India, China, and NSU
20 new fellows appointed to ICI

BY HELAINA HOVITZ

The India China Institute appointed 20 new fellows for the next two years to analyze how the two countries are emerging as global economic powers. The ICI, a division of The New School that analyzes specific issues in India, China and the United States, has had a fellowship program since 2006. The fellows include professionals, students and leaders from those countries whose backgrounds position them to develop projects at the institute.

These fellows will explore the economic particulars of these societies in increasingly globalized cultures. “For me it is important to both understand what India and China are like on the ground, [and] also what their global relationships are,” said Chris Eberhardt, a PhD student in Sociology at The New School. “They have had a huge impact on the [global] economy.”

Not all the fellows are residents of, or experts in, India or China. Recently appointed ICI fellow Adriana Abdenur, an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Program of International Affairs at The New School, specializes in Brazil and South Africa. “Most of my research so far has been on urban land conflicts,” Abdenur said. “I study disputes over informal settlements such as shacks in large cities, especially areas that have come under threat of eviction.”

Abdenur plans to spend the summer conducting exploratory research in both China and India, with a trip from Beijing to southern India by land, through Tibet and Nepal, to see how globalized shapes urban politics in the region.

“The ICI network has been helpful in connecting researchers with different backgrounds,” Abdenur said. “We are currently working on an event looking at India and China in Sudan,” he added.

New School Goes Green
University to unveil first undergraduate environmental studies program this fall

BY HANNAH RAPFLER

After a halting, multi-year process of planning, curriculum development and fundraising, New School officials say they are about to realize a long-sought goal: the creation of a fully-fledged cross-disciplinary program in Environmental Studies.

The program, set to launch next fall, will offer two undergraduate degrees—a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Ecosystems, run through Lang College, and a Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Design through Parsons.

Although many universities across the country now offer degrees in environmental studies, New School administrators tout this program as unique.

“When I came here, I started to think about what will distinguish a [environmental studies] degree from The New School versus NYU and Columbia,” said Dr. Joseph Westphal, the new Vice President and Director of the Tishman Environmental Design Center. “There are two areas that we are very strong in. One is urban studies and the other, of course, is design. Who else has the design school that we have, and the faculty?”

New School President Bob Kerrey recently hired Westphal, a political scientist and former Assistant Secretary of the Army and head of the Army Corps of Engineers, to head the environmental studies initiative.

“Joe brings a lot of experience in higher education, a love for The New School and New York City, deep knowledge of the environmental challenges of urban communities located on rivers, and a personal approach that has won him broad support at the university,” Kerrey said.

Asked why it took so long for the program to get started, Kerrey said, “Most good things take a long time to get going in higher education.”

The move to build the program dates back to 2004, when former

Under Surveillance: Havel’s Temptation

BY MICHAEL CLANCY

The Arts Program at Lang is preparing a production of Temptation, a 1986 play written by writer and former president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel. Temptation originally took place in communist Czechoslovakia, but for this production, director Ziahan Ugralis says she wants to take the play out of this context and place it within the culture of “post-9/11 America.”

Sam Harris plays the lead role of Foustka, a scientist who works for a tightly regulated scientific organization called the Institute. Foustka has recently become interested in occult literature and in the second scene is confronted in his apartment by Fistula, a retired cripple played by Sean Jones. Fistula knows about Foustka’s work, as well as his interest in the occult, and discusses with him the possibility of using his scientific knowledge to test the theories of the occult. Foustka is originally suspicious of Fistula, but ultimately shows a curiosity in what he is proposing, despite the fact that the Institute’s regulations forbid his involvement in black magic.

Foustka’s tepid interest in the occult clashes with his obligations to the Institute, and its regulations he has to those he works for, and he struggles to choose a side. The difficulty Foustka has in choosing between his career and the temptations of black magic is the center of much of the play’s action, which ultimately ends with him learning that he “cannot serve two masters at once.”

There are a total of 11 speaking roles in Temptation, consisting mainly of scientists and other employees at the Institute. There are also 11 “nurses” who work there and act as “drones,” according to Lindsey Galoo, one of the play’s nurses. They watch over the workers and place bugs throughout the Institute in order to enforce its regulations.

Two cameras are carried by the

Continued on Page 4

Continued on Page 9

Dr. Joseph Westphal, the new Vice President and Director of the Tishman Environmental Design Center

Kate Hanselman
Letters to the Editor

Re: Response to LSU
I’d like to congratulate the paper on a worthy layout that looks really, really great, especially the front page. The rest of my suggestions I offer as constructive criticism and advice, particularly with the Lang Student Union article featured on page 3. It is true that it is great that the NSFP reported on the current state of the Lang Student Union, but I’m concerned about the perception the article will have with Lang students about the interest in or importance of LSU. While you do quote two apathetic Lang students who have no interest, I think the more relevant question is, “Have you heard of LSU and, if so, from what source?” One reason that students could be apathetic is that they do not know of the $83,000 budget that LSU has available, and the varied uses that budget is available for. Before your article, I’m sure very few students knew about many of the interesting trips and projects that were funded for Lang students, as the LSU minutes were not sent out to students this semester. It is also concerning that LSU voted on many of these large projects without the mandatory fifteen students present and I hope that students will step up and attend meetings so funding decisions are made in a more meaningfully democratic manner. I think the next issue of the NSFP should do well to insist on a calendar of future LSU meetings, along with clear guidelines on how all Lang students can benefit from this funding. This information is currently available in limited form on the Lang Student Union Facebook group, but likely misses a valuable check as to how funds are distributed. Transparency would serve as a valuable check as to how funds are distributed, given that if student participation increased, funding distribution would be competitive and awarded to those who hope meaningfully present their work to the Lang community, ensuring that even individual travel benefited the student body as a whole.

Re: Issue 9, News
Sam Denlinger wrote this review. The byline incorrectly stated that Rob Buchanan wrote this review. Rachel Knopfler wrote this review.

Re: Issue 9, Reviews
The article incorrectly referred to The Grey Dog’s Coffee as “a New York” coffee shop. It is not that kind of school.

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Instead of avoiding the sexual dimension of the page 3 article, I think the next issue of the NSFP should do well to insist on a calendar of future LSU meetings, along with clear guidelines on how all Lang students can benefit from this funding. This information is currently available in limited form on the Lang Student Union Facebook group, but likely misses a valuable check as to how funds are distributed. Transparency would serve as a valuable check as to how funds are distributed, given that if student participation increased, funding distribution would be competitive and awarded to those who hope meaningfully present their work to the Lang community, ensuring that even individual travel benefited the student body as a whole.

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Max Adler, Lang Sophomore, Passes Away

By Adam Solomon

Max Adler, 21, a Lang sophomore, passed away last Wednesday, February 20. Max suffered a heart attack and died in his dorm, Israel Freeman, who has been looking at the sociology of memory, space, place, and identity, has been working in what we're reading and blocked a little within our own field in dealing with memory. We wanted to look at things differently and developed a university-wide understanding. This led them to the idea of holding a conference. "It made sense for us," said Lindley Freeman, who has been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. "Within academia right now, we found a huge interest. As a graduate student conference, we didn't have the money to bring people from elsewhere. But still there was a huge demand. People couldn't believe that someone said Yifat Gutman, another student organizer. In her work in sociology, she had been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. Senior scholars and doctoral students, along with artists and professionals related to memory, were all invited to participate. Over eighty panels presented their work at dozens of forums from the New School's campus.

Max Adler has had a big picture perspective. "I think there are general trends in what we're reading and blocked a little within our own field in dealing with memory. We wanted to look at things differently and developed a university-wide understanding. This led them to the idea of holding a conference. "It made sense for us," said Lindley Freeman, who has been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. "Within academia right now, we found a huge interest. As a graduate student conference, we didn't have the money to bring people from elsewhere. But still there was a huge demand. People couldn't believe that someone said Yifat Gutman, another student organizer. In her work in sociology, she had been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. Senior scholars and doctoral students, along with artists and professionals related to memory, were all invited to participate. Over eighty panels presented their work at dozens of forums from the New School's campus.

The Freewheelin' Neil Gordon

By Peter Holslin

Over the past two decades, Neil Gordon has had four concurrent careers as a novelist, film maker and scholar.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Gordon has held various positions at The New School Review, got his Ph.D in French Literature at Yale, finished his first novel, Sacrifice of Isaac, contributed to prominent publications and raised a daughter. By 2007, two novels and a son later, he was working at another novel and serving as both the Literary Editor of The Boston Review and the Chair of Lang's Writing program.

He's able to do three or four things simultaneously, said Jennifer Howard, a friend of Gordon's who worked alongside him at the New Review. "He does all of them extremely well."

In his year as a faculty and former colleagues say, such prolific multi-tasking will prove to be quite an asset. This summer, Gordon, a bespectacled, pensive but voluble man of 50, who has been at Lang for six years, will become Dean of Eugene Lang College.

His job is to form the intellectual communities of faculty and staff, who are going to be able to imagine and execute a whole set of problems in the coming years—looking for the different disciplines. We'd have working with this group, my as- sociate, collective and the in-between. I think there are general trends in what we're reading and blocked a little within our own field in dealing with memory. We wanted to look at things differently and developed a university-wide understanding. This led them to the idea of holding a conference. "It made sense for us," said Lindley Freeman, who has been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. "Within academia right now, we found a huge interest. As a graduate student conference, we didn't have the money to bring people from elsewhere. But still there was a huge demand. People couldn't believe that someone said Yifat Gutman, another student organizer. In her work in sociology, she had been looking at the idea of contested memory and its use for bringing cultural change. Senior scholars and doctoral students, along with artists and professionals related to memory, were all invited to participate. Over eighty panels presented their work at dozens of forums from the New School's campus.

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Spence touched on numerous other primaries. He attributed Clinton’s New Hampshire victory to her success in gaining the majority of women’s vote. Clinton also won overwhelmingly in Nevada and California, and here Spence of over 3,500 miles. New School President Bob Kerrey secured a $10 million dollar grant from the Starr foundation, and the IICI was born. Gurung joined as the program’s senior director in 2006. “We live in a different world where knowledge production and knowledge exchange can happen in many different ways,” she said. “I’ve been in a cocoon, working in the field, Charlton said, the current climate of the field is about “fifty-fifty.” The panel audience of about 25 individuals consisted almost entirely of women. When asked about the best ways to mentor, she mentioned that Charlton suggested the University Conseratory for Sexuality Research and Therapy (The Center for Sex and Intimacy, org), which posts sexuality related jobs and offers information and advice on the field in general.

New green degrees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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At one point, he asked the audience, “Have a special breed of people? Have a special breed of people?”

Focus the Nation was advertised on various ads around the school, including Lang and Wollman Hall. “On Fridays, we have a lot of student interest in New School events,” said Nevin Cohen, an Urban Studies professor and the Senior Advisor to the Provost for Environmental Studies, who is probably one of the most cross-disciplinary spaces that exists,” added Towers, now Provost for Environmental Studies. “I think it’s a very unusual choice to head up environmental Studies at The New School. A Long Island native with a PhD in political science, he spent much of his career as a political analyst and congressional aide. In 1995, Bill Clinton appointed him as Senior Advisor for Water at the Environmental Protection Agency and, in 1997, he nominated him to head the Army Corps of Engineers, the controversial federal agency that oversees both the nation’s waterways infrastructure and the offshore oil drilling industry.

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New fellows at IICI
Tsaurah Litzky gives great head.

New School Pornographer NSFP dating columnist tells it like it is.

SoHo Workshop Divulges Sexual Secrets.

Gangster of Love

Arts & Culture
Getting Deeper into Tsaurah Litzky’s “Silk Sheets”

By Jika González

Tsaurah Litzky is a professor at The New School for General Studies, a poet, fiction writer and essayist, yet perhaps she is best known for her writing of erotica. Her work has appeared in over 90 publications including Best American Erotica, The New York Times, The Blacklist Journal, among others. She is the author of The Motion of the Ocean, Baby on the Water and Goodbye Beautiful Mother. As a faculty member of the Creative Writing department at The New School, she is completing her tenth teaching Silk Sheets: Writing Erotica.

NSFP: How did you get involved writing erotica?
TL: I could say it was an accident but I don’t believe in accidents. I don’t believe that anything good could be arbitrary. I am a poet, my heart is a poet. It started when I wrote something that involved my sex life with a gentleman; it was very intimate and I knew that I couldn’t put that in my column at the newspaper I worked at the time. I put the piece away for a while. A year went by, I was thinking about something to put in my new publication, I gave it to him thinking that nobody would ever see it.

TL: It was a very intimate and I knew that I didn’t want to be seen by anyone. It was for someone to put in my new publication. I gave it to him thinking that nobody would ever see it. A month later, I had already forgotten about it and when I checked my mail box, there was a letter from Best American Erotica saying, “Congratulations, your piece, The Sacred And Profane Craft of Desire has been chosen to be in Best Erotica 94.” My poetry and other work had always been very sexually charged but that was the beginning of my career as an erotic writer.

NSFP: What is erotica to you?
TL: It’s a hard question to answer. In my class “Silk Sheets: Writing Erotica,” I say erotic fiction is fiction that contains sex. I always make a connection between sex and love; to me all forms of love involve sex.

TL: I don’t mind saying that I’m a pornographer, not because I’m a deviant but because I’m interested in exploring the sexuality of older people. I’m working on a book of stories involving the sexuality of older people, tentatively titled The Whole Chicken.

New School professor Tsaurah Litzky likes it kindly

Underaged and Underpaid
How sex can fill the penny bank

By Andy Gutierrez

My roommate Bridget* and I have similar stories. We both moved to New York City from the suburbs. We both found our apartment and jobs on craigslist. I chose to work as a busboy in Park Slope, while she chose to be a professional dominatrix.

Bridget is a working class women, Bridget works in a “dungeon,” which is typically a floor of an office building or a room that has been modeled to have themed rooms where clients can act out their fantasies. She describes her working environment metaphorically in a layout, while themed rooms accommodate various erotic fantasies.

“I was planning on moving here, but I needed to find an easy way to support myself” Bridget tells me. Her typical hours are two seven-hour shifts per day. After all, she makes an average of $280.

Other mistresses such as Nikki, 19, and Nikki, 26, work full time at a different dungeon in mid-town Manhattan. “I make enough to pay for a nice apartment and [have] a lot of aata for entertainment,” they both tell me. “I don’t make enough to pay for a nice apartment and [have] a lot of aata for entertainment,” they both tell me.

Bridget continues to use craigslist for “parties” where she makes hundreds of dollars in an evening; another thing that she, like Nikki, enjoys is being a dominatrix, seeing people humiliated.

“As a dominatrix, I make enough to pay for a nice apartment and [have] a lot of aata for entertainment. I don’t make enough to pay for a nice apartment and [have] a lot of aata for entertainment.”

Bridget lives with her older sister who works at McDonald’s; she describes her life as “distract himself he overachieved. He became a general’s aide, commanding officer and serving in combat. Merritt also worked at the top litigation firm in the US, Jones Day. ‘You don’t think about things because you don’t want to deal with it. From a psychological perspective, if you don’t deal with stuff, eventually it deals with you,’ he said."

When Merritt was stationed in San Diego, he noticed ads in the newspaper asking for “male models.” He got the job, aware of the connotations. Over the four years, Merritt was in eight gay pornos. When Merritt’s then boyfriend left her, Merritt began writing a column for the New York Times and wrote an article stating that the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy should be repealed. His article attracted the New York Times Magazine. He appeared anonymously on the cover as R. “It was kind of that make-or-break point. The thing is that I knew that I had done the porn and at this point, I was like ‘if they ever find out I could go to jail’ so, I needed to get out. As an officer, you just submit your resignation and that’s what I did,” he said. Merritt was re-issued his new ID six weeks later.

Catching the attention of a free lance reporter for the Los Angeles Times, the writer wanted to expose Merritt’s identity in the end of the year issue. He agreed. Soon afterwards, it was revealed Merritt had done porn. Merritt refused to comment. The article shocked the military.

“Sick six years ago, I attempted suicide and that was the big chang- ing point,” Rich Merritt says. “Six years ago, I attempted sui- cide and that was the big chang- ing point.”

Rich Merritt reads from “Code of Conduct”

Gay Marine, Says, Tells

By Jordan Katz

The Per-
Confessions of a New York Geisha

By Yuki-Jennifer Kurumi

In NYC’s Midtown East resides the Japanese night club community. These establishments are not the typical loud music clubs much loved in New York. There is no equivalent of this phenomenon in the English language; Japanese “Nakatokara” are formal lounges that solely cater to Japanese businessmen, where attractive hostesses offer convivial conversation and glimpses of young flesh to patrons.

One late morning in our apartment, I politely ask them to follow me to the bathroom…the waiters would demand for hostesses. Ranging from middle-aged businessmen to 50-70 year-olds, they can continue to do what they do best. As journalist Gerry Vosco stated, “I could not allow myself to see a woman making love to a man she didn’t love and I to accompany him for more than two hours?”

The evening was comprised of Hookers prefer to make an honest living

By Jordan Katz

On February 6, Spread Magazine held their tenth issue launch party in the Lower East Side feminist activist bookstore, Bluestocking. Spread, a new free magazine that caters to people who work in the sex industry and those who are curious about it, provides an open forum for sex workers to voice their opinions and income that they earn. Some are curators and al-

Unwrapping NYC

By Amelia Granger

The City of New York Department of Mental Health and Hy-

Women reportedly have the chance to meet and befriend hosts at Club MoMo*. Although she seems to have no expenses, meals, shopping and five-

By Daniel Egan and Bishop Nicholas Di-

I could not allow myself to see a woman making love to a man she didn’t love, and I to accompany him for more than two hours?

The evening was comprised of Hookers prefer to make an honest living

by Jordan Katz

On February 6, Spread Magazine held their tenth issue launch party in the Lower East Side feminist activist bookstore, Bluestocking. Spread, a new free magazine that caters to people who work in the sex industry and those who are curious about it, provides an open forum for sex workers to voice their opinion

One late morning in our apartment, I politely ask them to follow me to the bathroom…the waiters would demand for hostesses. Ranging from middle-aged businessmen to 50-70 year-olds, they can continue to do what they do best. As journalist Gerry Vosco stated, “I could not allow myself to see a woman making love to a man she didn’t love, and I to accompany him for more than two hours?

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Hookers prefer to make an honest living

Sex Workers Find Voice

$pread promotes tenth anniversary

By Jordan Katz

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**Glass Sculpted Butt Plugs**

_News School Free Press_ February 26, 2008

**A Night at Blowjob U.**

_By Jake Weingarten_

Hidden in a quiet section of NYC lies Babeland, a sex fiend’s treasure chest. Babeland is a sexual dream, a sensual wonderland that allowed my companion and I to lose ourselves. Glass dildos, flaunted vibes and a vast selection of “high-end adult films” are only some of the kinky items found at the Soho institution.

This past Sunday, Babeland put on a workshop entitled “How to Please Your Man.” Fifty people filed in for the two-hour class. Participants included eager NYU students, Babeland regulars and even a group of married women from the Upper East Side, dripping in designer accessories, and shocked to be in the workshop. “I am not drunk enough for this,” one woman complained.

Jayme Waxman, Babeland’s coordinator of special events, opened the workshop, stating, “We hope you enjoy what you see and hear tonight. And cum again. And again and again.” Directly following Jayme’s titillating introduction, sex educators Chris and Dar-ron took the stage, both having taught at Babeland for over two years. Both women emphasized that Babeland is a sex-positive space, meaning that everything people say and do is judgment-free. After some quick guidelines and brief information, both educators outlined the contents of the workshop: communication, anatomy, foreplay, handjobs and blowjobs.

Communication was broken down into two forms: verbal and non-verbal. “While having sex with your partner, before speaking, challenge yourself,” Chris said. “Instead of talking about what you like, use eye contact, grip the cock with it, practice non-verbal acts.” After audience reactions died down, both educators made it clear that it is crucial to “check in” with yourself and your partner.

Darron commenced the second portion of the workshop, “The Anatomy of the Cock,” by passing around diagrams. Photocopies of one-on-one nongraphic film, illustrating the overview of the visual aspects of sex not covered in more predictably explicit installations such as the pornography-through-the-ages ‘Sex and the Moving Image’ display upstairs, and is, in its own way, equally… titillating. ‘Design in Sex/Sex in Design’ runs through April 27.

**Whipped Dominatrix one-on-one**

_By Lindsey Galoob_

Currently, Brianna Duro is sipping wine and feasting on pain au chocolat. She moved to Paris a month ago to travel and be an au-pair for a French family. Before her voyage, she was living in New York, New Jersey, the towns where she was born and raised. Adopted into a large family, Bri grew up to be a unique individual. “In high school, she did her own thing,” says Lang student Terésa Franco, one of Bri’s best friends. Spending her teenage days experimenting with mushrooms and devoting time as a vocalist and keyboardist in her electronica band, We are the Seabores, Bri was destined for adventure. “To earn some Benz jamins for her trip and peak her kinky curiosity, Bri took a job at a well known dungeon here in New York City.

NSSP: When did you first become interested in this profession?

BD: It’s weird because I’ve always considered myself this sort of weird alpha female and I’ve always been preoccupied with kink in my life. So all it took was somebody [giving] me a pair of platform leather boots and I tried them on and thought, “Oh, hey!” I went on the internet to start reading about the easiest and safest ways to begin work in a dungeon. I ended up throwing caution to the wind and just finding a good looking ad on craigslist. I called the number, set up an interview and the rest sort of worked itself out.

NSSP: What was the dungeon environment like? Did you get along well with the girl coworkers?

BD: There was a sort of looming amount of camaraderie for the competitive nature that was also present. We girls were sort of in competition for clients, but we also understood the nature of the business and we viewed it with a healthy dose of humor [which] lightened the mood to a degree. I got along with the girls tremendously well because everyone was friendly and good humored. We were all there to make money, that’s the bottom line. A job is a job.

The facilities themselves were clean and safe, at least where I was working. Lots of weird looking shit, of course: restraints, corporal instruments (paddles, crops, whips, floggers), a sort of trance-like environment. Everyone there was in the same zone. Not a heav-

**Around the Courtyard**

_Written & Photographed by Courtney Nichols, Jake Weingarten and Jordan Katz_

Lily Carey, Parsons Sophomore

Xia Maguus, Lang Senior

Isabel Sheehan, Lang Freshman

Paul Ulrich, Lang Sophomore

Doggy style, for sure.

Plain of missionary.

I guess being on top.

Against the wall with my feet in the air, fun.

**What is your favorite sexual position?**
It’s A Mitzvah!

Be our guests at an interfaith wedding

By JULIA SCHWEIZER

The madness had already begun when I arrived at the chupah in Woodmere, Long Island, a predominantly Jewish suburb rich with diamond money. Sarah, or "Goldie" as her family calls her, grew up nearby, many miles from my Christian heritage, atheist by upbringing, brother Stephen in midtown Manhattan.

I barely recognized Gemma’s fiancée in her lace ivory wedding gown and veil, nor had I ever seen my brother in a three-piece suit, let alone a yarmulke. Sarah had her floor-length, full-sleeved, high neck dress made at an Orthodox Jewish bridal salon in Brooklyn. But all that formal-wear wasn’t for nothing—the photographer must have taken a thousand pictures before the ceremony even began. After an hour or two of being bossed around by a photographer, I heard my mother utter under her breath, "This picture-taking is for the birds." She was coffied in a black veil traditionally worn by the mother of the groom.

Soon, Stephen was brought down to a room where he and Sarah’s male relatives all pray together. Not knowing, I stepped in the room to be with my brother and was shooed out by a tall bearded man with a booming voice. The night before, my boyfriend (who, thank God, is Jewish) helped Stephen memorize the brachot, or blessings. I even learned how to bless the wine in solidarity: "Reuchu ato adonai eloheinu melech haolam boreh pri haqafen. Thank God, is Jewish) helped Stephen memorize the brachot, or blessings. I even learned how to bless the wine in solidarity: "Reuchu ato adonai eloheinu melech haolam boreh pri haqafen."

After the chupah, the Rabbi walked my brother and his wife to the bridal suite for about 15 minutes, they are supposed to eat their first meal as man and wife, and well, I’ll leave it at that. Little does her naively religious family know that they’ve been living together for over a year.

Despite all the rules, Jews really know how to party. It was fun even though there was same-sex only dancing, with the female and male sides divided by a curtain. At one point, the bride and groom were lifted up in chairs right after someone tied napkins together to form a jump rope.

When I stepped outside to smoke a cigarette, a cloud of smoke had already accumulated because of all the smokers. As I lit up, one of Sarah’s uncles said, “Oh good, you smoke, that’s good for my business.” Curious, I asked what business would he own and he said, “I just can’t smoke,” and said a long drag of his own cigarette.

After that, I found myself drowning in a sea of kosher champagne. My advice to any non-Jew attending an Orthodox wedding: cover yourself up, don’t try to shake hands with the opposite sex and always say "Mazel Tov!"

Pre V-Day Par-Tay: All That and A Bag of Chips

The Student Activities Board re-lives 7th grade

By ERIKA ALLEN

So, like, the Student Activities Board had, like, this pre-Valentine’s Day ‘90s dance party and I was all, “So what’s the deal dawg? Is it going to be as phat as the ‘90s actually were?” So instead of chillin’ at the crib, I decided to check it out.

Heading to the Student Activi- ties Space in the 13th St. building, the ‘90s jams were bumping. DJ Anthony, who is totally the lam- est DJ name ever, wasn’t from it. While the ‘90s may not have turned out the best love songs, there’s no denying there were some classics. Anthony played Mary J. Blige’s “Real Love” was followed by Ce Ce Peniston’s “I’m Movin’ and to top it off, he played Montell Jor-dan’s “This is How We Do It.”

Expecting to hear a little bit more grunge and alt rock I can’t say I wasn’t disappointed. Liza Bley, Student Activities Board member and ‘90s dance party coordinator, offered some explanation. The ‘90s had a lot of good pop and dance music. And for most of us, this is right around the time we were in middle school and going to middle school dances. We just thought it would be fun and kind of awkward.

And she’s, like, totally right for sure! Who knew that seeing a girl in a croppped sweater with holes in the knees of her jeans could totally, like, make me lose all social skills. I was kind of tripping when they told me I should enter the cos-tume contest because I was, like, in my everyday clothes. They were handing out raffle tickets at the party’s entrance. I took the ticket and the contest badge to be held. But, like, it would have been to-tally whack to accidentally win.

Everyone was dressed up in their freshest ‘90s gear, but you could hardly tell: ‘90s fashion is back in a big way. At least visors probably won’t be back.

The raffle prizes were less than impressive, though the chocolate fondue fountain more than made up for the trivia’s giant Hershey Kiss contest prize. After the light snack, pizza, and the 30 second- roid film they were using to cap- ture the evening, there may not have been much room for the 12x24 screen in the background where the action caught by these two cameras will be broadcast.

This is to give the audience a bet- ter sense of just how closely the Institute is monitoring its employ- ees.

Temptation is being run as a five week production. The cast is currently rehearsing five days a week to prepare for their Thurs- day, March 6 opening at La MaMa ETC, 66 East 4th St., Manhattan. There are performances scheduled for the following Friday and Satur- day night, and Sunday afternoon.

Pre-V-Day dance party
It’s a Gay, Gay World

By Spike Schwab

Ever since the introduction of the “gay best friend” to comedic romance novels in the nineties (as in, Best Friend’s Wedding), gay characters have evolved from sidekicks to starring roles in gay-themed television and film.

Once exiled to cable networks, gay characters are now becoming a common fixture on broadcast TV. While many networks have taken part in this trend, some have certainly been more involved than others in creating more on-screen diversity.

ABC surpasses all other major networks in its inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) culture in its programming. ABC was the first broadcast television network to feature a self-proclaimed bisexual and her husband on a reality TV show in 2007, followed this year by a post-op transsexual woman on a popular sitcom. ABC has surpassed all other networks in its inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender culture in its programming.

While fewer than six percent of the scripted shows on broadcast television are set in a gay neighborhood, the number of gay-themed television shows has grown dramatically, with a steady increase in the number of shows featuring gay and lesbian characters. This trend indicates that American television has become more involved than ever before in the representation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender culture.

For those viewers who were hoping for a more exciting, untraditional ending to a reality TV show, the possibility of a reality show starring a post-op transsexual woman is certainly not out of the question. While many networks have hesitated to feature his love life, the character Kevin Walker and does not hesitate to feature his love life, the character Kevin Walker and does not hesitate to feature his love life, the character Kevin Walker and does not hesitate to feature his love life, the character Kevin Walker and does not hesitate to feature his love life.

New York City remains the fashion capital of the United States, and each season ushered in the same mass-produced trends (inclusion of penis-skirts matched with bright-colored heels and bubble-sleeved blouses) and the same well-done-but-otherwise-natural-to-write-about gayness.

Zoe Posen maintained audience excitement for two years of transparent two-piece designs and BIDS inspired lace bodied gowns, all while remaining true to the gender fluid theme, but theme and intention seemed unrecognizable and show-closing crescendos were quickly forgotten by the yawnning audiences. Years past, final closing pieces from Gwen Stefani’s L.A.M.B. and Dona Karen illuminated avant-garde concepts of flowing fabrics and strangely shaped hems. Zoe Posen’s runways were a visual treat that came memorable due to pompos hair and costumes made to break up, rather than the clothes themselves.

The 2008 season, on the other hand, is a collection of designs that, in addition to the popular Hollywood “it” girls, have a big say in some fashion, in replacement, a more sophisticated, intellectual women’s day-to-day style.

Each year the program highlights lesser known celebrities, and more up-and-coming artists, earning recognition while their predecessors choose to show their line overseas. Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, recently renamed when previous sponsor Olympus backed out, is undoubtedly highlighted by the Project Runway finale, earning more media coverage than many other designers. But with the popular reality show star Victoria Hong earning a fashion week career, the show is currently in a recession in America and therefore fashion is reflecting this shift in our surroundings.

A changing government, a changing economy, shifts in American values. Utilitarian meets urban survivor with hidden hints of glamour that are not too showy, but still express our thirst for the shimmering luxury. You will see contracts in textures, colors of gemstones and flowing silhouettes. Also the end of the popular Hollywood “it” girls will have a say in some fashion, in replacement, a more sophisticated, intellectual women’s day-to-day style.

It is surprising to see how much the fashion industry has evolved over the past few years. The industry has become more diverse and inclusive, and the number of designers of color has increased.

It’s interesting to see how much the fashion industry has evolved over the past few years. The industry has become more diverse and inclusive, and the number of designers of color has increased.

Get Baked Brownie Bliss

By Kate Hanselman

11/3 cups cocoa powder 2 tps vanilla extract 1 tps baking powder 1 tsp brown sugar 1 tps unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8x8 inch pan. Mix dry ingredients (cocoa, flour, sugar) Add vanilla extract and baking powder. Mix into a batter. Stir until a thick batter forms. Add melted butter and mix well. Bake for about 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
Best Happy Hours in the ‘Hood
Get gassed for less cash

By Yuki-Jennifer Kurumi

The concept of “Happy Hour” is one of humankind’s greatest inventions, and NYC shows its support with its countless number of bars. But up comes a New Yorker curse: Where can one find the best Happy Hours? NSFP investigates.

The term “Happy Hour” originated in the 1920s, when the United States Navy began to call on-ship performances as such. These sailors used the word “happy” as a reference to drunkenness. Tradition dictates that these special hours usually refer to a specific time frame, Mondays to Thursdays, pre-dinner time. But in a city as busy as New York, there are many establishments that break the rules. Budget-stricken alcohol lovers can merely toast these heavenly venues in walking distance from The New School campus:

- **Blind Tiger Ale House** (281 Bleecker St. at Jones St.; West 4th Station, A/C/D/E/F/V lines): Between 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, the Tiger takes $1 of every drink from their already affordable prices. Furthermore, Monday nights offer Brooklyn Pennant Pale Ale for $3, accompanied by free hot dogs from 6 p.m. on. With 26 brews on tap and a wide selection of hard liquors, there is much to choose from at this Village favorite. To make it even better, the Tiger offers free bread and slices of cheese on Wednesdays from 5 p.m., and free bagels with a variety of cream cheese on Saturdays and Sundays, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.—a perfect weekend brunch for the earlybird drunk.

- **Box Car Lounge** (168 Ave. B at 10th St.; 1st Ave. Station L line): The cozy lounge makes use of its narrow size and corrugated sheet metal ceiling to recreate a train compartment. The friendly bartender explained that Box Car recently obtained a full liquor license, so now they have more than their previous beers, wines and wine cocktails. Drinks are regularly priced around $4 to $6, but there is the splendid buy-one-get-one-free option. Box Car is a local favorite not only for their prices, but also for the length of their Happy Hours. Hours last until 10 p.m. on weekdays, and 8 p.m. on weekends. It’s no wonder the establishment is fairly crowded even on weeknights.

- **Hanger Bar** (217 East 3rd St.; Second Ave. Station F/V lines): Look for the neon hanger sign in the window to find this little bar full of big discounts. Here, well-drinks go for $2, and everything else is 81 cents cheaper during Happy Hour, which is daily from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., with a late-night discount on weekends at 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. Their inexpensive chicken wings (10 cents each) are popular amongst all the friendly neighborhood regulars: hipsters, ordinary blokes and students. Hanger also happens to be a unique hybrid between drinking spot plus boutique. Reasonably priced vintage clothing hangs on display for the perusal of customers, who can simultaneously drink and shop. And for the non-shoppers, there is always the option of playing drunken Scattegories, Scrabble or one of several board games available on the back tables.

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MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY
fresh oak leaves and lather you up in olive oil soap. It may sound like torture, but it’s a guaranteed quick detox and thorough exfoliation. Not only is the bath a relaxing retreat, the facilities also keep you healthy by helping your body sweat out toxins. Manager Dimitri tells us that he uses the facilities often and hasn’t been sick in years.

The Bath House attracts people from every subway line. The wide variety of people lounging together in the dark steamy rooms creates a sense of timelessness.

ByDialoguing to experience cultural immersion, friendly people, extreme relaxation and maybe some sex, all for less than a night at Midis Shapes, the Russian and Turkish Baths is the place to venture.

The Bathhouse is located at 273 East 10th St, in the East Village of New York City.

One-day admission costs $30, which includes robes, towels, lockers and razors.

A soak frits it in the pain to bring home the bacon

Wok to Walk. 106 University Place

By Rachel Knoppler

Wok to Walk is “Asian Food made simple, affordable and irresistible to eat or to take away.” Located on University Place between 12th and 13th St, this tiny restaurant makes quality food quick.

Revolving around their original three-step menu, one has the freedom to create their own personal stir-fry. First, pick your carbohydrate. Choose from jasmine rice, egg noodles, organic wheat rice or mixed vegetables.

Next, pick your heart of your stir-fry. The chicken, beef, shrimp, pineapple, vegetables, tofu, peppers or roasted cashews are fresh and you can have just one all or all of the above.

Lastly, pick your sauce. My personal favorite is traditional teriyaki. If you’re craving something sweeter, try sweet and sour. And if you like spice, their “Hot & Spicy” is at its finest.

Whatever you desire, the cooks will make it right in front of your eyes. It’s like the Asian Starbucks, but without sugar-free options and steamed milk. If you’re on the go, Wok to Walk takes less than five minutes and will respond to your appetite in the most gratifying way.

Recommended

Theatre

By Emily J. Nelson

The three-year acting M.F.A. program at The New School for Drama culminates in the annual Random Acts! Festival, which opened on Thursday, February 14.

In preparation, the students have rehearsed for about three weeks in their collaborative production classes taught by Ron Leibman, Chris Shinn and Jaime Richards, where actors, playwrights, and directors learn to develop a project in a short time frame as a part of their training for careers in the professional theater.

The festival will run on weekends through April 26. Each weekend, a different set of one-act plays by student playwrights and more established writers will be performed.

A long, epic play with themes of messed-up family dramas such as the Iceman Cometh, yet loaded with satire. Topped with out-standing acting, outrageous writ- ing (Tracy Letts) and directing (Anna Shapiro), it’s quite a unique Broadway experience.

Recommended

Music
Diamanda Gala. Guilty Guilty Guilty.

By Helen Buyenski

Diamanda Gala’s St. Valentine’s Day Massacre took place at the Knitting Factory in TriBeCa for the third year in a row. She kept her fans waiting in front of an empty stage, but apologized and moved on to a grand stage.

Gala strode onto the stage almost an hour after the 9:30 p.m. ticket time to deafening cheers, sat down at the piano and smiled briefly at the audience before turning on the lights to begin.

The first song was peppered with “I’m sorry” sung in her immobile cabaret-burlesque style. She followed with a darkly humorous cover of Johnny Paycheck’s ’60s country tune “Pardon Me, I Was Got Someone to Kill,” sweater croon- ing the chorus over her own piano accompaniment. The set included several selections from her forthcoming album, Guilty Guilty Guilty, which will be released on March 31, and an original piece written in Greek, “Keignoume Kleftika,” from her 1991 album Malodrosis and Prayer. She

provided covers of songs by Edith Piaf, Marlene Dietrich and John- ny Cash, among others, and ended the show with an encore of Cash’s “25 Minutes to Go.”

Throughout the show, Gala made extensive use of her stunning three-and-a-half octave vocal range. She also added elements of various tropical intonations in the low register to high-pitched warbles that never fell out of tune. While her St. Val- entine’s Day Massacre is a recently established tradition, Gala has been recording since 1982, though she has somewhat toned down her growls high pitched and her eyes width out face on the audience for the umpteenth time to bring home the bacon.

Recommended

Apollo
Theater

By Josh Kulp

I came to the Apollo Theater expecting to be the only white per- son in attendance. After all, that’s what movies like The Jacksons: An American Dream and The Buddy Holly Story have led me to believe.

But I left with the image of a 70- year-old Jewish grandma doing the Rockaway to Pat Joe’s “Lean Back.”

The “World-Famous” Apollo Theater, established in 1934, has had some famous names grace its stage: Otis Redding, Jackie Wilson, Billie Holiday, James Brown— with many of those names per- forming at Amateur Night. Held every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. For seventy-four years later, Amateur Night is only a smudge of what it used to be.

Amateur Night works as such: if the audience likes you, you get to stay on the stage and finish your song, comedy skit, violin solo, whatever the participants think the audience will like; but if the audience doesn’t like you, you’re kicked off the stage accused by the Sand Man, an “executioner” who dances and entertains the crowd, behind the curtains never to be seen again.

The night’s MC, Drex Frazier, is the Office: to some an impression of Chris Rock: loud and not funny. He led the audience through about twenty amateurs hoping to make it big, all while telling the audience terrible, ste- reotypical jokes about blacks not liking cold weather. Yeah—and it’s still not funny.

The Apollo is one of the few American Idol-esque to a crew of stepdancers to a girl playing violin to bring home the bacon.

The only truly memorable high- light was the house band, Ray Chew and the Crew: sounding like a mix between Dave Matthews Band and Booker T. & the MGs, they provided some needed relief to otherwise crappy perfor- mances.

The night I went, the Sand Man came out twice, and that was the best part of the show; seeing terri- ble singers getting booted off stage and just being generally humili- ated. At one point, Mr. Man came out dressed as Michael Jackson, and made some easy jokes about being a pedophile. Forty years before this sad event, the Jackson Five tore up this very stage.

That’s the main problem with the Apollo: there’s an attempt to stay with the past, but that’s only by namingropping people like Otis and Ella, not actually providing the kind of setting these artists would want to thrive in. At one point, a guy dressed as Ronald McDonald came out and told the crowd how great the Apollo is.

And up in Music Heaven, James Brown didn’t feel good.
The Debate Over Diversity
How can Lang build community?

**BY KEVIN DUGAN**

Diversity here is a joke, and it doesn’t look like it’s going to get better any time soon.

When I think of how Lang has tried to fix its diversity problem, I think of the scene in the film The Weather Underground in which a band of radical activists, the Weathermen, is trying to talk some Black Panthers into joining their group. The Panthers turn down the offer because they feel they are being used by a sissy cause because of their race. No doubt the Weathermen were trying to do the right thing—they just didn’t realize that it came across as a little hollow.

One can boil down Lang’s problem to a simple lack of people of color. Perhaps a bigger problem is our total lack of community. Most administrators and students recognize it as an issue, but efforts to create a community through dorm activities and virtual camps are just band-aids. All of us—students, professors, administrators—need to be ready around us if we want to get a richer experience at this school.

How much diversity can we ever really hope to achieve? Colleges are, by definition, places that encourage upward mobility. According to US News, only 21 percent of Americans have even attended college. Just graduating college with a degree increases the likelihood of a middle-class salary. Even those who go into the nonprofit sector, or start a business, tend to have a financial cushion unavailable to most Americans. If we want a diverse community, we need to move beyond the proverbial collegiate gates and engage the rest of the world.

But what about what’s already here? This isn’t a small school, but we’re in the middle of one of the most diverse cities in the world. If this was some isolated New England campus replete with frat houses and giant mess halls, the existential seclusion might give us an excuse to not have diverse dialogue here. But we’re not, so we don’t.

We can’t rely on the groups here to give us diversity. In fact, groups are inherently biased by like-minded people, so we need to bite the bullet and start accepting differences. It’s up to the students to break out of their shells and start talking to each other—and the rest of the world.

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If You Can’t Say Something Smart...

**BY LAUREN TAYLOR**

I have had amazing professors at Eugene Lang, but I’ve hardly heard some of them speak. For $15,330 a semester, I would like to learn from people with college degrees. Eugene Lang is known for its seminar style teaching, the purported “real democracy of learning” according to the school’s website. We have all heard time and time again—especially if you ever got up at 6 am—no such thing as a stupid question. This is not true. There are questions too big and too small being thrown around in classrooms, often times careening a lesson off track. For example, a discussion about the events that occurred during the 2003 invasion into Iraq can quickly turn into a who-wanted-what-for-sports event.

No one was aware that this jargonism focused on the war until the first day of the semester. My teacher assumed, rightfully, that once the skeptics trickled out, his students were here to stay. And read. He stressed that a good class is one where he doesn’t have to do much of the talking. It would be great if all students read, and simultaneously brought studious viewpoints to discussions.

Unfortunately, our current system is too lean on those who do not read yet speak anyway. This is not about scaring people who would rather Facebook-stalk than read Orwell for the fifth time. This is just to say that there are intellectually out-of-bounds comments and questions that do not belong in the classroom. For those who do all of the reading, we want to learn from people who know better, who actually have answers to our questions.

Challenging and intelligent discussion should have its place in curriculum. After all, this component is supposed to comprise a majority of our grade. However, with the tendency of students thinking that showing up to class equals showing up, it’s impossible to give them that much freedom. The ability to make uninformed claims ultimately distracts from those who want to learn. Teachers, for their part, need to stop a tangent when it has gone too far. How long can a group of philosophy students discuss the nature of knowledge in an intro philosophy class? A long time, if you suppose that people can think they sound smart without having done any of the reading.

Blurring out your opinions is not the same as participating. I appreciate those who have listened to and respected my ideas, but I am willing to give up being a head honcho if my classmates are ready to do their job. Having dipped my toes into real world jobs, conversational skills look bleak from here. Do the reading or we can have and maintain dignified conversations and debates. And if you don’t, stay silent. There is no point in talking to someone who is paralleling an A in participation. We all know Lang doesn’t work like that.

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When the As Start Failing Us
Grades, self-esteem on the rise

**BY ROB MAYNARD**

You’ve got a ten page paper due of 3.7 or higher. Yeah, the kid in your class who says “like” so often that it’s possible he has a mild case of Turret’s, made it onto the Dean’s List. I was on the Dean’s List once, of 2003, it was 3.34. In fact, last year Liu said, “Those kinds of guides like the Bell Curve.”

The clock in front of you stares back, telling you it’s 11:30 p.m. You’ve got a ten page paper due tomorrow, and you can barely recall the topic. You didn’t even read the book before class. Greg was on. You had some friends over. Whatever the reason, you are royally screwed. You buckle down, and plow through the paper, knowing you’re going to fail. When the graded copies are passed back a week later, you open it with dread. Then you look at your A—

It’s a miracle? No, it’s called grade inflation, the phenomenon in which academic marks creep upward every year. The fake A’s graded as As, the B’s as Bs, the C’s as Cs. If You can’t say something smart...

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One third of Lang students made Dean’s List

**SAM DENLINGER**

Only prevalent here at Lang, it’s epidemic at every college in the country.

Last semester, the average GPA of graduating seniors at Lang was 3.44. Four years ago, in the Fall of 2005, it was 3.36. In fact, last semester, whopping 443 students made it onto the Dean’s List, out of the 1274 students enrolled at Lang. That means one third of your fellow classmates have a GPA of 3.7 or higher. Yeah, the kid in your class, who says “like” so often that it’s possible he has a mild case of Turret’s, made it onto the Dean’s List. I was on the Dean’s List once, of 2003, it was 3.34. In fact, last year Liu said, “Those kinds of guides like the Bell Curve.”

If you can’t say something smart...

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**NSFP Supports NIU**

**How to make sense of tragedy?**

**By R.E. Vandenbark, Guest Contributor**

A really big movie is probably on a creation, and when it hits, all life and Facebook accounts will be deleted. The occasion is Spitzer’s New Year’s resolution to extend our intolerances to the victims, families and the community of Northern Illinois University. As classes return to session, we hope that students and faculty will work together through the healing process and begin on the journey to normalcy.

The attempt at making sense of this event has come boiled down to one thing: we can’t. There are no clear-cut answers to why these horrific events take place. Our only route left is to point to the violence and machismo that is deeply embedded in American culture, the ability that force a tax on all illegal drugs.

The bill states that the tax must be paid in advance—assuming in advance of an arrest—by purchasing, and it’s as a prop for pop-industry and explore the material for pop-industry and explore the media and machismo that is deeply embedded in American culture. But at least in February 2008, the right and wrong in different ways. Fair-trade policies exist and they work. Binding, enforceable pollicine caps and taxes exist and work. All of the technology needed to manufacture and distribute must dumb things cleanly, fairly, and more efficiently already exists. What’s missing is the political and cultural capital needed to implement and enforce the better policies. Better is the operational term here; if you keep that in mind, then a workable definition of what sustainability can start to make some sense.

Like the “truth” about M&M’s, the “truth” about the process is complex and sometimes contradictory. In reality, I can’t think of a single situation that might be analogous with this theoretical nature versus economy argument, but even then, proving such a thing, it wouldn’t be representative of the whole “truth” of the matter anyway. The process of valuation—weighing the environmental and economic and cultural costs of a thing—is complex and sometimes contradictory. In reality, I can’t think of a single situation that might be analogous with this theoretical nature versus economy argument,

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The death penalty & 9/11

WANT TO SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATS?

By Lauren Cuscuna

The death penalty for Guantánamo Bay prisoners. A military tribunal is its least criminal and conduce and the court to conduct an or on the court is just another dead body. Or dozes. The United States is behind the times on this front—of leading the world on has been arrested, charged of genocide. The last time Serbia fought to keep Kosovo, it ended in genocide. Kosovo should not be an independent country. The tension that already exists between the Serbs, who comprise about ten percent of the population, and the Albanians, who make up the rest, will only increase. The two peoples are fighting about who was there first, and this is the type of unsolvable conflict that may well result in another genocide. Is an independent Kosovo worth the thousands of lives that will be lost?

Kosovo on the Verge

Independence will bring violence

By Elisa Deljanin

On February 17, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia for the second time in eighteen years. In protest, a group of Serbians set fire in the U.S. and Croatian embassies in Belgrade, Serbia's capital. If Kosovo's independence is internationally recognized now, this recent outbreak of violence will ex-plore into an all-out war. I grew up during the first Kosovo War, living in Montenegro, an independent country which borders Serbia, Kosovo and Al-bania. I know what the tensions between Serbians and Albanian Kosovars can result in. And the tension between these two groups now is eerily similar to that which developed during the 1990s, before the war broke out. What makes this bid for independence more serious than the last one is the number of coun-tries willing to recognize Kosovo. In 1999, only Albania did. This time, nine countries—including the United States, the UK—and France have already acknowl-edge Kosovo as an independent country. But Serbia, with the back-up of Russia, is willing to fight to keep Kosovo a part of Serbia. The last time Serbia fought to keep Kosovo, it ended in genocide.

Have Any Thoughts?

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THENEWCAMPUS .org
A few weeks ago, we snuck into the Hudson Yards and hoisted ourselves onto the deserted, elevated freight-train tracks that stretch all the way from Gansevoort St. to West 34th. We wandered through tall, white grass and discarded Budweiser cans, and marveled at the junkyards filled with abandoned backhoes and the large swaths of graffiti that border the tracks.

The last freight train to pass through here, in 1980, carried a load of frozen turkeys. Now, the tracks, built in 1930, look more like a playground for vagabonds than what the city’s park designers envision: an elevated, elegantly landscaped promenade featuring natural grasses, artificial wetlands and manicured gardens, similar to the Paris Promenade Plantée, the world’s only elevated public park. But, if all goes to plan, the first half of the new “Highline Park” will be open to the public this fall.

The Highline, owned by the city, will cost around $170 million to renovate. From what we saw, construction is moving along rather slowly, with only a few concrete slabs and one bench in place at the southern end of tracks. The concrete will be placed sporadically around the park as a walkway and are tapered at the ends in order to allow grass to poke through the pieces. In most places the future park reeks of airplane glue and gasoline, but on the other hand, it offers an unparalleled view of the West Side skyline—and a glance into the New York trapeze school.

When you walk through the plants that have grown up over the tracks and gaze across the rusted rails to the Hudson River, it is easy to imagine this industrial artifact becoming much more than a park. If the city sticks to its original plan of covering these unique 6.7 acres of aerial real estate with native grasses and other wildlife habitat, it could become a harbinger of a greener New York City.

We’re excited for the park to open, but at the same time the Highline is cool the way it is right now. Our advice: go and take a look for yourself, before it’s all cleaned up. Just make sure you don’t get caught.