘otherization’ of American Muslims is a disturbing trend, but not one that should be surprising in America. Islam has replaced Communism as the big boogey-man in the 21st Century.”

“We know that these things are wrong. To demonize an entire people/system of belief, and start treating those people like second class citizens is wrong.”

“I would like to ask a very specific question; why is it offensive to build, what amounts to a JCC or YMCA, two and half blocks away from ground zero? I have asked this many, many times and I have never gotten a straight answer. People say it’s like if Nazis built a Hitler museum next to a former concentration camp, and I’m tired of these arguments! I don’t want to know what it’s like. I want to know what it is! Why is this offensive, but all the porn/sex shops around the site is not offensive? I would like one of the people who are against it to explain to me why they think it’s offensive.”





"I learned that Muslims have a history of building mosques in lands they have 'conquered.' Makes you wonder why they want to build one 2 blocks from Ground Zero, where almost 3000 U.S. citizens were murdered by radical Muslims. I have nothing against the religion, but I am against this mosque being built and I don't care if you agree or not it's my opinion. I'm against the mosque and that doesn't make me biased. It's not like I'm saying 'oh, they should build a catholic church there instead.' Put the freaking Burlington back there!"

"First of all; No matter how many times you call it a mosque, it still isn't a mosque. It's a community center, with places to cook and play sports, and with a space set aside for prayer. A mosque is the exact same thing as a church; a building that's exclusively for prayer and worship. Saying that adding prayer space for Muslims into a building makes it a mosque is like saying that putting a chapel in a hospital makes it a church; that despite all the fancy medical equipment and doctors it won't 'disguise' the purpose of the building as being anything other than a place of worship.

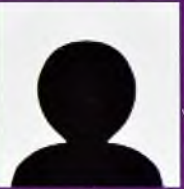
"Then you say 'Put the freaking Burlington back there', as if the city has some sort of choice in whether the actual company that owns the building sells it or re-opens the warehouse? For someone who touts the free market, you don't seem to understand it."



"I wasn't going to mention it, but there are a bunch of strip clubs on the 'hallowed' Ground Zero earth -- including one that I only found out about while visiting the Ground Zero site. Should I hold my breath for the protests?"



"Ground Zero is the perfect place for a mosque. What better way to uphold the U.S.'s values of freedom opposed by terrorists?"



"But they aren't building a mosque! It's a community center four blocks away! It's not even on ground zero! People should look up the facts before denouncing something they don't completely understand."



"Setting aside space for Muslims to pray does not make a building a mosque any more than, adding a chapel to a hospital makes it a church."



"You used that analogy before, cheater!"



"We've all used that before! Following this line of logic, the Campus Center counts as a mosque."



"If I can just go back to what [Anonymous] said; One of the more common things I hear when the subject comes up is the idea that, because of the number of people who died in and around the attacks of 9/11 (which is to say; not only those who were killed in the attacks themselves, but also the large number of those who died in the resulting rescue efforts), and because that group is so diverse, that it would be disrespectful for a single religious group to establish a place of worship in that area -- as if to imply that particular group might then have some sort of spiritual monopoly on the memory of 9/11."

"Those people who know better are quick to point out there are churches and, yes, in fact, even a mosque that already exist in the neighborhood, and have done since before September 11, 2001. Or, if you prefer, since before December 1970 -- when the North Tower was completed. These institutions are generally hand-waved away under the aegis of some sort of unspoken grandfather-clause, but that in-and-of itself leads to some interesting questions. Why is this religion more preferable than that? How close is 'too close'? How soon is 'too soon'? If it's ok to have an old mosque there, why isn't it ok to build a new one? If it's ok to have an old mosque there, why isn't it ok to build a new building with a prayer room? Why is it ok in America to fall back on Jim Crow style social justice?"



"So, it does pretty much boil down to a heaping helping of that old time xenophobia."



"I hate ignorance."

"RAAHHHHH!"
"NADIA SMASH! NADIA SMASH!"



"As someone that doesn't particularly care about religion, I'm one of the folks that said it isn't appropriate for any religious institution to be there. I still hold that to be the case. No church, temple, mosque, or other place of worship should exist that close - within plain sight - to Ground Zero. However, since these already exist, it would be wrong (and likely illegal) to force the existing institutions to move. Unless you are suggesting that the church, mosque, and whatever else is in the area be demolished, I believe that's why "hand waving" is acceptable. I haven't been in the area recently, I can't remember expressly what is already within eyesight besides a church."

"That said, I don't think a community center - regardless of who sponsors it - is a negative thing. After reviewing Park51's website (<http://blog.park51.org/>) I have found only one thing that I believe to be in poor taste, and only for the sake of redundancy. I don't see why a September 11th memorial is needed when it is so close to the actual site. If someone wanted to mourn so badly, they could walk two blocks and do it in person. I don't feel that having a prayer room is a negative thing; all people should be allowed to practice whatever they believe, as long as it doesn't infringe on anyone else's personal rights."



"The worst part of this discussion is it contains mostly people that agree, while no one else comments. I would like to have something to say about Andrew's comment, but I agree with all of it. I really do wish some of the people against it would speak up."

"Ok, well, here's a thought; As someone that doesn't particularly care about religion myself, I don't feel that any religious establishment should be anywhere. I'd be perfectly happy if i never saw another building consecrated in the name of some arbitrary interpretation of a codified oral tradition."

"That said, since people are determined to waste the space one way or the other, I normally say have-at-it."

"Sometimes I can't, though. <http://www.911christiancenter.com/> This should not be permitted, but there's hardly a whisper about it. I'm not sure I'm willing to give this one the same latitude as other "waste-of-space" institutions, however, because this is treading dangerously close to being a hate group."



"That's disgusting."



"FYI: there is a (Greek orthodox?) church immediately across the street from Ground Zero -- the front of the church is on Broadway across the street from the Au Bon Pain that is next to J&R Music World. The church is ringed by a metal fence and is right beside the Staples across from J&R Music World."



"I don't know about you guys but I'm offended by Au Bon Pain, how dare they build an over priced (if yummy) but massively overpriced sandwich shop right next to THE HALLOWED GROUND tm. I find it offensive."



"That's awfully arbitrary of you, Mike, to single out the sandwich shop. There's plenty of offensive music in the world. Maybe there shouldn't be a record store? And do you know how Nazi's killed so many people so efficiently? Memos. I think letting a Staples operate there is in poor taste, considering the strong Jewish population in New York."

"Of course, I'm being a bit absurdist here; but the point I'm getting at is this -- Without stepping into "slippery-slope" territory, I think it's legitimate to examine what is and is not a fair and protected expression of First Amendment rights."

"I don't believe that the presence of a community center poses a threat to the safety of the general public, but I think that hosting a group that spreads slander and libel (such as "Islam is a wonderful religion... for PEDOPHILES!" and "A False Religion that is About Hate and Death" and, even worse "The Coming Showdown between Islam and Christianity") against any group, encourages at-best; resentment, and at-worst; violence. **THAT** constitutes a danger to the safety of the public-at-large, and **THAT** is what I have a problem with."



"Marty, that 911 Christian center website is so awful. People forget that even if it was a 'mosque' being put there, it is in the constitution that we all have the right to worship whatever deity, follow any religion we choose. So legally, there can be a mosque there. Not that anyone plans on putting a mosque on Ground Zero."



A Counter-Point Perspective

By: the Editors

America was founded on the freedom to practice one's own religion. In these days, as in those, we recognize that certain freedoms must have limits. The free exercise of a religion mandating human sacrifice would be as unthinkable, as utterly intolerable, in America as we believe it would be anywhere in the modern world.

Islam neither mandates, nor encourages, human sacrifice either willingly or by force.

What Islam does mandate, on the other hand, is prayer. One of the Five Pillars of Islam (moral guidelines for Muslims, similar to the Ten Commandments) is Salah; the daily regimen of prayers. Muslims are obliged to give prayer five times per day. The free exercise of this aspect of the religion is something with which, we feel, no American should or will take exception.

Islamic prayers are quite humble compared with their Judeo-Christian counterparts. The Muslim supplicant bows low before Allah, and kneels. The daily prayers involve touching ones head to the ground. This requires the person to have a comfortable amount of space in an out-of-the-way location, or else it could cause an unsafe situation.

This mandate of prayer has a measurable effect on the daily lives of Muslim Americans, and on Muslims around the world. In order to be free to practice their religion, Muslims need a low-traffic space in which they can pray in comfort without fear of injury.

Which brings us to the problem of Park 51. A community center that serves the Muslims of New York must be allowed to have a prayer room. To say otherwise would violate the rights of the Muslim community to freely practice their religion. It becomes incumbent upon us as Americans to recognize this fact; not having adequate space to pray infringes on the practice of Islam.

To those who oppose the "mosque" at "Ground Zero" -- though it is neither a mosque, nor at Ground Zero -- but defend the American value of religious freedom, we ask you this; how is your argument not self-defeating? How does touting your staunch defense of religious freedom excuse your rationalization for the selective enforcement of it?

In America, we guarantee rights to everyone, not just to the people we like.

Untitled

By: Marty Clifford

Spinning starburst starlight lives
enlighten hearts, delight the minds
and queerer questions ever will
perturb the thoughtful, ever still
From distant places, vaguely known
inspired dreams can yet be grown;
Magnificent. Marvelous. Magic-less. Vast
futures implied by incredible past.
A gap so wide, there is no bridge
to ease our lonely pilgrimage
ever towards the barren coast;
it's failing hopes that ache the most
when walking near those empty shores.
This emptiness the soul abhors.
The beauty that we find today
are footprints left to guide the way.

Dangling sunlight, savagely flung
on precious paintings, poorly hung
from sparkling, sputtering, splintering skies;
it's in the night that twilight dies;
for what use is the burning sun,
when by it are good works undone?
Despite the desperate, drenching lies,
and counsel of the wicked wise,

and frigid fists of flagrant fools
content to be their master's tools
(for why would ever want they claim
to own their wrought; inflicted pain?)
Perhaps in sleep to dream, and see
the consequence of fallacy;
to know not what, nor where, nor when,
but still to claim the wisest ken.

Sensual, silken, seemly sights.
Whirling wonders. Dizzying heights
From parted lips the promise spins,
where midnight ends, her hair begins.
And he is trapped for all to see,
enchanted by her puppetry.
Her twisted purpose sweetly serves
to vilify his noble nerves.
This is how the story's told
to hearts of young, from mouths of old.
This is how the legends start;
value placed on player's part.
From this fiction fast we find
the wanderers path is well-defined
by twisting turns and gaping holes.
So deadly is this Maze of Souls.

Book Review Corner

Video Games and Nostalgia: A review of *Playing the Past*
By: M. Miley

Playing the Past: History and Nostalgia in Video Games
Edited by Zach Whalen and Laurie N. Taylor
Vanderbilt University Press, 2008
296 pages

I'm going to go out on a limb and say everyone reading this probably knows what a video game is, and most of you probably have some experience with video games; whether you've played the latest Playstation 3 game, or played a single round of Bejeweled on your phone.

Over the last 30 years video games have become ingrained in popular culture, but often we fail to consider the intellectual interpretations of video games. Many people are willing to dismiss games as culturally insignificant, not even considering them a form of art.

In the last decade there has been a growing movement towards academia on the subject of video games. *Playing the Past: History and nostalgia in Video Games* is an excellent example of what an academic look at video games can be.

Playing the Past is a collected volume of essays approaching the subject matter of how nostalgia is viewed through the lens of video games; from the original plug-in-and-play "classic" games, to the massively popular World War II shooters in style today. The book explores the differences in memory narrative created by plug-in-and-play games and the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator (MAME) communities online.

Plug-in-and-play games consist of a single controller that is hooked up to your TV. The unit contains a selection of classic games programmed into it; Pac-man; PONG; Space Invaders; Defender; Asteroids; even Mortal Kombat. In typical marketing fashion the ads for many of these games proclaim them to be the ultimate experience in classic gaming, and the definitive form of play. In the MAME communities, where people can download and play many of the same arcade classics, they are able to create their own "definitive" collections.



Other themes the book deals with are the ideas of the interactive museum -- such as Salem Plantation in Massachusetts -- as a form of gaming, and 'documentary' games -- such as JFK: Reloaded (which puts the player in the shoes of Lee Harvey Oswald as he attempts to assassinate President Kennedy,) and Kuma Games recreation of the mission that earned John Kerry his Purple Heart. These games either have a blatant message built into them, demonstrate an action, or help people relive a moment in history.

One of the most fascinating areas the book explores is the subject of the alienation, and the process of man behaving as robot in the modern post-industrial world; most explicitly shown in the games Syberia and Syberia II. These point-and-click style adventure games feature a New York lawyer, Kate Walker, sent to take over a factory in France following the death of the previous owner. The factory produces automatons, and Kate must attempt to help the child-minded brother of the former owner find Syberia; a mystical island somewhere beyond Russia. As her quest goes on, Kate begins to behave in an increasingly disconnected manner. She begins to more closely resemble an automaton herself.

Games like this can lead the player to examine his or her relationship with the game itself. Sometimes (especially during a particularly grueling, difficult, or redundant section of a game,) playing a video game can feel more like a chore. The player can feel as if they have lost a sense of self, as if they had become transfixed, hypnotically focused on a single, repetitive task; as if the players themselves had become the automaton.

The book is a marvelous read, fascinating from cover to cover. Perceptions of how we view the real world, and how that effects our experience in the digital world, are woven together to create a unique lens through which to view our collective, electronic past. This book changed the way I think about video games and how I look at the world. If nothing else, it made me more aware of the rose-colored glasses that we all sometimes wear when thinking of the past.

Israel and South Africa: A review of, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship With Apartheid South Africa*

By: M. Miley

The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship With Apartheid South Africa

By: Sasha Polakow-Suransky Pantheon, 2010

336 pages

In his new book, Sasha Polakow-Suransky explores the deep relationship between Israel and apartheid South Africa; starting in the late 1960s, and lasting until the very end of the apartheid regime. The book uses a variety of sources -- from oral interviews with former South African and Israeli officials, as well as de-classified documents from the South African archives, but official sources from the Israeli government in the book are close to nil (since Israel is still keeping a lid on information regarding the close military relationship between them and the apartheid regime). Polakow-Suransky manages to keep the editorial voice to a bare minimum, and focuses on the idea that Israel is an apartheid state (more on that below). It is important to remember that such discussion is not the purpose of this book; it needs to be stressed that the book is an exploration of the military ties between Israel and apartheid South Africa -- a relationship the author describes as "a marriage of interests and ideologies [wherein] Israel profited handsomely from arms exports and South Africa gained access to cutting-edge weaponry at a time when the rest of the world was turning against the apartheid state."

The book starts off by exploring the fascist roots of the South African National Party in the years before the Second World War and its' support of the Nazis against the British. It then moves on to discuss the aftermath of the war, and the creation of the State of Israel. Israel's initial moral foreign policy towards Africa rejected co-operation with Apartheid South Africa, and embraced the increasing number of free African states in order to get support in the United Nations; a move intended to counter the increasing anti-Israeli arguments coming from Arab nations. It also explores the actions of the Defense Ministry, and its' creation of a shadow foreign ministry that ran counter to the policy of the official Foreign Ministry. We see the start of this in the early 1950s, when Shimon Peres, then the Minister of Defense, began conducting secret arms deals with the French behind the back of Golda Meir, the Foreign Minister at the time. Peres went so far as to proclaim "the conduct of foreign policy cannot be left to the foreign office alone." Later, it would be



Peres who would be instrumental in forming the close relationship between Israel and South Africa. What begins to turn Israel away from 'Black Africa', and into secretly supporting the apartheid state, is the exact same event that turned Israel from the darling of the left into the pariah that it is today; the Six Day War. Following the occupations of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula in 1967, many in the African countries began to associate Israel with being a western Imperial power. Though the African nations were weary of Israel, they were still supporters. In reacting to the criticism of the independent African nations, Israel, with support of many in the Labour government, began to move towards South Africa as an ally. What is most disturbing about the alliance is the nuclear secrets shared between the two governments. The South African government was desperate to obtain an atomic device; ostensibly under the auspices of the "peaceful" nuclear explosion programs that were en vogue during the Cold War.

In the mid 1960s Israel achieved its' nuclear ambition, but to this day they are still vague about it; taking the line that they will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East. South Africa was of the notion that "the Israeli model of nuclear ambiguity coupled with covert weaponization was enticing. In order to gauge what it could get away with down the road, Pretoria was watching developments in the Middle East closely and, more important, observing the reactions of the superpowers." The nuclear co-operation between the two countries became so close that, in the mid-1970s, South Africa lifted all safety inspections on Israel of yellowcake (an intermediate form of uranium powder); of which they already had 500 tons, and, in return for another 100 tons of yellowcake, Israel agreed to supply South Africa with thirty grams of tritium (which can be used to increase the explosive power of atomic weapons). There was also the 1979 Vela incident; in which all evidence suggests that an Israeli atomic bomb was tested in the Southern Indian Ocean with the aid of South Africa. In the latter part of the 1980s, when South Africa was mired in the Angolan Civil War, they began to co-develop a medium range ballistic missile with Israel.

The Labour government of Israel saw the need for an alliance with South Africa as a necessity, even if they disagreed with the policy of apartheid. However, following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the right-wing Likud party came to power and fully embraced South Africa. The entirety of chapter six left my jaw agape, as it described how closely high ranking members of the Likud party identified with the "plight" of the white South Africans. In all truthfulness; words cannot describe this chapter, or how utterly horrifying the information inside it is.

The book ends with the fall of the Apartheid regime and the exposure of the alliance between Israel and South Africa. Attempts were made by Israel to discredit the truth of exactly how close the relationship

was; while defending, if only indirectly, the apartheid regime. It also covers the friction that resulted from the creation of the shadow foreign ministry. Those in the actual foreign ministry began to reach out to black South African leaders, and eventually Nelson Mandela's African National Congress. But the Defense mission, which bisected the Israeli consulate in Pretoria tried to hold up the Apartheid regime, going so far as to say that there was another twenty or thirty years left in the system (actually, as history would turn out, there were less than half a dozen). The book's epilogue then briefly touches on the notion that Israel is currently an apartheid state. What Polakow-Suransky argues here is that while there are criticisms against that notion, the hard-line defenders of Israel aren't doing any good by their knee-jerk reactions, nor by repeating twenty year old propaganda. While arguing that Israel isn't an apartheid state (just yet), citing the growing Arab population, and the desperate need of many far-right Israeli's to maintain Israel as a Jewish state, leads to Israel being no different than de Klerks South Africa. With that in mind, I leave you with the closing conversation between Polakow Suransky and the former Israeli ambassador to South Africa Elazar Granot.

"Reclining on his sofa and gazing out the window at the late afternoon sun, [Granot] confesses, "I haven't told you what I know, and I wouldn't...until there is peace in the Middle East." But for a moment he lets down his guard.

"I had to take into consideration that maybe Rabin and Peres were able to go to the Oslo agreements because they believed that Israel was strong enough to defend itself," says Granot, uncomfortably. "It wasn't the Americans and it wasn't the French and it wasn't the English. Most of the work that was done—I'm talking about the new kinds of weapons—was done in South Africa."

NYPIRG

Hi Everyone,

I'm Josie Zolkind, the Project Coordinator for NYPIRG, The New York Public Interest Research Group here at CSI. NYPIRG is a nonprofit organization located all across New York State and we have an office right here on campus, in building 1C. You might know us as the group that started the community garden on campus, or as the group that registered hundreds of CSI students to vote earlier this semester.

We work on a wide range of issues, ranging from fighting against tuition increases, protecting the environment, educating consumers on dangerous toys, and fighting against service cuts to the MTA, just to name a few!

We've had a really strong start to the semester. One of the most successful events we've held this semester was our Candidate's Forum. In coalition with Student Government and The Government and Law Society, we brought eight politicians to campus to debate one another and answer your questions. Over one hundred students attended the event, which was a great way to show politicians that students are politically aware and active. This will go a long way towards fighting against tuition increases. We've also been raising canned food to donate to local food banks on Staten Island. In late October we worked with Hillel to host our annual Trick or Eat event, where we went into the community and collected canned food that Staten Island Residents left out for us to donate. In such tough economic times, we were happy to help members of our community who are struggling to make ends meet.

Although we've had a great start to the semester, our work is far from over! If you'd like to get involved with NYPIRG, stop by the office, room 218, in building 1C.

I look forward to working with all of you!

Josie

learn valuable skills while
working on meaningful campaigns

contact Josie at the NYPIRG office for more information:
rm: 1C-218, (718) 982-3109

Memories of 9/11

A lot of our magazine this semester is about the relationship between America and Islam. People's feelings are very strong, and a lot of their ideas and opinions go back to the events of September 11, 2001.

We thought it would be appropriate for people who remember the events of that day to share their experiences, and invited CSI students to do so. These are their stories...

I woke up at 11:15 PM to the constant sounds of my phone ringing. I got up and answered with my grandmother in complete panic mode yelling at me asking, "Are you alright?!" I replied with, "I think every thing's ok."

I went back to sleep and then was awoken by my dad saying, "We are under attack!"

* * * * *

I worked at a coffee shop. People kept coming in. They wanted to use the phone. I gave away everything for free that day, and let them make phone calls to whoever or wherever they needed.

One man, I'll never forget his face. He was tall, in a blue suit covered in ash. He wore glasses and a short beard, and he looked like his mind was gone. I made him some coffee. He took it in his hand, but I don't think he even noticed it, to be honest. I asked if he was ok, even though I knew he wasn't.

"They jumped," he said quietly.

* * * * *

I was really young. All I remember was watching them play it on TV over and over again. I don't think I understood it very much at the time, it looked like a rocket ship in reverse.

* * * * *

I was in sixth grade. All of the kids were ushered into the gym, and told to sit down on the floor. I watched a lot of kids' parents come in and take them home. I was one of the few kids not taken out of school early that day. I was very annoyed because of that. When I got home, someone told me that two airplanes were flown into the towers. For some reason, I automatically assumed that Japanese people taking revenge for World War II had crashed the planes. I wasn't a very smart child.

* * * * *

I was hanging out with Muslims on 9/11. A girl I was seeing was French-African, and had other friends from Algeria and Morocco who were Muslim. I was on my way to her apartment when the bus PA system announced that the second tunnel from New Jersey to Manhattan had been closed. I asked my bus driver what was it that had just ruined someone's commute? His exact words were "some nut just flew a plane into the World Trade Center." I get really annoyed when people generalize and say things like "Muslims were dancing on 9/11." The people I was with were scared and vulnerable.

* * * * *

I was a freshman in Curtis High School on September 11th, 2001. I remember sitting in my third period French Class when the principal got on the PA system and told everyone to calm down about 'a plane hitting the World Trade Center.' When I heard that a plane had hit the WTC, I will admit at first I didn't think it was a big deal; awful that it had happened, since I had imagined that it was a small plane that had hit the buildings. As third period came to a close, the true horror of what happened that day was soon apparent. I spent the whole day in school watching people be pulled out and going home. At one point, toward the end of the day, I remember the few of us still in school ended up listening to the radio about what was going on. It was the scariest moment in my life hearing that an airliner had hit the Pentagon. No one knew who had done it or what was really going on.

As I left school that day, the smoke from the fallen towers was looming over the city as an evil streak across a brilliant blue sky. I waited for the 62 a few blocks away from the ferry. When I got on the bus, there were people wearing breath masks -- everyone was wearing them after the collapse of the Towers -- with looks of shock on their faces; just blank and empty as their minds tried to comprehend the horror of that day.

That day will forever be scarred into my brain.

* * * * *

My memories of 9/11 are sitting in my fifth grade English class. The priest of the school's church (Catholic school) walked in and told all that "something" had happened in the city. He asked if any of us had family that worked there, and if we did to walk downstairs and attempt to make phone calls to contact them. After being released from school early, I remember going home and watching people jump from the windows of the World Trade Center to escape the fires. Then the towers collapsed, and I knew from right then and that America was changed forever.

* * * * *

I was in fourth grade at P.S. 23. It was during English class, so we were doing writing exercises. I wished something would happen so I could go home.

I remember that a frantic teacher came in to the classroom and whispered something to my teacher. My teacher became frantic, and then the students became frantic. As time went on, students were being taken out of the classroom until I was the last kid left in the class. I asked the teacher what happened, and she told me to be quiet and read a book.

My dad picked me up, and I asked him what was going on. He told me the Twin Towers went down. At the time I didn't know what they were, so I kept quiet. Later I found out that my dad had missed his train and had to take a later ferry. If he had been on time, he would have been a block away when the towers fell.

My parents kept me home from school for a week or two.

* * * * *

It was a shocking day, not only for the nation but for an impressionable 10 year old. I remember being home sick from school. My mother called in a panic, telling my cousin and I to stay in the house. After watching the news, and seeing the second plane go into the building, my cousin and I immediately ran for the pier down the street in Brooklyn.

The sounds of people screaming and crying underneath the sirens were bone-chilling. The silence that followed when the first building collapsed was nerve wrenching. After the shock passed; mothers, wives, husbands and friends frantically called loved ones but failed due to network failure of cell-phones. My mother, who worked twenty minutes away at Kennedy airport, got home nine hours later. It was truly a gruesome day to remember; all the faces and tears coming from those who lost someone. I will never forget that tragic day where so much pain was caused.

* * * * *

It was my second full day of class, freshman year, at Stuyvesant High School, three blocks down West Street from the World Trade Center. I normally took the E train every morning to the World Trade Center station, walked through the tunnel to the Chambers Street exit, and walked down Chambers to get to school. However, that morning, I saw a friend I knew from middle school. She told me it was easier to exit through the World Trade Center exit and walk to school, so we did, and got lost along the way. This was a little before eight in the morning.

First period was gym. In the middle of class I felt the building shake, but paid it no heed. Next period was English. Around the end of that period, an Assistant Principal came on the loudspeaker and said, "As you may know, a small plane has hit the World Trade Center." At first, I didn't know what to make of this.

Third period was Mandarin. By that time, nobody was actually teaching. Instead, we were all glued to the news on the televisions in our classrooms. A classroom across the hall faced the World Trade Center, but we couldn't see the damage due to all the dust in the air. Near the end of the period, the same Assistant Principal came over the PA telling us that following the end of the period, we were to report to indefinite homeroom.

In homeroom, it was more of the same; people glued to the TV, trying to contact family on cell phones, etc. I remember wondering who would do such a thing? I feared that there was going to be another war soon, and my cousins were going to get drafted or something like that.

We were sitting there in the indefinite homeroom for what seemed like forever. All of a sudden, the TV lost reception. Our homeroom also faced towards the World Trade Center. It got really dark all of a sudden, the thick dust picked up in intensity. We all panicked! We didn't know what the hell was going on. The same Assistant Principal came back on the PA and announced that they were evacuating the school, and that we should proceed in a calm and orderly manner.

We were instructed to evacuate via the exits facing the West Side Highway. As my class was walking towards those exits I saw a fireman, covered head to toe in dust stumble into the school from an entrance facing the World Trade Center, hacking up dust. Other firemen frantically passed him bottles of water to rinse out his mouth. His dust-covered body was the last thing I saw before I left the building.

Once I actually left the building, we were told to walk north. I had no idea where to go. I figured that the subways weren't running, and there was no way I could get home to Queens. Luckily, I ran into my cousin -- who also went to Stuy -- and stuck with him as we walked to a dry cleaners' shop in Greenwich Village that was owned by a friend of his family. There, I was finally able to call my family and tell them I was okay. I stayed there until the subways started running again around 5:00 PM.

REFLECTIONS

The world changed forever on the morning of September 11, 2001. Third Rail Magazine would like to take this time to pay our respects to those alumni of CSI who lost their lives that day.

Joseph Agnello	1990
Laura Angillete	2001
Jane E. Baeszler	1981
Paul V. Barbaro	1988
Greg Buck	1995
Kenneth J. Cubas	1975
Beverly LaVerne Curry	1999
Scott Matthew Davidson	1991
John DiFato	1984
Lisa DiFato-Cannava	1993
Donald Joseph DiFranco	1979
Carole Beth Eggert	1990
John Rudolph Fischer	1978
Thomas P. Hannafin	1990
Lee C. Ludwig	1972
Richard Miuccio	1975
Troy E. Nilsen	1994
Brian Nunez	1999
William S. O'Keefe	1976
Mark James Petrocelli	1995
Edward F. Pullis	1992
Michael T. Quilty	1979
John F. Rizzo	1977
Lisa L. Spina-Trerotola	1982
Larry Sumaya	1981
Jeffery P. Walz	1986

THE Third Rail

WANTS YOUR WORK!

Third Rail Magazine is looking for people who are interested in illustration and layout. If interested please contact us.

We are in building 1C room 231

Our e-mail is:

thethirdrailmag@gmail.com

Our meeting schedule
for next semester:

02/03/11

02/17/11

03/03/11 [deadline first drafts]

03/17/11

03/31/11

04/14/11

04/28/11

05/12/11

THIS COULD
BE YOU!



Chantal Bryan 10/10/10