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New Credit Card Rules Popular with NJCU Community

By Komal Zafar and Danielle Chruh

The New Jersey City University (NJCU) community is satisfied with the newly proposed credit card legislation known as the *Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009*, which was introduced in the House of Representatives as H.R. 627 and provides consumers with greater protection against excessive fees and interest rates.

The legislation, passed in the Senate on May 19, 2009 by a 90-5 margin, will fully take effect on February 22, 2010.

"I think that it [the legislation] may make them [the credit card issuers] more cautious at giving out credit cards and giving out limits," said Dr. Harris Hordon, Chairperson of the Economics Department.

"I very much supported the government effort to curb the abusive actions of credit card companies. The Congress is very much in favor of the public."

According to creditcardreform.org, a few provisions related to the legislation took effect in August 2009, for instance, increasing notice for rate inflation on future purchases, preserving the ability to pay off on the old terms, and providing sensible due dates and payment timetables.

"The government is finally pursuing a reform for the betterment of the people. It is a great opportunity for those consumers who are having trouble with late payments, high APR rates, and debts," said Jan-Francis Aniban, 22, a Finance major from Jersey City. "There are many people in the



Photo by abcnews.com

United States who have credit and debit cards, and through this legislation, they will feel a little relieved from the notorious practices of the credit card companies."

Here is an overall summary of the legislation:

-Restricts all interest rate during the first year—Credit Card issuers cannot increase interest rate

in the first year when the credit card account is opened unless the increase is under the variable interest rate, at the end of the promised time periods of the promotional rate, and if the required minimum payment is not received within 60 days after the due date.

-Restricts interest rate increases on existing balances—Credit

card issuers cannot raise interest rate on existing balances unless the increase is under a variable interest rate, the promised time periods for a promotional rate is coming to an end, the required minimum payments is not received within 60 days after the due date.

-Increases notice for rate in-

crease on future purchases—The card issuer can raise interest rate on future purchases with 45 days notice after the first year.

-Preserves the ability to pay off on old terms

-Places limits on fees and penalty interest—If the payment is not received within 60 days after the due date, the interest rate will go back to the original rate if the consumer has been paying on time for the last six months, no over-the-limit fees unless the consumer has asked for an account to be set up that way, penalty fees, such as late fee or over-the-limit fee, must be reasonable and proportional to the omission and violation, and two-cycle billing is prohibited.

-Requires issuers to consider consumer's ability to pay

-Requires fair application of payments

-Provides sensible due dates and time to pay

-Protects young consumers under the age of 21

-Prevents deceptive marketing of credit reports

-Restricts issuance fees on fee harvester cards

-Requires enhanced disclosures

-Establishes gift cards protection

"I feel that finally Congress has proposed concrete reforms that are in the interest of the consumer. For so long, credit card companies and banks have given the excuse for flexibility and innovation to provide services for their customers," said Demetrios Kapetanakos a full-time professor of the English Department.

"Yet, they use every trick in the

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"There are many people in the United States who have credit and debit cards, and through this legislation, they will feel a little relieved from the notorious practices of the credit card companies."

—Jan-Francis Aniban, 22,
Finance major, Jersey City

NJCU Lecture Series

Renowned Dignitary Clovis Maksoud speaks before NJCU Audience

By Michael Palomino

As 2009 winds down and the first decade of the 21st century comes to a close, the challenges facing The United States, the Middle East and the global community came to the fore as New Jersey City University hosted esteemed luminary, Ambassador Clovis Maksoud.

Ambassador Maksoud, a former ambassador for the League of Arab States at the United Nations and currently the director of the American University's Center for the Global South, spoke for roughly ninety minutes before an enthusiastic crowd of NJCU students and faculty.

The event kicked off with opening remarks by the Vice President of the Division of University Advancement, Khatmeh Osseiran-Hanna, whose department hosted the event. She was followed by Acting Assistant Dean, William

J. Maxwell College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Political Science, Dr. Francis Moran.

Before introducing the evening's guest speaker, Dr. Moran discussed the desperate state of affairs in the developing world, citing several sobering statistics, but went on to celebrate both the NJCU and Jersey City community for their diversity with respects to their significant Arab-American community.

Speaking as the representative of Center for the Global South, a

think-tank dedicated to analyzing the critical issues for developing nations – collectively known as the Global South - Ambassador Maksoud spoke of and identified the challenges facing the world, including the United States and the Middle East, in the 21st century.

For the ambassador the answer boiled down to two points: combating poverty and encouraging diversity.

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"Arabs and Muslims don't hate. They're angry. Anger is an invitation to dialog. Hatred is the conscious destruction of dialogue, of its possibility, of its consequentiality. Therefore anger is a legitimate pursuit to correct the causes of anger."

— His Excellency, Clovis Maksoud



Photo by Bill Wittkop

Executive Vice-President of the SGO, Sandra Barsoum, President of NJCU, Dr. Carlos Hernandez, Ambassador Clovis Maksoud, Acting Assistant Dean, William J. Maxwell College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Political Science, Dr. Francis Moran, Vice President of the Division of University Advancement, Khatmeh Osseiran-Hanna

NEWS

Revolution '67

NJCU Screens Local Filmmaker's Documentary

By Michael Palomino

Monday, November 16 – students arrived on the fourth floor of the Karnoutsos building this evening to attend a special screening of Revolution '67, a film that documents the 1967 Newark Riots.

For many New Jerseyans, particularly those generations born in the years following the five days that brought the city to the boiling point, the 1967 riots are an enigma; an episode in the state's history spoken of in hushed tones, if at all.

Interspersed among the archival footage of the era, the film explores the subject of the riots through interviews with local historians and key figures who were present during the riots. Among those figures were political activists Tom Hayden and Carol Glassman, historian and former National Guardsmen Paul Zigo who served in Newark during the riots, former Newark Mayor Sharpe James, and *The New York Times'* Bob Herbert, among others.

Together they bore testimony to the tensions and frustrations of a 1960s Newark divided by the racial pressures of the era.

Indeed, before the riots took place racial tensions had already been running high in a city known

for its corrupt government, run by then Mayor Hugh J. Addonizio.

Addonizio and his administration were responsible for numerous public projects like the UMDNJ that displaced thousands of black and other minority residents at the time. This, coupled with years of neglect of black residents, culminated when Addonizio appointed a white man to the Board of Education; the appointee, who lacked a college degree, was picked over a man who would be the state's first black certified public accountant.

These incidents alone did not result in the riot, but were merely a pretext to them.

It would not be until mid-July, when John Smith – a black taxicab driver – was stopped by Newark police for a traffic violation.

Rumors spread quickly that he had been beaten to death. (In fact,

he was still alive and taken to a local hospital for minor injuries.)

The rumors took on a life of their own, however, and spread among the city's black residents fed up with their mistreatment at the hands of Newark's authorities.

For five days the city was gripped by rioting and violence that claimed 26 lives, injured hundreds and caused millions of dollars of property damage.

During the riots, the National Guard was called in to quell the violence and enforce martial law, effectively turning the city into a war zone here at home, at a time when the Vietnam War was raging overseas.

One of the film's objectives was to dispel some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding the riots, among them, that the Newark riots were responsible for "white flight" – the term used to

"For many New Jerseyans, particularly those generations born in the years following the five days that brought the city to the boiling point, the 1967 riots are an enigma; an episode in the state's history spoken of in hushed tones, if at all."



Donated to Revolution '67 by Corbis-Bettmann

African-Americans jeering at National Guardsmen.

refer to the exodus of working and middle-class whites from Newark into the suburbs – a claim that the film shows as false.

The film argues that a federal loan program aimed at providing low interest-rate mortgages, which at the time were available only to whites, started the exodus decades prior to the riots.

As these residents left, Newark became more balkanized and the poor and the working-class minority residents were left with fewer jobs and opportunities, which – in the aftermath of the riots – would be one of the underlying causes highlighted in a Senate report which studied the riots.

At the conclusion of the screening, the filmmakers behind Revolution '67 – New Jersey

residents Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno and her husband Jerome Bongiorno took questions from the students in the audience.

The questions ranged in topic, dealing both with the film and current conditions such as crime and poverty in Newark and the surrounding areas.

The event was co-sponsored by the History and Sociology club and hosted by Dr. Timothy White, Assistant Professor of History and joined by Dr. Max Herman, Professor of Sociology and historian who has collected oral histories on the Newark riots.

Be sure to check out the documentary's website (www.bongiornoproductions.com/REVOLUTION_67) for more information on the film and the Newark Riots.

NJCU Lecture Series

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"We have to plant the seeds of future correctives of the imbalances that exist between south and north, and imbalances that exist within the south and north," which as an Arab spokesman, Maksoud claims personal insight into those imbalances: "Arabs are a rich nation of poor people."

Maksoud's commentary did not shy away from criticism of either the United States or the Arab states of the Middle East.

"Criticism is our weapon against self-destruction" he went on to add.

Moreover, Ambassador Maksoud suggested that civic engagement in the Arab world has revealed a dichotomy between those Arab/Muslim intellectuals and organizations that would effect positive changes in their respective nations and the systems of governance in the Arab world.

"In that respect, we discovered that the governments in the Arab world are legal – but not legitimate," said Maksoud, comparing those governments to Apartheid-era South Africa, which was treated as a legitimate member of the international community despite its system of institutional racism, while at the same time the African National Congress, the organization that opposed apartheid, was not always deemed legitimate by outside observers.

The challenge for the Arab world then, according to Maksoud, "is to render what is legitimate: legal. And what is legal: legitimate." But this he admitted would be a daunting task, "a



ahram.org

Ambassador Clovis Maksoud

struggle [that is] to a very large extent, unprecedented."

Reflecting on the attacks of September 11, which Maksoud referred to as a turning point for Arab-American relations, he recalled being asked: Why do Arabs and Muslims hate the United States?

"Arabs and Muslims don't hate. They're angry. Anger is an invitation to dialog. Hatred is the conscious destruction of dialog, of its possibility, of its consequentiality. Therefore anger is a legitimate pursuit to correct the causes of anger."

To which he noted, "Anger causes resistance; hatred causes terrorism."

It was this dialogue that he referred to as an opportunity for co-discovery and mutual understanding between the United States and the Arab world.

"The 21st century should not be the prisoner of September 11th"

Instead he suggested that the September 11, 2001 attacks were also a catalyst for an empowered Arab-Muslim intellectual and

cultural movement within the United States, demonstrating that Islam could be an integrated aspect of American multicultural society.

Ambassador Maksoud likened this phenomenon to the Civil Rights movement of the 20th century; as Black society existed under a dominant White culture, which gave way to a prevailing White culture until eventually the two societies were integrated so as to become a single, cohesive culture.

Similarly, as the United States continues to be the dominant global political culture it will transform itself from the dominant Western culture to a global, multicultural society.

"In a way – every country in the world, every [ethnicity], every religion belongs to the United States, and the United States now has become [part of] the world community."

Though Maksoud acknowledged there would still be tensions and disagreements, he concluded that "the thrust of history-making has now rendered the United States not the superpower but [a] great power."

Maksoud concluded that at this moment in history, society is at a crossroads.

"[This] university as well as this community, celebrates diversity. We not only co-exist, but co-discover each other. We therefore transcend co-existence. For in co-existence we remain insulated from each other, but we don't co-discover."

"That is the challenge of the new millennium, of the global America, we should undertake mutual discovery."

New Credit Card Rules

Continued from page 1

book to squeeze out pennies that would benefit their bottom line. Members of Congress are finally looking out for those who have voted them into the office rather than those that have made donations to their campaigns."

Stephanie Gonzalez, 22, a Psychology major from West New York said that the legislation is a great idea and keeps everyone updated. She mentioned that the legislation would help maintain good credit scores for consumers since the legislation places limits on late fees.

The NJCU community also took into consideration the legislature's attempt to protect young consumers.

Unlike its predecessor, the *Credit Cardholders Bill of Rights Act* of 2008, which limited special protection to consumers under the age of 18, the new legislation would grant special protections to consumers under the age of 21.

"Under 21 is a good idea because they [young consumers] are not careful with their purchases," said Dr. Bruce Chadwick, Professor of the English Department. "Look at the students of NJCU. They already have too many worries, and why should they be worried about their credit cards?"

"I am turning 21 in January [and] until then I can survive," said Salih Javid, 20, a Business Management major from Jersey City.

Dr. Francis Moran of the Political Science department said that it's a good idea to prevent students

from falling into a black hole, and the government is trying to make the policies clearer.

On November 12, the Federal Reserve took further steps to protect the consumers by announcing a new policy that addresses overdraft fees on ATM and debit card transactions.

According to npr.org, the Federal Reserve established the rule that beginning July 1, 2010, banks will not be allowed to charge consumers an overdraft fee unless the account holder has asked to be covered by the overdraft plan.

"I had an overdraft fee, and I was very upset," said Aniban. "That means I had to pay an extra 35 dollars from an overdraft fee."

"Although I think that those who get the overdraft fee should be more aware of their balance, the power to randomly enact fees should be stripped from the credit card companies," said Kapetanakos. "It is just another way for them to get the last cent for their bottom line."

Whether the new legislation will bring real reform is still the question on the minds of many consumers. Juan Arroyo, Assistant Director of Career and Placement department, believes that the responsibility lies with the consumer.

"If you're a responsible person, you will handle your credit responsibly," said Arroyo,

"If you don't and you have no concept of how banking works, then you're going to get in trouble."

For more information on the "Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009," visit <http://www.creditcardreform.org/pdf/credit-card-bill-2009.pdf>.

OPINION

Abortion and Health Care Reform *Considering the Merits of the Stupak Amendment*

By Joseph Sforza

It was the fall of 2006 when I entered New Jersey City University as a naïve and persuadable college freshman; nevertheless, I possessed firm convictions, one of which inevitably surfaced in my Contemporary Moral Issues class, wherein we explored several ethical subjects, their controversies and their possible effects on societies.

Today, the debate still rages over the subject of abortion, as evidenced in the Stupak amendment in the House of Representatives health care reform bill, HR 3962.

The amendment, primarily sponsored by Representative Bart Stupak (D-Mich.), states, “no funds authorized or appropriated by this Act (or an amendment made by this Act) may be used to pay for any abortion or to cover any part of the costs of any health plan that includes coverage of abortion,” except when a woman’s life is in danger or when the pregnancy follows from rape or incest.

By definition, to amend something involves a revision, which, in legislation, makes something more neutral, precise and informed. The Stupak amendment, which passed 240 to 194 in the House, certainly would appease middle-of-the-road, pro-life democrats. But conservative Republicans, who support privatized healthcare and insurance plans,

correctly see it as cunning trickery by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and liberal leaders on Capitol Hill.

Conservative Republicans see the Stupak amendment as a way to swindle unsuspecting conservative members of Congress into endorsing the Democratic version of health care reform.

As a conservative, I oppose both abortion and HR 3962, its stated purpose is “[t]o provide affordable, quality health care for all Americans and reduce the growth in health care spending...”

In order to implement a bigger health care plan, however, the government must raise taxes and spend more, as is the case in more socialized countries around the world, thereby invalidating and contradicting the claim pushed by Democratic leaders that expanding health care could cut costs.

I am not arguing that our current system is perfect, but that it’s preferable.

Yes, it is expensive, but it’s exceptional. If, god-forbid, a pandemic spread throughout the classrooms of NJCU, every student would have access to immediate treatment at nearby

hospitals.

Because the governments in socialized countries pay for health-care, time in the doctor’s office must be rationed, causing throngs of people to impatiently wait for needed checkups, prescriptions, and medical advice. In America, our competitive system keeps health care prices in check and doctors readily available.

If the government truly cares for the health of women, it would prevent them from even having abortions, which are most often the result of irresponsible behavior and are followed by painful regret and deep depression. Sorrow, anger and shame are so pervasive in the lives of women who have had abortions that Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS) has been unofficially coined to describe the emotional condition.

In an anonymous statement meandering throughout the Internet, someone wrote, “Everyone who supported slavery was free. Everyone who supports abortion was born. That’s how oppression works. They’re not really people! We’ve heard that before!”

Nearly fifty million babies have been murdered since *Roe v. Wade*,

Conservative Republicans see the Stupak amendment as a way swindle unsuspecting conservative members of Congress into endorsing the Democratic version of health care reform.

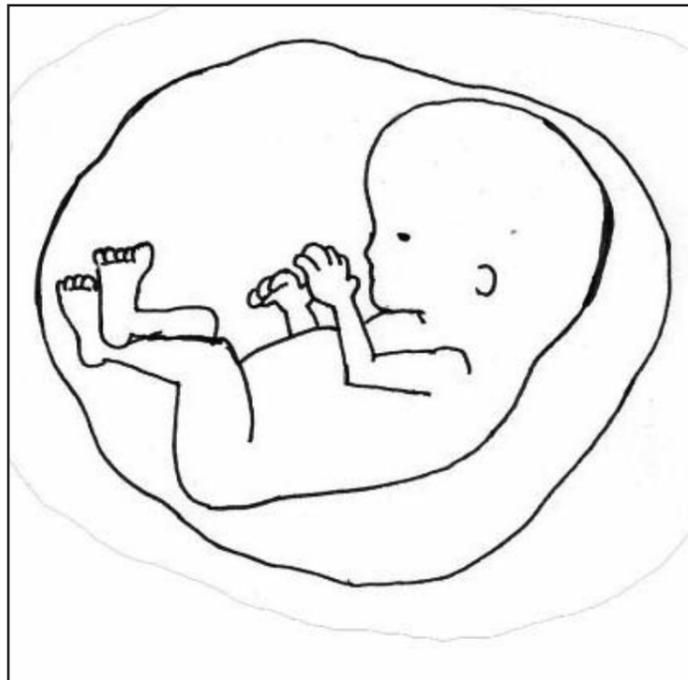


Illustration by Abdoulaye Camara/The Gothic Times

the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court case which ruled abortion to be legal. My case against abortion is uncomplicated and straightforward: since human life begins at conception, abortion is murder, and murder is utterly immoral.

The only way to avoid this contention is to assert that the unborn are not individuals. The trouble with that assertion is that the only “beings” that fetuses can be are human beings. Saying they are not is an irrational rationalization.

I highly oppose health care re-

form as proposed by the Democrats in both chambers of Congress, for it is, in actuality, costly and inefficient, and the attempt to create a compromise through the Stupak amendment is disingenuous. However, my conviction about abortion is stronger than that which opposes socialized medicine.

If health care reform passes in the House as well as the Senate, I would undoubtedly hope that the Stupak amendment is part of the package.

New Jersey Stuck with Christie

By Jan Aguilos

The question of “What now?” always emerges after the election of a new leader in any government. Since I’m a true-blue Democrat, this question sticks out in my mind even more when I think of Chris Christie’s recent election as New Jersey governor.

I know that Jon Corzine isn’t the most loved figure among those at New Jersey City University, being that the unions for the faculty and staff felt ignored by him, but he’s better than the new guy.

As many eye rolls as Corzine gets from disenchanted voters, Chris Christie is a downgrade. Christie will take office in Trenton on January 19 as a man who didn’t run on ideas. He just ran as the guy who wasn’t Corzine. This may have been a winning campaign strategy but it’s short on solutions.

Christie wisely ran as a fiscal conservative, with voters worrying about property taxes and high tolls on the highways. But New Jersey is dealing with a \$1 billion budget deficit for the current fiscal year and independent projections suggest that it will

get much worse as time goes by. If Corzine, a former CEO of Goldman Sachs, couldn’t avoid this fiscal mess, what can Christie do to alleviate the state’s fiscal troubles?

His only call on the economy is to cut taxes, that crowd-pleasing proclamation that’s a tried and true G.O.P. cliché.

And it’s funny how Christie blamed all of New Jersey’s economic travails on Corzine when the nation-wide Great Recession started under the watch of his former boss, President George W. Bush.

Let’s not forget that Christie has long followed the ideas of the Republicans. He was a top fund-raiser for George Bush in 2000, after all.

Bush would later appoint him as the U.S. District Attorney of New Jersey, Christie’s most prestigious feather in his cap. Well, corruption-buster and Bush appointee seem like diametrically

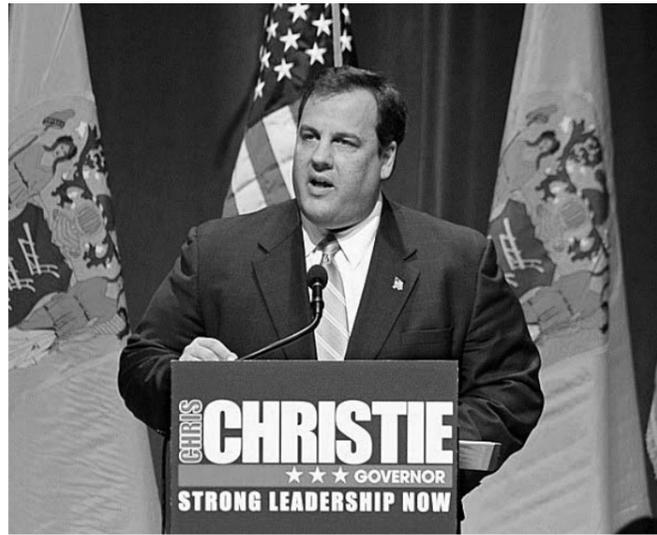
opposed roles to me.

There’s also the incident of Christie not disclosing a \$46,000 loan to Michelle Brown, a former employee at the District Attorney’s office. Isn’t investigating murky financial dealings of other politicians something that occupied a lot of his time as D.A.?

I guess there’s one set of rules for others and another set of rules for Mr. Christie.

As much as Christie wants to pretend that he’s non-partisan, his history of Republican cronyism is obvious. Karl Rove actually admitted to giving him advice on running for governor while he was still District Attorney. Karl Rove!

I feel like we’ve seen this movie before and we all know how it’s going to end. A Republican comes into office as a maverick or corruption buster or fiscal conservative and we quickly realize well into the term that



christiefornj.com

Governor-Elect Chris Christie

they’re just the same old Republican bloviators we’re all too familiar with.

Judging from some of his ads, Chris Christie thought that he was the “Change” candidate and even had the gall to use clips of Obama’s inspirational speeches in his TV ads. However, Obama endorsed Corzine and gave him fulsome praise, not Christie. If you want a good laugh, go on Youtube and watch videos of Christie appropriating Obama’s

“Change” theme.

I think Christie wants us to forget that he disagrees with Obama on most issues, but it didn’t fool me. Nevertheless, he convinced enough New Jerseyans that he was the best choice for governor.

But can I see any good in Christie being our governor? Well, he’ll share one thing with Jon Corzine: he’ll only last four years. New Jersey will want another change in 2013.

Christie will take office in Trenton on January 19 as a man who didn’t run on ideas. He just ran as the guy who wasn’t Corzine.

ENTERTAINMENT

Holiday Movie Preview

By Zeba Blay

The Holiday season is officially upon us, and besides shelling out millions of dollars on presents; the public will open their wallets for the gaggle of blockbusters and Oscar hopefuls being cranked out this winter. But which ones are actually worth watching?

Precious (Nov. 20)

If you're looking for a good cry, check out this gritty tearjerker, starring newcomer Gabourey Sidibe as an overweight, illiterate, pregnant, and sexually abused teen living in the slums of New York. It sounds like an overall downer – but the film has an uplifting message, and heart wrenching performances by Sidibe, Mo'Nique, and Paula Patton.

Everybody's Fine (Dec. 4)

Interestingly enough, the only other movie out this season that even mentions a winter holiday. In this heartwarming comedy, Robert De Niro plays a widower who goes on a cross-country road trip to reconnect with his children for the holidays.

The Lovely Bones (Dec. 11)

Director Peter Jackson has left Middle Earth for Heaven in this adaptation of Alice Sebold's novel about a 14 year-old girl who is murdered by a neighbor and, from her own private heaven, looks down on the lives of those she's left behind. Expect stunning visuals and a strong performance from lead actress Saoirse Ronan (*Atonement*).



Princess and the Frog – Disney, 2009

The Princess and the Frog (Nov. 25)

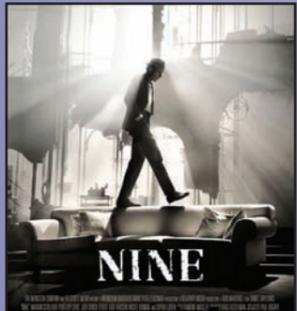
For your inner-child, check out Disney's new landmark animated movie. Set in 1920s New Orleans, it's a fairytale about a frog prince (voiced by Bruno Campos) who needs a kiss from a beautiful girl, Tiana (voiced by actress Anika Noni Rose), to become human again. Only things don't go exactly to plan when she turns into a frog as well.

A Christmas Carol (Nov. 26)

If you're a lover of the quintessential holiday movie, there is the Robert Zemeckis directed *A Christmas Carol*, a computer animated retelling of the famous Dickens story. Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three ghosts who teach him the true meaning of Christmas, and Jim Carrey's s incredible voice-acting in nearly all the roles brings this darker version of the story to life.



A Christmas Carol – Disney, 2009



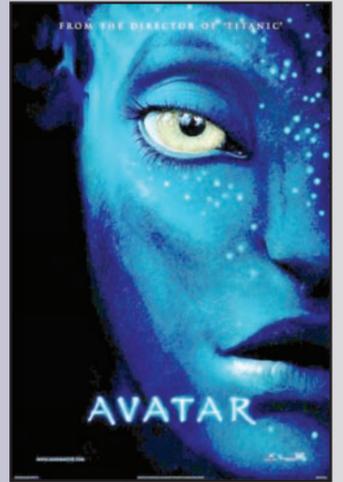
Nine – The Weinstein Company, 2009

Nine (Dec. 18)

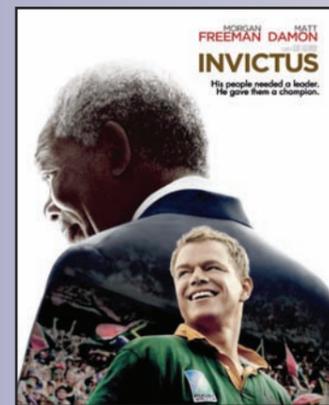
From the makers of *Chicago* comes a glitzy musical chock-full of Hollywood's A-list. Daniel Day-Lewis is an Italian film director who struggles to juggle the women in both his professional and personal lives. You'll come for the great music and glamorous scenery; you'll stay for stellar performances by Nicole Kidman and Marion Cotillard.

Avatar (Dec. 18)

Avatar is director James Cameron's latest stab at box office gold, and it sure does have all the ingredients for success. It's a futuristic love story of epic proportions, starring Sam Worthington as a paraplegic ex-Marine who goes to an exotic planet called Pandora, where the military has declared war on the planet's blue, cat-like humanoid race that are getting in the way of valuable resources. Just as crazy as it sounds, but awesome special effects and action sequences make it worthwhile.



Avatar – 20th Century Fox, 2009



Invictus – Warner Bros., 2009

Invictus (Dec. 11)

The frontrunner for this year's Oscar race, *Invictus* tells the inspiring true story of Nelson Mandela (played by Morgan Freeman), the former South African president, and how he united a post-apartheid ravaged nation by rallying the country's rugby team during the 1995 World Cup.

Sherlock Holmes (Dec. 25)

Opening Christmas day, this action-comedy starring Robert Downey Jr. as the title character is full of more thrills than you'll probably remember from the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. If you're expecting a stately fellow with a handlebar moustache and a monocle, look elsewhere – this edge-of-your-seat, Guy Ritchie-directed blockbuster is much naughtier than it is nice.



Sherlock Holmes – Warner Bros., 2009

PATHS: Student Penned Poetry and Prose

By Efrain Calderon, Jr.

On Tuesday November 17, NJCU students gathered to enjoy readings of original works by their peers included in the 2008-2009 edition of *PATHS*, a student journal of creative writing. *PATHS* collects pieces from over thirty NJCU students submitted via e-mail or worked on during various creative writing and poetry classes on campus.

Associate Professor Tan Lin and Associate Professor Ethan Bummas, both members of the English Department, helped publish the student journal. Despite the wide range of voices in the journal, there's an ever-present grittiness and unabashed honesty throughout.

At first the journal's structure, alternating from poetry and prose, was tough to cope with. While reading, I found that I would have to switch my approach constantly.

Professor Bummas explained, "The narrative pieces when combined, might make for a very

slight narrative...and the special section and the poems can be read as sort of interludes between the fiction pieces; or the other way around, with the prose being interludes between poems, or the entire journal being a feature of personal essays surrounded by fiction and poetry."

It then became clear that what was being presented, though a collection, was also very effective as a whole. Being more music minded, I started to relate the journal to a sort of "text-based mix-tape." The perfect mix-tape should have variety but shared lyrical themes or musical structures bring it all together.

I noticed certain words (pony, raisin, dough nut, manhole) repeated frequently in a lot of the avant-garde abstract poems. I felt a little silly approaching Professor Tan Lin about my discovery, wondering if it was just an odd coincidence.

My suspicion was confirmed when Professor Lin explained that he uses rule bound composition, challenging students to use prepared words in a set order.

"Each student is, in a sense, solving the same "problem," students can see how other students dealt with specific words. Then we can have a discussion of whether words were camouflaged or stuck out in the context of a poem, and whether this was a good or bad thing," explained Professor Lin.

The first pieces in the journal have linear stories, but slowly *PATHS* introduces abstract experimental pieces before the special section of personal essays begins.

Robert Lombardi's essay, "Mountains or Teacups?" recalls childhood memories with adult nostalgia. The essays that follow are heart wrenching, and explore the clash between adolescence and adulthood in the midst of urban dysfunction.

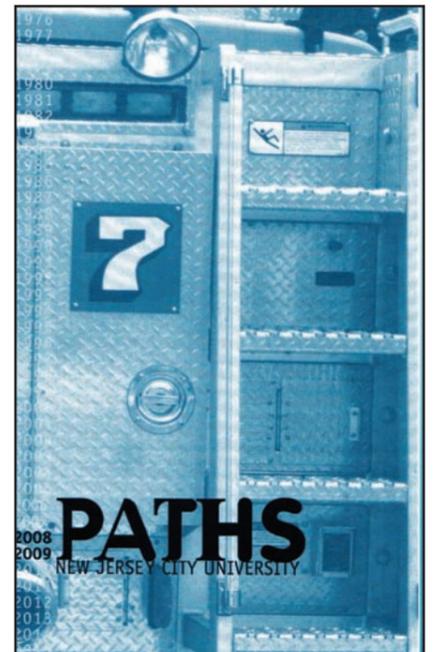
Krystal Sital's essay, "Thread-thin Bloodlines" feels like the journal's main course. Sital's descriptions are striking, jarring, and beautiful. Sookdeo Mungroo, a character from the essay, is presented as both a menacing husband and an aging vulnerable grandfather. Sital does a great job

of preserving a fair and honest look at abuse, intent, and morality.

Julia Gilchrist's poem "Fake Love" exposes the mind of a drug dealer with bombastic and clever lines. Cutting through the word-play are blunt assertions that jump off the page and bring this anonymous predator to life.

Joan Levine's "Cuttle Bone" reads a bit like the rule bound compositions, but has an oblique narrative that challenged me to decipher it. One line "Ex-con boyfriend needs beer" at once marries tragedy and comedy.

Though I found much of the abstract poems tough to follow, I could still appreciate the poetic devices used within them. Being unaware of many modern poetry movements, I feel a preface might have been helpful if maneuvering through the rule bound compositions. The inclusion of such a preface, however, would have disrupted the flow of the journal as a



Design and Cover Photo by Ellen Quinn

whole.

One might feel compelled to ask about the different styles of poetry within, or wonder whether some of the stories are fictitious or factual. The journal doesn't explain it all – it's not a textbook – instead, *PATHS* prompts curiosity and succeeds in showcasing some of the university's great writers.

EDITORIAL

Two Sides of the Same Coin

The Parallels between Fundamentalists and Militant Atheists

By Michael Palomino

At this moment a battle rages, a sectarian battle that has intensified over time. Yet, this skirmish is not taking place on the streets of Baghdad, Kabul or Tehran; it is taking place on the Internet – on YouTube, blogs and message boards – as well as on university and college campuses all across the country.

Its participants are fighting for the hearts and minds *and* souls of those who would listen to them.

At issue in this on-going war of words is the very existence of God.

Once the province of scholars and theologians, the debate is now open to anyone with an Internet connection. While the debates between atheists and theists are not new, their proliferation has caused them to devolve into invective-filled shouting matches.

Websites like Amazon.com have become popular with atheist and theist alike, lobbing broadsides at each other over reviews for books on Christian apologetics and Atheist-penned critiques on religion.

The video-sharing site, YouTube, has also become a popular battleground for these debates. Some YouTube members have fostered a small-but-significant following producing videos refuting the others' arguments.

The results aren't always pretty; indeed they can be downright ugly or embarrassing.

One particular example shows Evangelical Christian Ray Comfort in a now-infamous video opposite Kirk Cameron (the former sitcom actor who played Mike Seaver on TV's *Growing Pains*). Comfort holds up a household banana and triumphantly claimed its ergonomic and nutritional qualities as evidence of intelligent design; the fact that our modern-day banana is the product of thousands of years of cultivation and manipulation by human beings seems to have escaped Comfort. Comfort has since recanted this claim.

However, non-believers are not without their own problems.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 by religious extremists gave renewed currency to the "New Atheism" movement - led by such notables as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens – that goes beyond the humanistic goal for a secular and just society

Richard Dawkins, in particular, has spearheaded this new militant brand of atheism. Through his books he has encouraged his fans-turned-followers to confront people of faith; essentially encouraging his readers to proselytize atheism.

Moreover, what is witnessed among the most devout of these solipsistic materialists is a nihilistic desire to not just do away with religion (organized or otherwise) but with anything not based in verifiable fact in the stoic belief that this is what is best for humanity.

For many of these new atheists, you may as well toss Plato, Aristotle and Descartes on the pyres along with the Torah, the Bible

and the Qur'an.

It seems these non-believers have forgotten or overlooked the insight of nineteenth century Russian anarchist and atheist Mikhail Bakunin who wrote in his treatise *God and the State* - "Science is the compass of life; but it is not life itself."

Bakunin understood that science, like religion, could easily be substituted in place of moral or political authority. As an anarchist Bakunin regarded any authority with suspicion and recognized the dangers of a society or state whose legitimacy was couched in science. He concluded: "the only mission of science is to enlighten life, not to govern it."

The new atheists, on the other hand, have elevated science and have turned it into its own belief system.

They have replaced one God with another; supplanting reason with dogma, and ultimately forgetting that reason and logic are a means to an end not an end unto themselves.

What we see then when we compare these two extremes side-by-side is that they share more in common than they would care to admit. Each side seeks to subvert the debate with arbitrary or reductionist arguments, in effect, they are trying to end the debate before it's over.

To quote Shakespeare, much of the fault for this mess, *lies not in our stars, but in ourselves*. After all, each of us at one time or another have been tempted by the easy target that theist and atheist alike have created: the two-dimensional caricature of the "Superman" God.

Believers all too often uphold this notion of a magical being, who - like some comic-book hero - can bend the laws of time & space to save someone from running late for work but who is indifferent enough to allow childhood cancer and natural disasters.

Indeed, it is this very same cartoon-God that atheists repeatedly use as fodder for their straw-man refutations of religion.

This caricature emerges from our "remarkably undeveloped — even primitive [understanding of God]" according to *A History of God* author Karen Armstrong writing for the *Wall Street Journal*. This primitive view is what maintains the debate stagnant, instead of allowing it to flourish into greater personal understanding.

The solution then, for those of us who wish to avoid picking sides in this clamorous debate, is to speak up and confront the participants for their narrow-mindedness.

Those who profess faith should reject the anti-intellectual and anti-science currents that have come to dominate much of religious thought of the last century; they should reject the cartoon depiction of God-as-Superman and, instead, seek to develop a better understanding of God by asking those questions which religion has yet to answer adequately (such as the question of suffering).

Non-believers and skeptics

should be wary of those who would couch all their answers in the cold logic of science. Science will likely never answer questions of a *human dimension*, those aspects of human life that are ineffable and outside the bounds of the material world, yet exist on some level, and are no less valid.

Atheists would do well to remember that it is this human quality that reason and logic, like faith, can easily be subverted for malicious ends. To think otherwise is hubris.

In the end, we must not let these warring factions frame the debate as an either/or argument. Their polarizing rhetoric is a disservice to all moderates, be they spiritual agnostics or classical humanists.

There is nothing in evolution or cosmology that refutes or contradicts the existence of the divine; nor does the acceptance of science in any way diminish the majesty and integrity of our humanity or of creation.

Those who argue otherwise are revealing their own insecurities.

What we – as individuals – must do is to imagine greater. We must challenge ourselves and ask the hard questions. We must not allow ourselves to be penned in by those who would settle the argument for us.

We must keep the participants honest, our hearts and minds open and always hold skeptical the words of anyone, be they theist or atheist, who would claim to have all the answers.

WGKR, Reconsider Your Programming

By Patrick Jarkowsky

I often read the fliers posted on various billboards around the NJCU campus. Mostly, these fliers appear to be promoting normal, college themed events such as, "Come Out and Support the Psychology Club" or "Help Us Celebrate Multicultural Month." But when I came across a recent flier posted by the official radio station of New Jersey City University, WGKR, I was both shocked and disgusted.

The flier reads as follows:

**Gothic Knight Radio presents
DIRT**

**Someone you want to air out?
Know something you shouldn't?
Send us an email**

At first, I thought the flier might have been posted without the permission of the Student Government Organization (SGO). Unfortunately, I was incorrect. In the bottom right hand corner the official stamp of the SGO is clearly visible.

However, my real concern over the posting of this flier is not whether it had the approval of the SGO (I'll get to that point later), but rather the public safety and legal ramifications or "airing out" private information over the airwaves.

Haven't we learned that people who are teased or publicly embarrassed often lash out at those who have made *public* their *private* information? Do the student leaders of WGKR think that it's wise to set up a system whereby students can spread rumors about other students?

And if you think I'm being an

alarmist, consider these few scenarios:

What happens if a scorned girlfriend decides to divulge the private, possibly embarrassing information of her ex-boyfriend? Will he seek retribution? Will he find her and take out his embarrassment on her or will he find someone else to do it for him?

What happens if a student who is struggling with his or her sexual identity is publicly "outed" on WGKR? Will he or she find it hard to deal with the idea that everyone now knows his or her private business?

At the LGBT Flag Raising ceremony last month, Director of Hudson Pride Connections, Nancy Caamano, a former NJCU student, stated, "I remember being nervous about signing up for Gay and Lesbian Literature because I was worried that everyone would then know [about my sexual identity]."

Should we leave the decision to "come out" up to students like Nancy or is it WGKR's responsibility to make the decision for them?

What happens if a student's private medical information is "aired out"? What if the student decided to have an abortion or was considering a sex change operation? Does the NJCU community have the right to this information?

If any of these scenarios were to occur, they would more than likely be followed by legal action against the University.

As for the SGO, you are the leaders of this University. You should be looking out for the concerns of the students as well as the University. By

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Letters to the Editor can also be sent to gothictimes@njcu.edu. All letters must be typed and include full name, age, major/occupation, class year, and hometown. A letter submission does not guarantee publication. *The Gothic Times* looks forward to hearing from you.

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Corrections/Retractions

In our November issue, we neglected to give credit to the *New York Times* for the use of the demographics images in our coverage of the New Jersey gubernatorial race.

We also made a factual error in our headline "Mr. Christie Comes to Trenton: Republican Statewide Victory First in Seven Years." The headline should have read; "Republican Statewide Victory First in Twelve Years."

In our article "The Rainbow in the

Sky: NJCU Honors the LGBT Community" we mistakenly reported that the representative from Jersey City Gay and Lesbian Outreach (JCLGO) was John Mendoza when in fact his name is Paul Mendoza.

In our article "In/Out Up/Down Over/Under Jared Martin Memorial Exhibition" we incorrectly identified one of the organizers as Laura Krepacher when in fact her last name is Krapacher.

allowing this flier to be posted and therefore extending your tacit endorsement of the program, you've left students open to public ridicule, possible blackmail, and the threat of violent retribution while simultaneously leaving the University open to legal damage.

And for those who would argue on WGKR's behalf, if you feel that they would never divulge the information that I've mentioned above, and I will admit that the scenarios I've outlined are quite extreme, then what is the purpose of this program? Is it to divulge trivial information? If so, then I have to ask, why is WGKR so concerned with the private lives of the NJCU community? What right do they have to divulge *any* private information?

I understand that the above scenarios may have never entered the minds of the creators of DIRT, the leaders of WGKR, or the SGO, and having met many of these individuals, I don't believe them to be irresponsible or reckless, but the mere possibility of these scenarios makes this program a bad idea.

Our privacy may have been whittled away thanks to President George W. Bush and the telecommunications companies that followed his orders, the Internet, *TMZ* and *US Weekly*, and social networking sites such as Facebook, but that shouldn't excuse the actions of WGKR.

So please, WGKR, with all due respect, keep your nose out of the private business of the NJCU community and do what a radio station is supposed to do.

LIFESTYLE

Giving As A Form of Living NJCU Students Lend A Helping Hand

By Joseph Sforza

When familiar carols resonate in shopping malls, wintry sweaters pervade every social gathering, and holiday leftovers occupy entire refrigerators, 'tis certainly the season to be jolly, and for most members of the NJCU community, the holiday season is marked by a resurgence of goodwill towards humanity.

"The holidays are a time to give without remembering and receive without forgetting," said Robert Quinones, Assistant Director of

the Office of Campus Life at New Jersey City University.

When the homeless freeze along busy highways, children are deprived of adequate clothing, and refrigerators don't work because the electricity bill wasn't paid, it is certainly a time for those who have to remember those who lack. In response to this need, many clubs at NJCU have partnered with philanthropic organizations to host a variety of charitable outreaches and campaigns.

"It [the holiday season] is also a time of giving. That's why we get bonuses, so we can give back to our communities," reasoned senior Nastassja Torres, 23, an Economics, Finance and English major from Bayonne.

On Thanksgiving Eve, the Salvation Army of Jersey City hosted its annual community dinner in which NJCU students and other volunteers served hot and tasty meals to droves of Jersey City residents.

Throughout the month of November, The Center for Community Service and Volunteerism (CCSV) spearheaded a canned-food drive, the collections of which were given to the Salvation Army to distribute at their dinner; CCSV also collected frozen turkeys, giving them to the disadvantaged.

In partnership with Jersey Cares, a non-profit affiliate of the Hands on Network, NJCU clubs and organizations will also collect unsullied winter coats for the third annual Operation Warm Coat Drive. Coats may be brought to the Office of Campus Life, Monday through Friday, between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm until December 15.

The ensuing winter break will provide NJCU students with much needed R & R (rest and relaxation) from a hectic semester filled with onerous homework, punishing exams, and tiring term papers. As families reunite with their college pupils, it's important to remember that the human race is one huge family, which should care for its members, especially in times of need.

NJCU volunteers have stretched



Courtesy of Urban Mission Photography

Young girl helps bring in people for the community breakfast.



Courtesy of Urban Mission Photography

College students offer Jersey City residents a free community breakfast, sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ of NJCU.

What You Didn't Know About New Year's Resolutions

By Ameer Gronczewski

January 1 is coming up fast and a new year is a fresh start for everyone. We hear our friends and family declaring what they want to change or what they hope to accomplish during the upcoming year. New Year's resolutions seem like a great way to better oneself, but from where did the tradition of making New Year's resolutions originate?

The Romans started the tradition in 153 B.C. Janus, a mythical Roman king with two faces, was placed at the head of the Roman calendar. With one face he would look at the past and with the other towards the future. Janus was also the god of beginnings, and the guardian of doors and entrances. The Romans traditionally asked for forgiveness from their enemies of the past year.

The week between Christmas and the New Year is a time when people reflect upon the events of the past year and start thinking about how they want to change the future.

During this time, everyone is deciding what it is that he or she wants to change for the upcoming New Year. The most popular resolutions are to lose weight, quit smoking, and more generally, to be a better person.

"I'm going to try to make it to the gym at least three times a week," says Pelliccio, 21, a Fire Science major from Bayonne.

"My feelings on resolutions, personally, are that I set goals, but I don't follow through," says Nicole Garcia, 21, an Education and Psychology major from Bayonne.

"I would like to eat better, get in shape, and not be so lazy. But, with a busy schedule, I probably won't keep my resolution."

Others, like Dr. Laura Wadenpfehl, and Charlene Otero have mixed feelings on making New Year's resolutions.

"My resolution is to read Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* also known as *Remembrance of Things Past*," declares Dr. Laura

Wadenpfehl, Assistant Professor of the English Department.

"I don't believe in making resolutions every year because people break them – I break them – so I think that if we really want to change something in our lives, whatever moment we're at is the time to do it and not to wait for an artificial day to do so."

"I don't really make resolutions every year and when I do, I don't keep them," said Charlene Otero, a member of the English Department staff.

"A lot of people say they want to lose weight and live healthy, but I just don't make them."

Most of us make New Year's resolutions and many will keep them during the year while others will not. What is your resolution going to be?



By Alissa Koval-Dhaliwal, Ph.D.

Ask NJCU students what images come to mind when they think of the "holiday season" and you're likely to hear about shopping excursions, decorating, parties, family gatherings, religious observances, cooking, and gift exchanges. However, for many of us, holidays can also be draining, disappointing, lonely and tense.

Inability to be with loved ones, financial worries due to increased spending, family conflicts, increased demands on one's time, and not having enough personal space can all contribute to stress overload. Being realistic about one's expectations can help reduce stress overload.

Here are some things you can do to help keep the "holiday blues" in check:

Don't aim for "the best holiday season ever." This is a set up for disappointment.

Be practical about what you can and can't do. Make sure what you commit to is truly manageable, given your daily obligations.

Break larger tasks down into smaller tasks and pace yourself.

Plan a holiday budget and stick to it. In addition to gift expenditures, account for the "hidden costs" of extra transportation use, celebratory foods and beverages, charitable donations, extra phone calls to friends and family, greeting cards, and postage.

Consider some festive activities that incur little spending, such as attending public school concerts, walking or driving around to view holiday decorations in your neighborhood, or going to New York City to enjoy store window displays.

Spend time with supportive people. If you're unable to be with loved ones, reach out to others who may be in the same position and make a plan to keep each other company.

Watch your alcohol intake. Remember that alcohol is a depressant, and excess drinking will leave you feeling tired and rundown.

Do something for others who are experiencing misfortune in their lives. Helping others gives us a sense of meaning and purpose, distracts us from our own troubles and helps us to recognize the things we are grateful for in our own lives.

Take care of your body. It may be tempting to overindulge in holiday treats or to skip workouts, but healthy eating and exercise plans are great buffers against stress.

Celebrate the holidays in new ways. Developing fresh traditions can be as enjoyable as participating in old ones. Change is a part of life. Even when we don't choose it, we can empower ourselves by taking an active approach in adjusting to the transformation.

"The holidays are a time to give without remembering and receive without forgetting."

—Robert Quinones,
Assistant Director of the
Office of Campus Life
at NJCU

out hands of compassion and will continue to do so throughout the year, with outreaches such as Habitat for Humanity and Hudson Cradle. For some, volunteerism is a day-to-day lifestyle; they've realized that there are a great number of Americans in need of assistance and have chosen to devote ample time to helping them. Whatever one does for a living, and whatever activities are lined up for winter break, the holiday season is a timely reminder to self-reflect on one's selflessness.

Arts

Spotlight on a NJCU Artist: Richard Ryals

Artist's Statement

A semi-sweet chocolate landscape melts over the crème brûlée foam of the Hudson River. A colorized photo of Roy Hargrove swings while an African drummer beats the sky into an egg-white froth. Artistic impulses draw me closer to my subjects as I unleash a barrage of shots that corals the crowd. Close up shots, wide angle volleys, and macro compositions click clack until I exhaust my memory card. Like a border collie, I can't help circling my flock, vigilantly watching for strays.

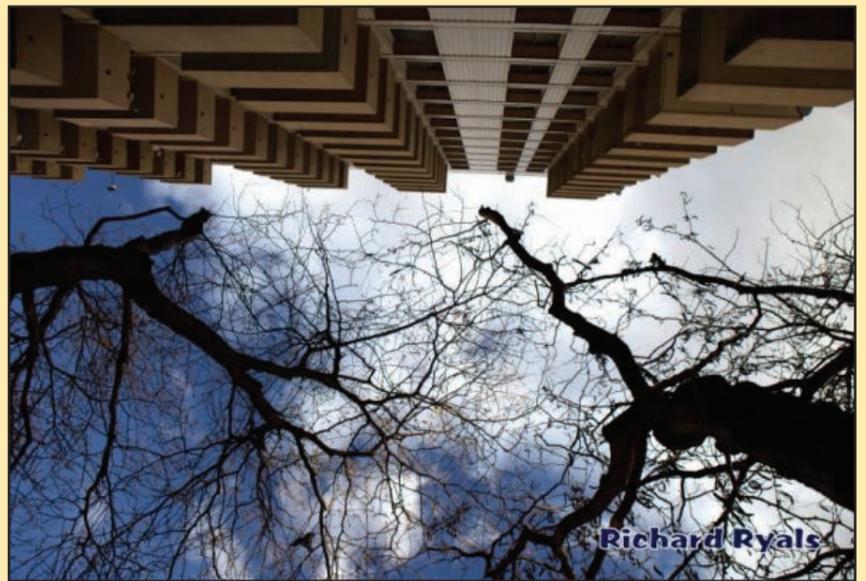
Photography is the perfect outlet for aggression. My Neanderthal impulses add color to

my landscapes with hope and fierce determination. It is well known that cavemen were cultured and helped to propagate art. The caveman in me was given life by art.

I am evangelizing about art as a therapeutic means to redemption, a useful way to pass the time, and a great way to meet good people. I would not have believed in the message had I not experienced art for myself. Art is a sweet chocolate landscape that has fed me when no other food would satisfy me. As my eyes feast on the landscape, my soul is full, my awareness is keen and my heart rejoices. Experience art!



Photographs by Richard Ryals



Richard Ryals

Resources for Artists

By Moustapha Camara

If you're looking to advance your art career, improve your skills, earn some extra cash doing art, or if you're simply curious about the art world, you should check out these valuable online resources.

You can submit your t-shirt designs and illustrations for a chance at winning cash to these t-shirt design competition sites:

- Threadless.com
- DesignbyHumans.com
- Cameesa.com
- Teetonic.com
- Lafraise.com

You can show off your artwork on these sites for feedback and criticism:

- DeviantArt.com
- AmateurIllustrator.com
- Artspace.com
- DigitalWebbing.com/forums

You can bid on jobs and projects for companies looking to hire freelance artists on these sites:

- Guru.com
- Elance.com

You can get valuable info by reading articles on these websites:

- T-ShirtMagazineOnline.com (my website)
- HowtoStartaClothingCompany.com
- GoMediazine.com
- HongKiat.com
- SmashingMagazine.com

A Woman with Many Faces

By Jessica Nelson

On Thursday, November 12, Maya Lilly's one-woman play, *Mixed*, was presented at the Margaret Williams Theatre. NJCU alumna, Christina Moses, was the star of the production, a collage of eight multi-racial characters that share their individual narratives.

The play's author and original star of *Mixed*, Maya Lilly, utilizes media and performance art as a platform for her social activism. She composed these narratives out of more than 200 interviews in which she posed the question, "What are you?" We soon learn that this simple question has complicated answers.

Christina Moses proves to be a talented and versatile actress as she slipped off one character's skin and transitioned into another. Throughout her performance, Ms. Moses took on the persona of these diverse characters who varied in race, age, gender and sexuality.

Although there were minimal props, two chairs for the set, and costume changes limited to a bandana and a few hats, Moses

crafted each story so vividly that you saw the character's world from their perspective.

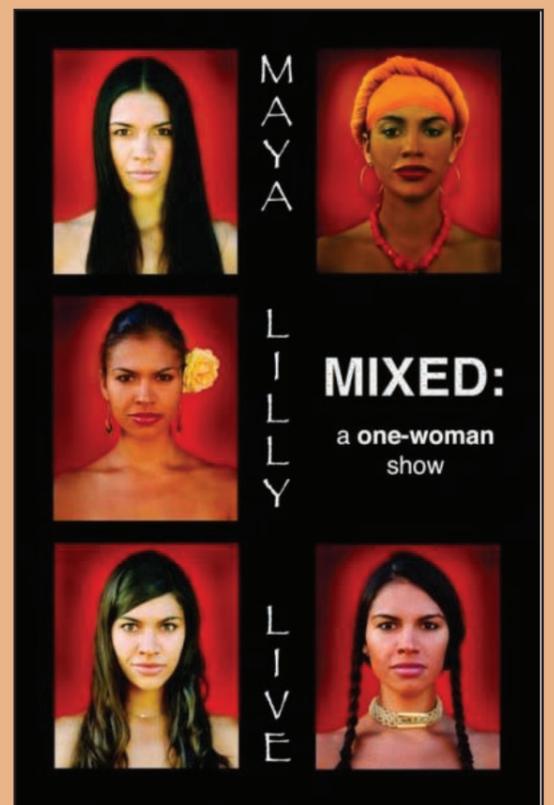
The play depicts the adversity faced by its characters confined to a single body but inhabiting separate racial, cultural or sexual identities. Their encounters reflect the isolation and confusion experienced when their different identities pull them in opposite directions.

The narratives range from the difficulty of having to check the "Other" box on a government Census form to being estranged from their communities because of a character's biracial heritage. Other characters deal with the extra weight of being homosexual and biracial.

Other examples include an Arab-Black man's attempt to confront his racial identity in a post 9/11 world and the death of a parent, the victim of an anti-Arab hate crime.

These stories of struggle are balanced by

Whatever your heritage may be, under the skin you are a person, just as similar, just as unique, and just as equal as any other person.



the pride that resonates in these carefully constructed characters.

The significance of a single woman performing the narrative of several individuals gives way to the overarching message: Whatever your heritage is, under the skin you are a human being, just as unique and equal to any other. The only way to end racism is to eliminate race as a matter of importance and stop adding more boxes to the U.S. Census form. Quite simply, you can't fit a human being into one box.