Rock the Vote Visits Bergen

By Catherine Caruso

 Veronica Portillo and Rachel Robinson of MTV’s Road Rules visited Bergen Community College on the 15th to represent Rock the Vote and help lead over 200 plus students to the polls. This helped reverse a 20-year cycle of declining participation with a 20% increase in youth turnout compared to the previous Presidential election.

With each year, Rock the Vote is exceeded in engaging youth and partnering with important issues affecting the youth of America, as well as making changes that affect us all. An example being in 1996, with the help of MCI, they created the first online voter registration named NetVote ‘96.

In today’s presentation, Robinson and Portillo focused on the Democratic and Republican candidates for the 2008 presidential election. While maintaining bi-partisanship, they shared how they felt on certain issues. Being a lesbian herself, Rachel offered her opinion on current same-sex marriage policies, stating that rights given to heterosexual couples should also be awarded to same-sex couples. She spoke with passion and honesty about her own life experiences.

Moving onto the issue of health-care, Veronica spoke of her own struggles, stating that she paid over $300.00 a month for health care due to her employer’s lack of health benefits. Veronica and Rachel spoke of Barack Obama’s plans for the war in Iraq. BarackObama.com said immediately upon taking office, Obama will give his Secretary of Defense and military commanders a new mission in Iraq; ending the war. The ladies also covered John McCain’s views on the second amendment, the right to bear arms.

JohnMcCain.com states, “Law abiding citizens should not be asked to give up their rights because of criminals/criminals who ignore gun control laws anyway.” The 200 plus students were encouraged to share their feelings on important issues and how they are affected by them. Veronica asked us, “What is most important to you?” She explained how no candidate can match all of your wants, needs and expectations. We need to focus on the issues that are most significant in our lives. During the brief question and answer period that followed, there were questions about gun control, health care and of course, what it was like to be on road rules.

For more information, go to RockTheVote.com, which also offers an online registration form.

Barbara Walters Debuts her new book titled: Audition

By Ervina Bilalaj

On June 11th, Project Literacy (a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting education and literacy among adults) presented “A Conversation with Barbara Walters” hosted by Bergen Community College. President Ryan conducted a public interview with Ms. Walters inside BCC’s Gymnasium with an audience numbering close to about 800. Many consider Ms. Walters to be a pioneer for being the first female to co-anchor a news program for both NBC’s The Today Show in 1974 and ABC’s ABC Evening News in 1976, but she is also well known for her appearances as an anchor for 20/20, and as co-executive producer/host of The View. She has recently published her second book, an autobiography titled: Audition, which she describes as “an extremely personal story”. At one point, the book was going to be titled Sister, which would have been dedicated to her younger sister, Jackie, who suffers from autism. Throughout her career, Barbara Walters has interviewed a rich and diverse cast of political and celebrity figures, ranging from Monica Lewinsky to Miley Cyrus. When asked about some of her fondest interview sessions, she chose Fidel Castro, saying “He is a dictator, but at the same time a fascinating man”, but in terms of contemporary politics, she shared how she met the Dalai Lama. However, it was at Bergen Community College that she had the opportunity to switch roles with President Ryan and answer a few questions. He asked her about her experiences moving from place to place while living with her parents, her previous marriages, her adopted daughter, her career, and of course, her newest book.

Ms. Walters spoke about the challenges of balancing her career and her personal life without the aid of the internet at her disposal. She also explained the challenge of reaching success at a time when she was not allowed to ask hard questions during interviews for the mere fact that she was a woman. “I had to work…No [going] back to mommy, no [going] back home” she explained. Naturally, being the first of her kind, she did not have the luxury of having a female news anchor to mentor her, but she was able to fulfill the role for newcomers Oprah Winfrey.

Ms. Walters shared stories and secrets from her personal and professional experiences, but she also took the time to give advice for aspiring journalists in the audience. “Get your foot in the door, get there, work hard, and don’t whine”, she said. After the interview was over, she answered questions from the audience and distributed autographs as well. In a separate interview with the Torch, she stated that she had no further plans for television programs in the future.

A Conversation with Barbara Walters

President Ryan: A Retrospective

By Brian Park

Editor in Chief

Ever since President Gordon Jeremiah Ryan first stepped into office in June of 2007, he has implemented a significant amount of changes to the face of Bergen Community College as well as its internal policies, but his plans for the future are far from finished.

Among his accomplishments during his tenure at BCC, Ryan counts the opening of the Meadowlands campus in Lyndhurst on June 17th, which currently houses over 500 students. In his administration’s Capital Master Plan, which deals with changes made to the structures on campus, he mentioned that construction for the Science Building was under way, along with a plan to add 4000 square feet to the Student Center, saying that “It would be a wide open space for students to congregate…It would be a very attractive steel/glass [structure], much like the West Hall, so it would be a nice looking building.”

See President Ryan pg. 5
Active Minds Promote Mental Health

By Rachel Kaminer

College can be a very stressful time. Many students are juggling work, school, and relationships, all of which can contribute to stress and an unhealthy state of mind. Bergen County Community College recently held the Mental Health Seminar, which took place on September 17th in the Maria Ciccone Theater and was sponsored by Active Minds, a student organization dedicated to promoting awareness for the disorders that may result from poor mental health. Allison K. Malmon, one of the speakers at the seminar, founded the organization as a junior at the University of Pennsylvania. She has received numerous awards, one of them being the "Tipper Gore Remember the Children Award" from Mental Health Magazine. She has also been featured on CNN and many other publications and talk shows. Malmon started Active Minds after the suicide of her older brother, Brian. She found out that the average mental health of a student is suffering and said, "What I found out when I researched was that my brother went through was not unusual, that 75 percent of people with schizophrenia become ill between the ages of 15 and 25, the college age." Allison says this means that college students are developing mental disorders, like schizophrenia, because students are not reaching out and talking to others. Active Minds is an organization that focuses on peer-to-peer interaction. They publicize student speakers at conferences who present their own story. The organization is student-run and encourages student support groups. In the 2007 Ventura survey, which was only one student chapter, this transformed to over 150 chapters in North American and Canadian colleges and universities. Active Minds is expected to grow to 300 chapters by 2010. The colleges in the area that already have their own chapters are: Montclair State University, Ramapo College and The College of New Jersey. The seminar focused on mental disorders that may result from having poor mental health. Some of these problems that can occur are anxiety disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse. All of these disorders are treatable, but there is a reduced risk of developing by them in maintaining a healthy mental composition. One resource for raising mental health is the Wellness Center at Bergen Community College, which organizes programs such as this seminar. It also provides counsel for students, faculty, and staff. The Wellness Center operates on a holistic approach, and is located in rooms L-122A and L-121B. Malmon strives to promote Active Minds as a way for people to expand their comfort zones so they can feel free to seek help and says, "Ideally, not only will Active Minds become the voice of young people but it will be the force behind breaking down stigma and raising awareness."
Dr. Peter Dlugos Promoted

BY JONA ELF

Headline: Dr. Peter Dlugos is promoted to Vice President of Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality.

Need byline

Bergen Community College has recently promoted many new officials, who were voted on and approved by the Board of Trustees. Dr. Peter Dlugos, after serving as a philosophy professor in 1996, was promoted to the post of Vice President of Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality.

Dr. Dlugos began his career at BCC for 12 years, has been promoted to the post of Vice President of Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality. According to Dlugos, Bergen Community College has already put into operation roughly one-third of its strategic plans, and he plans to implement changes directed at improving the overall quality of the courses at BCC. In addition to making general improvements in order to help students succeed in their academic endeavors, Dr. Dlugos said he first took an interest in philosophy when he was five years old. He often found himself entertained by philosophical issues and drawn into the more abstract ones. During graduate school, he was published in areas of the history of philosophy and philosophy of time. Some of his later publications include a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Dlugos began his career at BCC as a philosophy professor in 1996. He said that philosophy paved the way for being an amazing source of training by teaching him how to deal with the practical application of ideas, improve his communication skills, and most importantly, how to be persuasive.

"Philosophy is a great training for life. It helps you to learn how to deal with ideas and values… I’ve begun to think more about values and different conceptions as well," he said.

Dlugos said his experience as a philosopher and his contributions and previous leadership positions have prepared him for his new vice president position, and that he expects to grow personally and professionally from his promotion. Among the important issues that arose over the years were the findings of the Bergen Community College, which was responsible for the College’s re-accreditation.

The catastrophic event took a toll on Shenkler’s perspective, as he described in a disheartened tone. "For the following three months I was going to nothing but funerals, because I lost 170 coworkers. So, I guess that changes your life, puts it in perspective. That you never know when you get up that day what’s going to happen…

"The lights erected in memoriam of 9/11 were visible from several miles away.

Dr. Peter Dlugos was recently promoted to the post of Vice President of Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality.
The Labyrinth, BCC’s student literary magazine, is seeking poetry, short fiction, and creative essays for its Spring 2009 issue. In addition to publication, accepted works will be automatically considered for the Second Annual Creative Writing Contest, sponsored by The Labyrinth in association with the BCC English Department.

$100 Best Fiction
$100 Best Poetry
$100 Best Creative Essay
plus Honorable Mentions

Deadline: February 15th, 2009

Guidelines: • Contest and publication in The Labyrinth limited to full- or part-time students of BCC enrolled in Summer 2008, Fall 2008, or Spring 2009. • All work submitted must be original and previously unpublished. • Only electronic submissions (email or disc) will be accepted. Please format documents to be readable by Microsoft Word. • Word length: fiction and essay, 5000 words maximum; poetry, 25 lines maximum. • Contest prizes will be awarded in the form of gift certificates to BCC Bookstore or bookstore of prizewinner’s choice. • Dual submissions in fiction, poetry, and essay permitted. Maximum number of submissions per individual: 3 in each prose category, 5 poems. Novel excerpts, short plays, and artwork may be submitted for publication in The Labyrinth, but will not be entered in contest. • All work must be typed, double-spaced, and include on the first page the contributor’s name, full address, telephone number, and email if available. Contributors are advised to thoroughly edit and proofread work before submission. • Submissions that do not follow these guidelines may be discarded.

Submit work electronically to jzorn@bergen.edu with the subject line “Labyrinth Submission” or on disc to Room A-333, English Department Office, attn: Professor James Zorn. See below for submission guidelines.
In regards to the internal engine of BCC, Ryan mentioned the addition of numerous new students for the fall semester. He also mentioned increasing tuition revenue up to $982,000 of new revenue due to a reduction in state aid, the revision of the Code of Student Conduct and the reduction of the smoking ban.

Of the many physical and internal changes, one new item that attracted the attention of some students was the expansion of the library. Many students were not accustomed to the layout of the library, and some noted that the increase in space would make it easier to find the books they needed. In addition, the new furniture and seating arrangements were noted as being more comfortable and conducive to studying.

In the coming year, Ryan stated that he hopes to continue to focus on providing a quality education for all BCC students. He noted that with the changes made in the past year, the college is well-positioned to continue its growth and success.

The Bergen Record ran a front-page story titled "BCC Faculty Pledges to Fight Code of Conduct" which featured quotes from various members of BCC's faculty expressing their disapproval, along with quotes from students.

"The reaction in the beginning was from a few very vocal people, and, [and] they confused the civility issue with freedom of speech and they spoke out accordingly," he said. "In this interview, it was never a free speech issue... you can have free speech and express your opinions, but it's all in the intention of the words you are saying."

The college's re-accreditation process, which was responsible for the Bergen Community College, Study Steering Committee at the Middle States 2005-06 Self in all standards. Dlugos chaired the committee, in which it is added to a policy change.

Based on Seth's advice, we developed the possibilities and potential of the idea and the potential it has, to support the College's efforts in this regard, and to create an agreement on what constitutes civil behavior in our community.

"College should be a time for you to learn, to figure out what you are passionate about, and then figure out a way how to use that knowledge to benefit others. Professor Hendricks explained how she gave Hendricks constructive and critical ideas, in turn, said "Sometimes when I read a student paper for the first time, I see the idea and the potential it has, but I see that it needs work to become a Beacon paper. I have seen many generous revisions to their papers before they were ready to be featured at the Beacon Conference. After going through the revision process, they went on to meet with other BCC students in the presence of Professor Altmann to critique, judge, and classify each paper. Professor Altmann had this to say about the conference; "Hosting Beacon 2008 was a tremendous amount of work, but the support of President Ryan and the entire BCC Community helped make the conference a great success. Everyone who attended was impressed by the quality of scholarship and exhilarated by the exchange of ideas. I once heard a longtime Steering Committee member describe what happens at the conference as 'the magic of Beacon's'. I am proud to have achieved this magic on June 6th at BCC'."

The Awards Session was held in the Caccione Theater, where President Ryan welcomed all students to the premises. Prizes were then awarded to the Outstanding Presenters and their mentors. If you missed the Beacon Conference this year, the Beacon Conference 2009 will take place in Talomak Park, Maryland on the first Friday of June. The Beacon conference is designed for students with outstanding potential, and the financial support will be provided.

The revised civility code

Civility is a vital component of an inviting and effective learning environment. It is fitting, given the enormous diversity of the students we serve, that we strive to establish a culture in which civility is the norm. To support the College's efforts in this regard, we invite everyone to contribute to the environment of learning for all, students are expected to strive for the following:

To allow others the opportunity to express their points of view and to seek to understand their experiences which may have contributed to the formation of these views.

To reflect on our own life experiences which contribute to our current views and how these experiences and views may differ from those of others.

To seek out opportunities and experiences that will lead to greater understanding of the ways in which the diverse members of our community are at once the same and different.
Why the Bipartisan Political System Hurts American Politics

By Michelle Isler

As the highly anticipated November elections draw near, one word thrown around more than any other is “change.” The candidates have been promising real change in Washington, but will they be prepared to deliver after they step into office? With a female vice-presidential candidate and an African-American presidential candidate, we are guaranteed to see a first in political history. But while the glass ceiling appears to be lifted, there will exist another major bridge to cross.

American politics are thought of in blues and reds - Democrats and Republicans. Each side is rigidly thought of in terms of the Democratic and Republican candidates, and the policies and ideologies of those who don’t pander to either of the extremes are lost along the way. Candidates adhere to the Democratic/Republican platforms and ideals, resulting in a rapidly stagnating election process. The American people are tired of the bipartisan formula, and in response to the demands of the general public, every candidate markets themselves as being different from your typical politician. However, the only differences we’ve seen have been the obvious physical ones. Yes, Barack Obama is the first African-American presidential candidate, and yes, Sarah Palin is a woman. But that’s not enough. Beyond their physical appearances which somehow make them “revolutionary,” we are still faced with the same tickets we’ve voted for in past elections. Does it really have to be that way? As expected, along with the election comes much speculation regarding every major decision made along the way. With regard to the vice-presidential nominees, it’s not perhaps the most interesting and wide-spread speculation was the possibility of Connecticut senator and 2000 election vice-president nominee to Al Gore, Joseph Lieberman, taking the Republican vice president nomination.

Whether you agree with his views or not, Lieberman does dare to be different. In 2006, Lieberman announced his intention to run for the Democratic nomination to the 2008 elections, political analysts suggested the strong possibility that he could choose Republican senator John McCain as his running mate, but as expected, he opted against making this a reality. Would this have been the more politically advantageous move to choose John Edwards. Our present political system has some advantages - candidates can build up support networks and financial backing through their participation in the general election. It’s general comprised of the two “key” candidates (one Democrat and one Republican) and the odd third-party candidate which helps prevent a repeat of the 2003 election for California governor in which 162 candidates ran for the position. Still, the advantages can’t make up for the detriment that the bipartisan system imposes.

Our political system suppresses the one thing that every candidate claims to support - progress. Policies and programs that are introduced and discussed in Congress are often reversed when Republicans take power in Congress and in presidencies, and vice versa. If we were to consider abroting our present political structure, our politics might actually move forward, and we might be able to address more than just two key positions are available on any major issue, we remain at a standstill. It’s time that we start to consider a real change in Washington.

Oil companies would probably be too small to significantly impact of new oil produced would probably be too small to significantly affect our energy needs. Even if we built up support networks and financial backing through their participation in the general election, it’s generically comprised of the two “key” candidates (one Democrat and one Republican) and the odd third-party candidate which helps prevent a repeat of the 2003 election for California governor in which 162 candidates ran for the position. Still, the advantages can’t make up for the detriment that the bipartisan system imposes.

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During the past two years, Americans both young and old have come and gathered around the television to watch the so-called “Reality TV.” We have become so engrossed by these shows that some of us find that we schedule our daily routine around the time of their airing.

We sit for up to an hour at a time, hypnotized by the likes of Tila Tequila (the bi-sexual looking for love on the set). New York (a single girl who was second runner up twice on a fellow reality show, only to be blessed with her own version) and Flavor Flav (a toothless, worn out rap singer looking for love for the third time), just to mention a few. We dedicate every Tuesday or Wednesday week to those shows rooting for our favorite contestant to move on to the final, making bets with our friends to see who will be the last man or woman standing. We wait to get our next fix, to any reason, any time of the most confused, troubled, pathetic wannabe Stars.

I really think the contestants that make the cut to appear on these shows are not in fact looking for love in such a short period of time by living with strangers and performing grotesque acts like drinkingoud hoolg, relish and bauls, compet ing in diahons, and eating raw animal parts (usually consisting of the genitals). It’s really if you really think about it.

In reality we all go through trials and tribulations when in a rela tionship, but not doing nonsense actions like some of these people partake on these shows. It really makes you think what some peo

Apple continues to promote their increased bandwidth speed, this isn’t exactly fast. Sprint and Verizon’s net works use EVDO (Evolution-Data Optimized).

Both networks, 3G and EVDO, offer internet access over the air, but the gap between these two services is that AT&T’s network hasn’t been well deployed nationwide, and EVDO is a much more developed system. 3G has been left for the use of older cell phones, while EVDO is what many modern devices use nowadays. However, Apple is promoting this because it is faster than the iPhone EDGE (the original Phone over a slower network).

It has to be brought into consideration that the iPhone 3G supports Wi- Fi access which can reach higher bandwidth speeds, but it still doesn’t provide the anywhere/anytime internet access we crave.

In design it has also undergone some aesthetic improvements. The iPhone weighs in at 4.7 ounces, is 2.4 inches wide by 4.5 inches tall, and has a .48 inch depth. The screen uses Multi-touch technology, allowing the use of more than one finger to control the device. The display screen is 3.5 inches, with 480-by-320 pixel resolution at 163 pixels per inch which is just wonderful when used in landscape or portrait orientation mode.

It comes with the options of a black or white back cover, which takes the new reflective surface on the back, but Apple still maintained the sensibilities with design that they have always been famous for. A 2.0 Megapixel camera accompanies the Apple logo on the back. It supports Bluetooth technology and even includes an Assisted Global Positioning System (GPS).

Although Apple puts its recognizable name on the field, Apple’s Instinct was designed to become the iPhones most direct competition. Sprint pro pounded Apple with the Instinct W 2209, and provides very similar features as the iPhone.

The Instinct weighs 4.4 ounces, is 2.17 inches wide by 4.57 inches tall, and has a .49 inch depth, which, compared to the iPhone, runs nearly identical spec. On the other finger, the Instinct has a 3.5 inch diagonal dis play screen with 240-by-320 pixel res olution, and uses Touch Flow Technology, which like the iPhone allows you swipe your finger on the screen, although only one finger at a time may be used.

On the good side, the screen is a Haptic Touch Screen meaning that when the finger meets the screen a visual response will let you confirm that a button, option, or field on the screen was pressed. Bluetooth, GPS location, and a 2.0 Megapixel camera that support video and camera func tions.

One important feature the Instinct lacks compared to the iPhone is the Wi-Fi. However, Apple realized that the EVDO network, which as previ ously mentioned, works at faster handshakes speeds than the AT&T network.

Of course, how can the Instinct be called an “iPhone-Killer” if it doesn’t support music file formats? Well, many developers though this and included a MicroSD card reader with the phone. Many phones now currently support SD cards, MiniSD cards, and have built-in music playing software. The SD card readers have been a sup ported feature by many phones over the years, and even though it is not as convenient as Bluetooth or Wi-Fi for capacity for media files, it does pro vide portability, as these SD cards can be plugged in the computer to trans fer, play, and manipulate media with out the need of syncing cables or other syncing software installation. The Instinct comes with a 2GB MicroSD card, but also supports 8GB MicroSD cards.

These two phones can hardly be compared to the iPhone, but they usually fall under the category of Smart-Phones or Smart-Phones. Prices are dropp ing, and the capabili ties the phones support make them more appealing every day. Standalone PDAs have become obsolete as we now see that having an agenda with scheduling and memos capabilities are simply one of many features of most Smart-Phones. Apple has taken giant steps by entering the mobile phone market, but it took baby steps when upgrading the next generation of the iPhone. Other popular and advanced mobile phone companies, such as Samsung or HTC, didn’t have to struggle much to provide phones similar to the iPhone. With all this competition occurring during the first half of 2008, we are expecting more from Apple and from companies that have been marked as competition.
The Torch
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Assault on Technology

BY CARINA TESONE

Stem cells have been the center of many a heated debate since James Thomson (director of regenerative biology at the Morg慴 Institute for Research and professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health successfully isolated and cultivated the first embryonic stem cell lines in 1998. At this time, research opportunites were severely limited by President George Bush in 2001, because embryonic stem cell research required aborted fetuses, which were the major source of embryonic stem cells. However, scientists have been finding new ways to generically manipulate stem cells into different cell types so that they would no longer need to exclusively depend on fetuses.

Christopher Thomas Scott (Director of Stanford University’s Program on Stem Cells in Society) and John Smalley (biotechnology/embryology professor at Bergen Community College) both commented on the basics of stem cells and how research is finally starting to skirt the ethical and moral issues of abortion.

Scott, who teaches courses based on the biology, policy, and ethics surrounding stem cell research at Stanford University defined a stem cell as “a special cell that can duplicate itself and differentiate into different kinds of cells.” He said that embryonic stem cells (ESCs) were essentially the same as other stem cells, with the exception that ESC’s are pluripotent, and, in theory, can proliferate into any cell in the body.

Smalley explained how stem cells were related to the issue of abortion: “Embryonic stem cells have a lot of developmental potential...if we could get some of these ESC’s, then we could give them the right signals—and get them to become what we want them to. Then, have the ESC’s regenerate into a part of a heart, a part of a spinal cord, or part of a pancreas—that’s kind of the idea...the source for these ESC’s is embryonic or fetal tissue, because you can get lots of stem cells. But of course, there is this huge issue of abortion which is a big ethical and moral debate for a lot of people.”

President George Bush has objected to the immoral aspects of embryonic stem cell research due to its affiliation with abortion in 2001 by saying “Congress has also passed a second bill that attempts to overturn the balanced policy I set. This bill would support the taking of innocent human life in the hope of finding medical benefis for others. It crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect, so I vetoed it.”

Scientists have already made progress with stem cells and regular cells that do not come from abort- ed fetuses. Smalley spoke about a recent experiment on rodents diag- nosed with type one diabetes where scientists used adult cells— not stem cells—and just three tran- scription factors (which reprogram the cell) to make insulin-produc- ing cells. The experiment was a successful biomedical breakthrough.

Smalley also had some concerns about stem cell research, and added “I think you got to be a little cautious, though. If you’re not careful, things could go wrong.” Scott who studies stem cell research policies, also spoke of the associated risks, stating that 1) ESC’s live as long as that person does, so if you put it into people, it may have adverse effects, 2) Stem cells have to be free of viruses and contaminants, and 3) They can cause cancer if they proliferate too much.

However, Scott still looks to the

The Out of Homeostasis Club
Learning, Earning, Returning
Bergen Community College

See Stem Cells...p. 15

AFC
Community Service Awareness of Health Representing B.C.C.
Learning, Earning, Returning
Bergen Community College

Certification/Transcript Record, Possible Internships and
$55 Educational Funding$$$ Experience

ASH
Scientific Presentations on
Health Conditions
Academic Achievement
Recruiting New Students
Exceeding Expectations

Tuesday meetings @ 12:30 p.m., room TBA
October 7, October 21, November 11, 18, and December 2, 9
Contact: kbrench72@people.com, Keisha Branch, President
Advisors: Dr. J. Fitzpatrick, Dr. R. Kanterman, & Prof. F.J. Benedict
One of the extraordinary things about human events is that the unthinkable becomes thinkable. Sir Salman Rushdie is one of the most celebrated and controversial authors of our time -- of any time. A brilliant provocateur, he's penned a handful of classics (Midnight's Children, The Satanic Verses), overcome a fatwa, received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth for "services to literature," and become both a genuine pop icon and one of the most prominent, witty and thought-provoking speakers working today.

In his spellbinding lectures, Rushdie braids together the worlds of literature, politics and philosophy -- a show of intellectual pyrotechnics and deadpan humor that conveys fully the texture of modern life. He speaks about the major themes coursing through his writing, his life and our world: freedom of expression, religion, pop culture, Muslim culture, current events at home and abroad, East-West relations, and the role of the artist to shape our understanding of the world. For those more interested in his writing, he touches on storytelling, the magical realism he made famous, and the unique sensibility of his "globe-swallowing, capricious books." Few authors are as enrapturing in person as Rushdie is, or as fully embracing of their well-earned place in the spotlight.

Sir Salman Rushdie's novels include The Moor's Last Sigh, The Ground Beneath Her Feet and 2008's The Enchantress of Florence; his essay books include Step Across This Line, The Satanic Verses, wonderful nonsense, received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth for "services to literature," and become both a genuine pop icon and one of the most prominent, witty and thought-provoking speakers working today.

Dr. Cornel West Wednesday, October 29th 1:45 PM - Ciccone Theatre

One of America's most provocative public intellectuals, Cornel West has been a champion for racial justice since childhood. His writing, speaking, and teaching weave together the traditions of the black Baptist Church, progressive politics, and jazz. "The New York Times has praised his "ferocious moral vision."

Currently the Class of 1943 Professor at Princeton University, West burst onto the national scene in 1993 with his bestselling book, Race Matters, a searing analysis of racism in American democracy. Race Matters has become a contemporary classic, selling more than a half a million copies to date. In addition, West has published 12 other books and has edited 16 texts.

West earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard in three years, magna cum laude. Martin Klein, one of his professors there, describes West as "the most intellectually aggressive and highly cerebral student I have taught." After earning his Ph.D. at Princeton, he became a professor of religion and director of the Afro-American Studies program there. West has also taught at Union Theological Seminary, Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris.

In his latest book Democracy Matters, West analyzes the arrested development of democracy both in America and in the cross-ridden Middle East. He argues that if America is to become a better steward of democratization around the world, it must first recognize its own long history of imperialist corruption. His latest CD, Never Forget! A Journey of Revelations is a collection of socially conscious music featuring collaborations with Prince, Outkast, Jill Scott, Talib Kweli. West also offers commentary weekly on The Tavis Smiley Show from PBS.

West was an influential force in developing the storyline for the popular Matrix movie trilogy and has served as its official spokesperson, as well as playing a recurring role in the final two films.

Cast Your Vote Nov. 4th!

Bergen Community College
Speaker Series 2008

Distinguished Speaker Event

Sponsored by the Office of Student Life
The Coen brothers’ new film, which is marketed as a goofy comedy, reveals more depth and warmth than the advertising campaign would have had you believe, which is partially due to the brilliant growing maturity as film makers. Don’t listen to the brainless critics who say things like “The trailer from Oscar-winning masterpiece to this mess is especially depressing”; such criticisms reflect an attempt to pigeon-hole directors whose most defining characteristic is their versatility. It would have been easy for them to make another quiet, inward, and drab film noir that would have appealed critics and awards circles, but the Coens have never been about the easy fix; they have built their reputation on catering to those in the audience that want (and deserve) to be challenged. Indeed, their career has been about something deeper than taking their ruminations on genre and genre versatility on screen have, at face value. In spite of what certain critics may think, this film is completely consistent with the mainstays of last year’s stellar No Country For Old Men.

The whirlwind plot is set into motion by a former CIA agent’s memoirs that come into the possession of two gym employees, who assume they are “secret files”, and proceed to use them in an attempt to blackmail him. Linda Litzky (Frances McDormand) is convinced she needs plastic surgery to become attractive, and she thinks the former CIA insider will pay big bucks for the return of his files. With the help of dim-witted but lovable Chad (Brad Pitt), she manipulates the situation to the best of her ability by attempting to sell the information to the Russians, a hilarious twist on Cold War espionage films. Much like the protagonist from No Country for Old Men, Linda Litzky capitalizes on the opportunity to escape from her current confines of her life and move onto something bigger and presumably more rewarding, in spite of the fact that her kind but repressed boss is crazy about her just the way she is.

Though the plot has large twists and turns, there is an aura surrounding this film that brings to mind Kubrick’s masterpiece, Dr. Strangelove. Like Kubrick, the Coens film governmental highjinks up at low angles, treating them almost as demagogues, but also like Kubrick’s film they permeate incompetence. J.K. Simmons’ character (credited as CIA ‘Superior’) tells one of his underlings “Report back to me...I don’t know, when it makes sense” at the height of the film’s insanity. This refers not only to the eclecticism of this film’s plot, but to the ‘brothers’ entire oeuvre, which often feature characters who sometimes don’t figure out what’s going on until the very end of the film if that. In the midst of a film that defies expectations of being the same thing over and over, they also jab at the critics of No Country For Old Men’s alleged ‘non-ending’, reminding the audience on a little package but still defending genre expectations; but they’re not simply being coy or clever. Such a tactic would be transparent and cheap, and the so-called ‘anti-climax’ is ingnated into the thick of the story rather the telling. It is the story of— as Osborne Cox (John Malkovich) called it— a ‘league of morons’. All the characters in this are clueless to the others’ actions, which is where the film’s comedic element originates. Although one might say the premise was created by giving the audience more information than the characters have, it’s easy to see, and that is because of the Coens’ ability to bring together all the cinematic elements in an unforeseen way as possible. And yet, the characters are never condescending to, in spite of their shortcomings. They’re treated with dignity, even when the film segues into the absurd.

The feel like Looney Tunes bound by the rules of our own universe, functioning within the confines of the madcap 21st century society. There are, undoubtedly, farcical elements; but it also doesn’t fit expressly into the definition of farce set forth by Chuck Jones (Director of Looney Tunes), who once stated that “Comedy is unusual people in real situations; farce is real people in unusual situations.”

Take an instance in the film when Brad Pitt gets punched in the face; it is worthy as comedy, but it also has real world repercussions: he is being held by his nostrils and tilting his head back in the next scene, and we see that he got blood on his nice, clean suit. The violence in the film has a genuine cinematic resonance and niggest. The film is a testament to the Coens’ ability to bring together all the cinematic elements in an unforeseen way as possible. And yet, the

At this point, Tropic Thunder switched gears and set to introduce its characters and its relationships. With A-list talent like Robert Downey Jr., Jack Black, and Ben Stiller, one should figure that the film dynamic would be the best of the Coens, and sticking this three actors together in the same frame would simply moments that would become the stuff of legend. Unfortunately, all of the previously hard-earned potential went largely untapped. The dialogue was peppered with one-liners that struggled to repel the rest of the sagging comedy. It’s hard to say if there was truly any character development, because the majority of the film’s dialogue only served to showcase each character’s individual quirks, which would be more tolerable had they worked on more than just a one-joke wonder formula. This especially applies to Robert Downey Jr. and Jack Black, in both of whom I saw glimpses of possible brilliance, but these glints of light were quickly laid to rest as their characters made the same tired punchline. Robert Downey Jr. parodied so many tired jokes that we would have long since lost the joke themselves. What’s more, we never even got to see his own laugh track complete with a rumble. It was truly painful to watch such talented actors go to waste as we attempted to deliver their one-liners with a slightly varied candy coating. There seemed to be an interesting rivalry developing between action star Tugg Speedman and Australian actor Kirk Lazarus as it started to dawn on them that they may not be filming a movie after all, but that managed to die before it even got off the ground. Tropic Thunder attempts to remedy this by replacing character driven humor with situation-based humor, but the feeble attempt at gaining back its audience was a fail.

In fact, one of the few occasions where they display any semblance in pleasing the plotline came after getting out of their actors before going into the red is how they deal with the Director (Steve Coogan) and Tugger/Tug/Tug/Tugg (Nick Nolte), who’s sub-plot arc turns aimless and eventually runs off the map into the stratosphere. Tom Cruise’s presence alone might bring laughter, his performance, like a majority of the actors in this film, degraded into schtick. It’s not that Cruise is bad in the role, it’s simply more of the same. The trailers made the film seem like it was going to be a sharp, mile-a-minute comedy that would be a testament to the Coens’ comedic crooks feel similar to that of a cartoon, the heart of the film indicates a rich poignancy; a sad, desperate longing for the current confines of his life and move onto something bigger and presumably more rewarding, in spite of the fact that his kind but repressed boss is crazy about her just the way she is.

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Tropic Thunder

Out of all the trailers that I’ve seen this year, few have managed to conjure up the same level of raw anticipation for a summer blockbuster comedy than the Redband trailer for Tropic Thunder. It was by pure chance that I stumbled onto this trailer a few months ago, and in spite of being sick to death of conventional summer blockbuster comedies, the cast (along with the rumored cameo appearances) made the movie seem interesting enough to at least warrant a download. Within two minutes, I was hooked. The premise seemed simple enough, but it was the inspired casting that made me realize that Tropic Thunder had the potential to strike comedic paydirt.

Given the fact that most of Ben Stiller’s comedies were never my cup of tea, I was surprised by how excited I was getting for Tropic Thunder, which featured them in the lead role. It’s not that I think the man lacks talent or comedic presence, or the contrary; on the very rare occasion that Stiller pairs up with a director that knows how to balance his shine. However, I’m convinced that Stiller has the rare ability to do a better job at directing himself than anyone else can. The evidence for this is his film Zookeeper, which was completely underwhelming but also directed, produced, and started in, and which also happens to be one of the best performances by Stiller (and generally one of the best comedies) I had ever seen. Simply put, when Ben Stiller is put in charge of his own material, he raises his game to a new level.

The opening sequence to Tropic Thunder does a great job of establishing the tone of the film and the grand scale of its set pieces, proving that Stiller is more than capable at directing an action sequence. However, after the (amazing) faux-makes and initia action sequence, it does not take long for the film to start losing its momentum after all the preposterous tomfoolery are over. Even when more started to keep up with a steady stream of goofy dialogue and funny situations, the initial hard-and-fast pace is almost regrettably in conjunction with the rest, but I must stress that this only go to show how amazing the first ten minutes are.

By RYAN KELLY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Burn After Reading or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Coens

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

BY RYAN KELLY

PAGE 10

THE TORCH

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Left to right: Jeff Portnoy (Jack Black), Kirk Lazarus (Robert Downey Jr.), and Tugg Speedman (Ben Stiller).

PHOTO COURTESY / 20TH CENTURY

PHOTO COURTESY / 20TH CENTURY
"Welcome to a World Without Rules" the larger than life posters for The Dark Knight assured me. If only the film made good on its promise. One of the most disappoointing aspects of Nolan's pseudo-epic is that it makes far too many attempts to ground itself in the 'real' world, falling victim to the fallacy that realism is interesting by necessity. In all of its attempts to both mythologize and demythologize the Batman franchise, the film falls short in both departments. The Dark Knight sets out to pay homage to the Batman franchise's graphic novel counterpart while simultaneously attempting to break away from it in order to become its own entity. It lacked the grand scale and spectacle of graphic novels while simultaneously contriving an energetic pace of dramatic panel-to-panel style storytelling. This back-and-forth display of priorities between graphic novel and film creates an unsteady inertia that feels more like watching an identity crisis unfold onscreen. The film simply can't bring itself to have a sense of wonder about anything; it's too 'cool' to be fun. And due to the fact that the film is forced by its nature to pander to teens (it would not have made nearly as much money had it been rated R), it is unable to follow through with its philosophical convictions. It's nihilism packaged as a meal. The Dark Knight paints its world and its characters in shades of gray in order to avoid having to paint an expressly black or white. This is typified by the Harvey Dent/Two Face story line, which takes up an overwhelming portion of the film's running time. It tries to personify the struggle between the Joker and Batman in the form of the fall of Harvey Dent. Yet, one either die either live long enough to see yourself become the villain,” he randomly exclaims at dinner party with total strangers (the film uses anything it can as a jumping off point into amorality pseudo-philosophy), ramming the self fulfilling prophecy (as if it wasn't obvious enough) down the audience's collective throat. It is dialogue like the 'hero' line that typifies exactly where it is The Dark Knight goes wrong. It refuses to affirm humanity or human decency (a perfect example being the ferry scene) and pulls back the reigns with its nihilistic convictions in order to still be accessible and easy to swallow summer fare. Worst of all, it is so pretentious that it shortchanges the summer blockbuster spectacle in favor of a forthright morality play and sanctimonious pseudo bubble. The late Heath Ledger's performance has been the subject of much scrutiny in the months since his untimely passing back in January, and rightfully so—the moments he is on screen are when the film achieves its grandest heights. I am remiss to call it an Oscar-worthy performance, but I don't deny that the performance is quite incredible; his presence becomes a force of nature, a hurricane blowing through Gotham City. It is astounding how Ledger completely loses himself in the role. His passing is a huge loss for cinema, and his performance here stands as a testament to the intense, uniquely charismatic actor that he was. The most fascinating thing the movie has going for it is its use of special IMAX cameras: when the film suddenly engulfs the entire IMAX screen it completely takes over your senses. The sequences shot in IMAX include gorgeous shots of Chicago and Hong Kong, as well as the film's finest set pieces (the bank robbery opening and the aforementioned truck chase, for example). One can only wonder what the results would have looked like if Nolan shot the entire movie this way, since during these key moments it works on a pure sensory basis. In spite of my misgivings, The Dark Knight is without a doubt one of a handful of must see summer films and a fine Hollywood production. When it is finally given room to breathe, as in such images of Heath Ledger's head hanging out of a police car window, it visually achieves the mood of chaos that its horribly contrived dialogue tries to convey. It is during these purely sensory moments that the film truly shines, and because of these brief glimmers of light it does remain a worthy addition to the Batman film canon. It just strikes me as a wasted opportunity.
Leadership Workshop #2

“Leadership: A Woman’s Perspective”

Presented by
Vice-President Sue Johnson
& Dr. Maria Makowiecka

Monday, October 27th
9:30 AM
Room A-113

For the first time this semester, we are offering a series of leadership-themed workshops presented by prominent BCC faculty members and administrators.
Duffy Does the China Club

Cute face? Check. Soulful vocals? Check. Blonde hair and red lips? Check. Chris met keyboardist Rob after school R&B tune sung by the likes of Etta James or Roberta Flack. She steers the song with ease as her only accompaniment is a jazzy riff. She put any doubts of her range to rest within the first few words, and dragged out the rest effortlessly. She went on with the title track to her smash album Rockferry, and continued with “Hanging On Too Long” (the best song on her album) which proves she doesn’t rely on studio magic to make her album shine, but rather her soft-yet-raw vocals that fans of “Mercy” have yet to see. There are many things that contribute to the unique charm of Rockferry. For instance, one would be hard-pressed to make an easy comparison to titles like “Mercy,” which is certainly an accomplishment in itself for a hit single. Although some may be looking for another dance jam, Rockferry transcends expectations by offering a bery of instant classics, many of which acted as outlets for Duffy’s relationship frustrations. “I used to feel very vulnerable in the beginning, but these guys played a few of the acts and then we thought that we needed to make sure to acknowledge them. And I thought that we needed to make sure that we needed to make sure things are better for our little show.” says Jose. “So we played a lot of shows and worked on each song and tried to add things to it to make it different and fun, and more appealing. You want to see a band jam out and do cool things. It’s clear that, although they’re four grown men with jobs and commitments outside their band, they all look forward to their Saturday rehearsals to cut loose and play together. They all have different band interests, but they say they’re going to tour and playing nonstop in a perfect world. “There’s much about being a successful and famous, says Greg, “but the main goal is to pay the bills with music,” he says, with a sincere smile. But they’re very aware of the treacherous path to fame, especially in today’s musical market madness. “A lot of people think a major label means success and rock star status,” says Chris. “We don’t believe that.” He thinks long and hard about the songs, and the songs they write. “We don’t do this for the money,” says Chris. “We want to make that change,” says Chris. “Do you want to go out there full force, drop everything, leave everyone you know and live in a van down by the river? But we’re having a good time and always keeping our eyes open for an opportunity.” The band has a plethora of influences, and they all shine through when Tempus comes together. “Ben Fold in my head,” says Rob. “Any song that you can do with keyboards. Anything you listen to, there’s something you can draw from.” Among the easy beats and up tempo thrash is Rob’s keyboard. From the opening track “If I Could” to the beautiful ballad “Here in My Head,” Rob offers the little something extra that other bands are without. In “Got a Good Feeling,” the title track off the band’s 2007 album, Chris brings his personal experiences into the spotlight, singing about the all too familiar place we’ve all found ourselves in at one point or another. And I can’t see! I think I’m going down/ can you show me which way’s up? cause I can’t see which way you’re going/ now can you save me? I feel your life is over/ it’s really just beginning/ it feels you work’s done/ you couldn’t be more wrong. The life I’ve wanted is not mine! I feel this all the time! Will I ever come to find the meaning of my life/ I’ll give a good feel. It’s like Dave Matthews and Counting Crows put in a blender for a shi-smoothie. Though Harvey’s lyrics sing back and forth from bitter to sweet, it’s all accompanied by flowy tunes and stays true to the lives of the starring artist; confused, happy and hopeful. He says he thinks long and hard about the writing process. “I try to look at the creation of the song, the structure, production, how the tempo is decided.” The band made some new equipment acquisitions and say their new albums in the works will reflect the changes. “I try to make every song different so that it’s not the same formula, the same sound, the same subject. I’m writing about,” says Chris. “That’s probably what we’ll do this time around—different vibes, different moods.” Tempus is playing Carlstadt’s Cornerstone Inn on October 17th. Visit myspace.com/tempus or tempusband.com for the latest.
Super Happy Improv Troupe: Pardon the Acronym

By Amanda Ferrante

It’s a warm September afternoon, and six friends get together to talk about what they love most: improvisational acting. David Lee, Elmer Santos, April Macchio, Sergio Pagan, Brian Arya and Jackie Ely make up the Super Happy Improv Troupe, an ensemble that first met at Bergen Community College and wanted to branch off from the College improv circuit to shake S.H.I.T up elsewhere.

The multi-cultural group consists of three Asians, a Spaniard, and two Caucasians, with none possessing the ability to sit still, staying true to the comedic group’s repertoire. Throughout the interview, they drew on Stroyfoam plates and giggled like little children in church. It’s clear that they’re a tight-knit group of friends with plenty of laughs and inside jokes to share. Elmer constantly interrupts the group in order to correct their grammar, which only makes everyone laugh harder.

David, a 27-year-old Liberal Arts major and “ringleader” of the group, has been acting since 2001. He served as a host to Bergen’s 11th improv show when he met 22-year-old Jackie, a Psychology major, who never even said a word. “My humor...I’m pretty out there with the 90s, slapstick-almost-cartoon major influences were Jim Carey in the 90s, slapstick-almost-cartoon...when it comes to comedy, my favorite cartoon family. David, who is a part of a production company, recently worked on an independent film he wrote, which April starred in. ‘I’m pretty eclectic when it comes to movies,’ says Elmer. ‘But when it comes to comedy, my major influences were Jim Carey in the 90s, slapstick-almost-cartoon humor...I’m pretty out there with my humor.’

While Elmer’s “out there,” April finds a chuckle in a comedic genius who never even said a word. “My main comic influence is Charlie Chaplin,” she says. “I just love the way he can make things funny without saying any words—and I love Stephen Lynch.” Sergio, who was an extra in 50 Cent’s upcoming, Before I Self Destruct, says he loved Eddie Murphy, but "when he was good. I used to stay up until 2-3 in the morning and watch George Carlin- he was amazing," he says. Fellow improvisors like Ryan Stiles have really paved the way for comedians. “I really liked improv for a long time,” says Brian. “I knew from the start, because I loved SNL, that a lot of those guys started off in improv. I used to do my research when I was young, Bill Murray and Mike Myers, Jim Belushi, they’re all parts of old improv groups—they’re who I look up to.”

From left to right: David Lee, April Macchio, Brian Arya, Sergio Pagan, Jackie Ely and Elmer Santos

Jackie found herself relating to some of the most renowned female comedians on television. “I always really liked Lucille Ball,” she says with a smile. “I thought she was just amazing. Everything she did is awesome. When I was younger I really liked Roseanne Barr and how sarcastic she was. That really had a big impact on me.”

The wiry ones put together an off Broadway show in July. David produced the show financially and technically at Hell’s Kitchen’s nonprofit Medicine Show Theatre. “We did our thing...exactly what we set to do, and it turned out great,” says David. “It’s stuff that you would see on Who’s Line is it Anyway...funny quips,” Sergio adds. “The group enjoyed a slew of smiles and bundles of belly laughs, but Jackie admits, “There was alcohol there so that helped” The show was a success for the group—and it proved worthwhile financially, too.

“Like a lot of new shows that come out in NY, it’s a very rare thing for them to actually make money,” says Sergio. “They’re very lucky to break even. We actually made a lot of profit on our show.”

David says they did “better than we were supposed to do.”

“We’d have our own theatre with...”

See Super Happy...pg. 16

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

#ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
"In general, I think that electing people should inform themselves... and I think that people in general should get informed, as well informed... and I think that people should focus on the sick and suffering among us, rather than listening to what politicians, philosophers, or religious conservatives say. "Stem cell research, if it is based on solid ethical systems, and he has pledged $250,000, which will be used in this by rolling back Bush's tax cuts and the American, and he plans to fund American, and he plans to fund on the list of issues. Obama plans are clear signs of a flawed econom-
### Men's Basketball

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**Coaches:**
- Head Coach: Sal Guillen
- Assistant Coach: Randy Brazil

### Women's Soccer

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**Coaches:**
- Head Coach: Ralf Embro
- Assistant Coach: Lissette Lombana
- Assistant Coach: Cris Salazar

### Cross Country

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**Coach:**
- Head Coach: Randy Brazil

### Coaching Staff:
- Cross Country: Randy Brazil
- Men's Soccer: Sal Guillen
- Women's Soccer: Ralf Embro
- Women's Volleyball: Lissette Lombana
- Assistant Athletic Director: Megan Smith
- Equipment Manager: Chris Cioppa
- Secretary: Betty Highkal

**Sports Schedule: Sign up for intramurals in G-201 (2nd floor above gym) 4-Man Soccer, 3-Man Basketball, Volleyball, Ping-Pong, Chess, Flag Football, Tennis, 25-Mile Bike, 50-Mile Triathlon. Intramurals take place every Tues. & Thurs. 12:30 to 1:25pm in the Gymnasium. Proper Attire Required.**

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- Region XIX New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania
- Garden State Athletic Conference

**Dr. G. Jeremiah Ryan – College President**
- Mr. Raymond Smith – Vice President of Student Services
- Dr. Ralph Choonoo – Asst. Dean of Student Services & Judicial Affairs
- Prof. Bernard Fuersich – Athletic Director

**COACHES & STAFF:**
- **Cross Country:**
  - Head Coach: Randy Brazil
- **Men's Soccer:**
  - Head Coach: Sal Guillen
  - Assistant Coach: Ralf Embro
- **Women's Soccer:**
  - Head Coach: Lissette Lombana
  - Assistant Coach: Cris Salazar
- **Women's Volleyball:**
  - Head Coach: Megan Smith
- **First Aid Manager:**
  - Head Coach: Chris Cioppa
- **Equipment Manager:**
  - Head Coach: Betty Highkal