One Stop Copes With Volume

By Jonathan Lin

One Stop in North Hall, the college’s consolidated student services center, was particularly busy around the withdrawal deadline. Although the system has improved over time— with changes in both schedules and services— students still feel that One Stop is not always up to par.

“It works in the sense that it benefits the students because it consolidates the services,” said Nilsa Lam, One Stop Services Coordinator. “It’s really a package that we deliver to students.”

One Stop has taken precautionary efforts to help as many students as possible in a timely manner. On particularly busy days, the five workstations at the One Stop counter may be joined by a mobile cart and up to four additional workstations across from the counter.

“There is a lot of training involved,” said Lam. “With the new CUNYFirst Project, we have to instruct our current One Stop staff. Staff members don’t just come out of nowhere.” The new CUNYFirst Project will be replacing eSIMS as it is more user-friendly.

Not only does One Stop have to deal with students, but the entire John Jay community as well. With around fourteen thousand students, both graduate and undergraduate, it’s a wonder that One Stop has been able to accommodate the needs of everyone in an orderly fashion.

Even with the training and additional workstations, some students at John Jay, however, still did not see any improvement.

“It didn’t work,” said Alyssa Justine Zayas, a sophomore. “One Stop has the right intention to help John Jay students, but it’s not effective. You have to go early in the morning if you want to get anything done.”

“Sometimes there is room for improvement, such as more hours and more available help,” said Slajanna Jean, a sophomore Criminology major. “It would also help if One Stop listed all of its specific purposes.”

The lines at One Stop are known to become overcrowded and to extend past classroom doors. At peak hours, the lines have extended past room 1304N.

“It’s the time frame that students do things in,” said Lam, in regards to the student complaints. “It’s a large amount of students doing things relatively at a crunch time. Students have to understand that we’re all human.”

By Amanda Aponte

“You could incarcerate my body, but you would never imprison my love for peace and justice, because my conviction has made me free,” said Professor Luis Barrios as he reenacted his appearance at the United States District Court in Georgia.

Barrios chairs the Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies at John Jay and is a priest at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church on West 126th Street in Harlem. He is also a part of the SOA Watch, a grassroots activist movement against the School of the Americas. On November 22, Barrios was arrested along with six other SOA members for trespassing at Fort Benning, a military base in Georgia where the School of the Americas is located. The SOA is infamous for training Central and South American soldiers in the methods of oppression and torture.

In March, three days before he was due to report to the Metropolitan Correctional Center for two months, Barrios described his activism and his trial in Georgia.

“We had a lot of fun that day,” Barrios said with a smirk as he took out a stack of papers. Flipping through pages of court proceedings, charges, and letters from the archdiocese, Barrios’ expression was not one of fear, but of pride. “I combined my academic activism and religious activism to impact society in a positive way,” he said.

It was a sunny day in Georgia, warm with a cool breeze, the type of weather that entices a person to go out and take a walk. This was exactly what Barrios and his activist friends did. They took a one mile walk straight into the military base of Fort Benning. His entrance was nothing short of a walk in the park, as he pushed his veteran friend, Al Simmons, in a wheelchair.

Barrios explained that the lack of security was nothing but carelessness on the military’s part, since they were only guarding the base because they were worried about protesters.

“Once you get in, you have good fun there until they arrest you,” he said smiling. “This is the purpose of civil disobedience, and we do something with all the intention to violate the law, because you want to be arrested.”

Barrios spoke passionately about his mission, and explained that everything he
BARRIOS

had ever believed in brought him to that moment. “I accept that I am a transgressor, with all intention,” he said proudly. “A transgressor of violating any unjust law, any unjust plan, is not a law, and you have to disobey it.”

Next he described his annoyance with the judge. He could not believe that someone of such authority remained indifferent to justice. In Barrios’ eyes, indifference, or being “neutral,” contributed to the crimes committed by the School of the Americas.

Barrios became angry as he recounted his take on the SAO. “So when it comes to arresting people, torturing people, and killing a person- No that is not acceptable,” he clench his jaw and continued.

“I have a moral obligation to God and to society to go against that.”

Instead of being afraid when he was arrested, he joked around with the MPs, who were Puerto Rican. Both of them were around 18-years-old, and as soon as Barrios found out they were Puerto Rican he started to tease them. “I am going to call your father when I get out of here,” he said.

“The MP’s eyes were wide, and he turned to his partner and said, ‘He’s going to tell my daddy,’” said Barrios. “His partner rolled his eyes and responded, ‘He doesn’t even know who the hell you are, he’s joking.’”

He was laughing hysterically as he climbed into the corrections bus. “I am going to call your daddy and tell him what you did to me, you arrested me, you’re not supposed to do that, I’m a prince,” Barrios recounted, laughing at the memory of the MP’s facial expressions.

But the trial did not have the same atmosphere of lightheartedness, and Barrios sighed at the memory of the anticipation and tension. According to Barrios, the protesters had to pay a fine and return to Georgia for court on January 26th. Since their actions led to federal offenses, and within federal court the protest was considered a misdemeanor, they were given a trial without a jury.

The Deputy Faircloth was their judge. Barrios portrayed him as a strict protector of the law rather than a judge of moral obligation. All six members including Barrios were found guilty.

On March 9th Barrios reported to the Metropolitan Correctional Center. Despite the price of his action, Barrios remains committed to his cause. “It doesn’t matter the consequences. So if the community were to cut me off, then I am gonna to go to prison, but we need to stop this,” said Barrios.

When he got back to New York after the trial, he was hit with the realization that his activism might have impacted his teaching career and worried that the administration would take it away. To his surprise the students, faculty, and administration were very supportive.

Barrios believes in the John Jay slogan, “Educating For Justice,” and that is what his actions follow. Still, some were annoyed with Barrios, and the college did not pay him a penny.

The priesthood was another sector of Barrios life which could have been impacted by his activism. Usually Father Barrios’ radical beliefs on activism cause a bit of friction between him and the archdiocese. Surprisingly, though, they only sent him a letter praising for him and his cause. They commended him for his bravery but said though they did not approve of his methods.

When asked about his intentions in prison, Barrios smiled and laid out his two month plan. “I want close the school, and end the consequence. So if the consequence is Oklahoma, I am going to organize people and give the prison system hell,” he said leaning over his seat.

Because of the understanding and giving a radical mass. I want to understand that the prison is a business, and they each have a price on their head.”


Visual Arts Club Holds Workshop

By Jonathan Lin

On March 12th, eighteen students initially met in room 1304N to participate in a workshop with Professor Bill Pangburn, instructor of the Introduction to Drawing and Painting course (ART 111). Students who attended this workshop were educated in creating computer generated art using Adobe Photoshop CS3 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

“My goal for this workshop is to basically have people interact in graphic art,” said Pangburn.

The sixteen member team was selected out of a pool of roughly fifty students by faculty advisor Mathematics, Jacques Fomerand, George Andreopoulos and myself. Because of the limited size of our team we selected the most qualified students to proudly represent John Jay as delegates from Burkin Faso. We were represented on seven different U.N. committees and as an independent advisory justice and clerk on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In preparation for the conference we required to extensively research the national, regional and international policies of Burkin Faso on topics ranging from the situation in Israel and Palestine, the rights of Children in Armed Conflict, Climate Change, Economics, Regional Trade and Integration, as well as the applicable law for the two cases before the ICTR.

Mike Rodriguez describes his experience, “The first committee session was overwhelming for a first-timer, however, my partner did an exemplary job of calming my nerves and urging me to assert myself in the committee despite my inexperience. Once the conference got rolling, I was enamored with the complexity of multilateral cooperation and the difficulty of achieving consensus support for a resolution.”

Because of the limited size of this workshop, and took many hours of work and determination while being a full-time student, and, for some, a full-time employee, mother, or father. Mike Rodriguez looks back on his experience, “I also really enjoyed working with students from other countries. I got to really value international opinions because this was my first time ever working closely in an academic setting with students from other countries.”

The team was: Patrick Scullin and Rennae Francis on the Security Council; Gabrielle C. Ursitti and Mark Benjamin on the ICTR; Eva Helena Hermik and Stephanie Valarezo on General Assembly Plenary; Norhan Basumi and Mike Rodriguez on GA 1st; Beye Polanco and Alma-Mariya Ampah on GA 2nd; Geeta Gaadandeen and Peter J. Cella on GA 3rd; Marie-Andree Barthelemy and David Sabatelle on the African Development Bank; and Jennifer Shima and Natalia Lystewska on the World Trade Organization.

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We welcome letters to the editor and stories relevant to the John Jay College community, to New York, and to our nation and world. If you would like to write for us, then drop us a line.
Writing Center Helps Students Help Themselves

By Masoud House

“Our job is to work with the students, not to do the work for them,” said tutor Angelica Blazina.

“The room is off-white; every nook and cranny of the space available is used for desks, chairs, or computers. At the front of the room, just a few feet ahead of the entrance, is the desk where I was promptly greeted. Everyone at this room is buzzing with activity. This is the Writing Center in room 2450 North Hall, directed by Professor Livia Katz, where students don’t come to have their papers simply edited or graded. They come to improve their writing style and thinking processes.

“I’m taking it for English,” said Tracy Raysor, a sophomore who has been coming to the Writing Center since the beginning of the semester. “My trouble area is organizing my thoughts in my writing and grammar and mechanics,” said Raysor.

The Writing Center isn’t only for students with minors in English, or students in the new English Major, as some commonly believe. Sitting nearby was long-time tutor and supervisor Keneda Barnwell, surrounded by other tutors Blazina and Roxanne Sejarto, who’ve worked there for about seven years.

During the times of the CUNY Proficiency Exam, mid-terms, and finals, the tutors find themselves with more students and appointments than they can handle.

“We’ve had over a thousand students come in for individual appointments. And for the workshops, we have seven workshops a day, full with 30 people, 40 people,” said Barnwell, shaking her head as she leaned back in her seat.

“It’s absolutely impossible because the CPE, the exam, is happening now, but during testing time, mid-terms, and finals we’re always swamped, and we have less funding and less staff.”

Still, the tutors work with great proficiency, a literary version of Spartans tackling an overwhelming workload and still making it through stronger than ever. Tutors themselves are hand-picked and go through a long path to becoming a full tutor. “It’s based on recommendation, you have to take a year course before you’re allowed to teach and tutor,” said Zully.

“There are two courses, varying types of grammar, varying types of teaching skills, and public speech. It’s pretty, pretty intense.”

These courses are not open to any student either, but reserved for the tutors through independent study, which earns credit.

Tutors receive additional training as well. “Everyone is training to work in every discipline, tutors in training are not allowed to teach the CPEs, and very rarely will anyone see a tutor in training teaching since they’re in training, they’ll really be observing,” said Zully.

But tutors aren’t just glorified students with a knack for writing and simple patience. Many are graduates, and, according to Barnwell, “more than half of the permanent staff have a Masters Degree, or is working toward one.”

Some have even gone into teaching, like Blazina. The transition from student to tutor is smooth, according to the tutors, and Sejarto adds “you feel good, coming full circle.”

Sometimes they have to deal with troublesome students, but experience makes doing so easier.

When I first became a tutor, I guess I was a little naive. I was a little too nice and she started coming with big piles of research, to leave them for me to read, so I could tell her what I read and tell her what she should read,” said Blazina.

Barnwell added firmly, “Students need to know we’re not doing their work. Students come in here and they think we’re being mean and assume we’re being lazy and we don’t want to do our work and why we’re repelling them, it’s because we’re not in charge of interpretation, the process you bring to us is the final product. We can help you enhance it and make it better, but it’s still up to you to interpret your assignment. It’s your work. We can’t write it for you.”

It doesn’t end there either. Often, like police officers, the tutors find that they’re never off duty. “Someone hands you a paper at the store and asks you to read it, or you’re walking home to the subway and someone hands you a paper because they recognize you,” said Barnwell.

“It’s New York, you can’t miss that, there’s always something interesting,” Zully said, laughing. “We get the worst, the best, the crazy people, the perfectly sane people. We get the whole line.”

All of the tutors gathered agree on one thing. “When you get a student in here and they want to improve, they’re the best you can get,” said Barnwell. “When you get students who come in and say ‘I don’t want to be here, it’s just horrible. It can make an hour session feel like forever’.”

“Have a student come back and say thank you for the help, it always makes you feel good,” adds Sejarto.

“I had one at graduation, who dragged me to meet her mom and dad and grandmother, and her mom said, ‘you’ve helped her so much’, and I was like ‘oh my god, I feel so happy,’” said Barnwell.

At the end of the day, through the long workloads and difficult sessions, the group seems to draw it’s energy from each other. As some tutors head home, many hug or kiss cheek to cheek farewells, saying goodbye until the next day.

“I’ve met some of my best friends from this staff,” Sejarto said excitedly, beaming a grin to her friends.

“We’re all enjoying our time together because it’s a great group of people to work with,” said Barnwell. “We’re definitely family.”

Health Center Relocates In North Hall

By Yvette Pelaez

The location of the Student Health Office has changed, but the same helpful and necessary services are provided. The center has moved to room 1292 North Hall, one floor down from its previous location.

“Hey, what do you need help with today?” is the first thing students hear when they enter the room for help. Baury Reyes, a student at John Jay College who was hired as a college assistant to work in the Student Health Center, greets the students as they enter the center. The services provided at the center are consistent despite its new location. “We have the same services as always. We offer HIV testing, STD testing, immunization shots, and we also offer over-the-counter low cost clinics and health insurance,” said Reyes.

“Sometimes fifty students come in a day, sometimes more, and sometimes less,” said Reyes as he greeted the next student on line.

Those students who do know about these health services do take advantage of them. Danny, who is a senior at John Jay, does exactly that. “Yes I have gone there several times. I live on my own and I don’t have insurance, so I need those free services,” said Danny.

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Urban School Spirit?

By Leslie Larson

At state schools with large campuses, tailgating traditions, and championship football teams, students deck out their dorm rooms in school colors, camp out all night to buy sports tickets, and tattoo their mascots on their foreheads.

This isn’t really the norm at John Jay.

It’s challenging to find school spirit in the City. Manhattan is not a college town. John Jay students share their Upper West Side location with professionals at Time Warner Center, Lincoln Center, Fordham Law School and the rest of Manhattan.

Once you leave North Hall or Westport or the T-building you’ve left John Jay.

“School spirit at John Jay is close to extinction,” said Kim Wei Goh, a third year Law School and the rest of Manhattan.

Unfortunately, most of the students are too busy and never get the chance to cultivate that spirit.

John Jay isn’t the only metro college challenged to create school spirit. Other urban colleges face the challenges of engaging students when real-world responsibilities distract them, and when an exciting city tempts them elsewhere.

A metropolitan environment provides great opportunities for internships and employment that a small town can’t provide. Matt Swift, a junior at Georgetown University says that students at his school focus more on school work and getting good internships than they do lining up to buy football tickets.

“So many students want to work in cyberspace after another, maybe we can view this as a positive challenge for John Jay to embrace,” said Swift.

College campuses in the city face the challenge of not having a gated campus, the rest come and go. “John Jay is a commuter school, students can use the club rooms to hang out in between classes. At other colleges, people might go to their dorms,” said Ming Zhang who works in the Office of Student Activities and serves as Secretary for the Asian Student Association.

Perez describes how her club sees a need to help bring about student unity since “for commuter students it’s hard to feel that sense of belonging, many [students] are parents, work full-time, and are also students full-time” wrote Perez in their club’s mission statement.

But beyond student clubs, what are the main sources of school spirit? I’ve got one word for you sports.

Larger state schools enjoy the luxury of successful, publicized sports teams to unite students and alumni. “The biggest contributor to Rutgers school spirit is the Rutgers football team,” says James Boyd, Assistant Director of Public Affairs at Rutgers University, a college known for school spirit.

Even Condi Rice once noted “we need a common enemy to unite us.” Sports provide a healthy sense of rivalry and competition that connects people.

“External threats promote internal solidarity, so a good rivalry can go a long way,” Boyd adds.

The John Jay Athletic Department did not respond to my request for an interview, but athletics do not seem to be a unifying force at John Jay like at other colleges.

While academics and research grants are great for the academic success of a college, there’s that je ne sais quoi element to healthy competition. “You’re not going to get together to cheer on the science department. When you can people together to cheer on the football team, that’s key to school spirit,” says Swift.

Though housing a college campus in Manhattan is different, that doesn’t mean John Jay can’t have school spirit. Sure, we may not have a football team, but we have one of the most diverse, pulsating cultures around us.

This is New York–we may do it differently, our school spirit may not be reflected in mass quantities of John Jay sweatshirts– but we can still find a way to make sure we’re part of the heartbeat of the city. There are three main ways: by contributing to the arts, helping the community around us through public service, and leaving here with a diploma and a drive to improve our own lives and the lives of the city. That’s true school spirit: giving back what we’ve received here.

Market Impacts

By Lauren Meyer

It may have seemed as if everything was done correctly. Degree? Finished it. Internship? Did it. Connections? So many. Regardless of our immaculate resumes, we are stumped as we set out to get a job and come to face a common dilemma, unemployment.

How does one define this problem?

Perhaps it’s reasonable to attribute our job search struggles to the current economic climate. While multiple organizations have admitted to negative financial forces, even major businesses, like the New York Times, have settled into the industrial downtown program with aggressive cutbacks. The Times has threatened to close its cousin conglomerate, the Boston Globe, unless nearly $20 million in cutbacks can be arranged.

However, this problem is hardly generically specific. Dr. Barbara Ehrenreich, journalist, author, and activist, conducted a social experiment. By stripping the Ph.D. from her resume, she set out to explore the difficulties of white-collar professionals seeking employment.

Even though her resume represented how she did everything right, she still couldn’t land a job in her field. She recorded her experience in her book, “Bait and Switch: The Delusive Power of Lies.”

The sequel to her first book, “Nickel and Dimed.” My research on the book showed me that college educated workers are extremely vulnerable to downward mobility, and often end up in the kind of low-wage jobs I had done for “Nickel and Dimed,” she stated on her website.

Although many argue our economy has been spiraling out of control for years, Dr. Ehrenreich’s book was published in early 2005. So then, what other facets impact young graduates’ attempts at finding employment? “I was amazed at the lack of jobs offered to those in limbo between their bachelor’s and master’s in New York City. It is extremely apparent that in order to gain employment, it’s necessary to obtain a specialized degree beyond a bachelor’s degree, which can be extremely time-consuming and expensive,” said Rachael Mong, a first year graduate student in the Forensic Psychology program at John Jay.

“I definitely feel that having an advanced degree will give me an edge within this field. But also I feel that more and more these days, a master’s degree won’t get you very far,” said Mong.

Prior to graduate enrollment, did the future appear bright, or still somewhat bleak for Mong? “I felt like I would have no problem obtaining a job before I started graduate school. I was moving from New Hampshire to New York City, and thought the job opportunities would be endless. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case,” she said.

For junior Danielle Charbonneau the future is most likely the best. “I don’t think it’s going to be very hard to find a job,” she said. “I’ll do it if I have to conduct on a master’s program, I do feel that I will have a very hard time getting a job. The criteria for this field are specific.”

And what of those walking away with secondary degrees? “I feel that I have gained so much knowledge in the graduate program here at John Jay even though it does not settle the fear of not being able to find a job,” said Amanda Rieder, a Criminal Justice graduate student preparing for graduation in May. “All you can do is stay optimistic and make sure to build a network in hopes that something will come along.”

It can’t be all bad news. Perhaps the current economic situation paired with the proliferation of job search web sites can be viewed as a positive challenge for soon-to-be graduates. As difficult as it may seem to submit one resume into cyberspace after another, maybe we can embrace this challenge.

“Internet-based employment searching makes people very marketable over a wide range of areas. If more employers use these search engines, I feel they will have more applicants and can be more selective,” said Danielle.

By returning to school and gaining new skills, learning new languages, and landing hard-to-get internships, students are shaping themselves into valuable assets. Is it possible, that employers are looking for something in particular?

Many young graduates are under the impression that they are the competition, the person to beat when interview day arrives. And usually, they are. Universities and colleges are producing sharp young professionals with new knowledge and cutting-edge perspectives.

However, is this enough? Media conglomerates have suggested a return to school is a wise choice during this time of global economic hardship. “I have always had the desire to change careers and get into this field. It was only a matter of waiting for the right time and that time finally came,” said Erin Macara, a graduate student in the Forensic Mental Health Counseling program who returned to school after six years. But, she says, “The competition is extremely high right now with so many people having lost jobs. Inexperienced students are competing against seasoned professionals in many areas.”

So then, an ultimatum: if these discouraging realities of financial fatigue prove too much for recent graduates, perhaps a return to school might just be that light at the end of the tunnel.
Homeless Families Struggle

By Masoud House

“The rents are ridiculous,” said Maureen Petersen, an officer of the Department of Homeless Services. “The high cost of rent is what a lot of people come here for.” PATH — or the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing — is a temporary placement connected to the EAU: an Emergency Assessment Unit, under the DHS, or Department of Homeless Services. Here DHS Officers and Employees take care of a difficult task: trying to help homeless families get homes. But it’s not easy.

With a rising cost of living — an effect of the nation-wide economic problems, many find that they don’t have enough money to keep up with rent, especially in New York. A 2006 New York University study concluded that households making about $32,000, or 80% of the median city-wide income, would not be able to afford many of the apartments in the city.

Specifically the report stated that in a spreadsheet there were 205,000 apartments that would have been affordable to the median, and majority, salary of New Yorkers. Also, the median price of unsubsidized apartments increase 20% in this time — from $750 to $900. And it has increased since then.

“What makes it bad is that Guiliani had changed it,” continues Petersen, referring to the state of her department. Petersen, who has worked for the DHS for more than a decade, has seen plenty of changes. “All boroughs had EAUs, but he [Guiliani] ended them all, this one, and it made more hectic. There are all kinds of places that are kids are displaced out of school. If they had an EAU in each borough, it’d be better.”

“It’s the worst on kids,” another officer adds, who asked to remain anonymous. Standing next to a family of four, including a mother and her kids, the officer looks on and frowns. “The process of [the kids] going back and forth, the kids being shuffled around, that [they] might be in Brooklyn, y’know? It’s hard,” the officer adds.

“It’s disgusting,” said one client, a mother standing outside. She paces back and forth, shifting side to side with her head down and her eyes closed. “I was just arguing with him on how P***ed up it is,” she adds. “If we didn’t have no place to go, I wouldn’t be here.” There is no doubt that the children hurt the most. While standing there, countless children stand by their parents and older siblings as late as eleven o’clock, and beyond. “They’re missing out on school cur they have to be here,” said another client. “That’s an ACS case but we can’t do anything.”

Walking into the large stone building of the EAU, the first thing a family encounters in the brightly lit building is not warm meals and blankets, but metal detectors, though some would consider it a necessity. “It’s different. Every day it’s different,” said Masullo, a DHS Officer standing near the metal detectors. “You can’t always take a look at the monitors and shakes his head. “Never know what you’re going to get.”

“We have to check for contraband and weapons,” said his fellow officer, Gonzalez, as she checks the screen for an incoming client’s bag. “All bags must go through—if they beep, they get checked.” And while some may think this is a trivial step, others say otherwise.

“When I was at the Men’s Shelter by Bellvue Hospital, a man tried to come in with a machete,” said Petersen, a long-time employee of the DHS. “Hid it up the sleeve of his jacket.”

After passing the metal detectors, families reach the Processing Stage. Here they must put in their information and the reasons behind their homelessness which leads to a temporary overnight stay while an investigation is made on the client’s claims. After moving to Reception, more information is needed to prepare the family for the Family Worker who gives the family a medical check.

Next employees of the Diversion Department try to see whether there are other options for staying without staying in the shelter system, but if things are approved the family is given temporary housing and a ten day placement. If they’re found eligible, then the family will be guided to finding an apartment. But if they are found ineligible according to varying circumstances, then the family may have to start the process over all again.

In addition, guidelines and rules are constantly changing. “A lot of people mess it up for others,” said Petersen. “One client can do something bad and it changes everything for everybody else.”

One officer had an example. “[A Family] can be at the end of their ten day placement period, and it can be eleven at night, and [they] have kids; and they have to get them out, instead of waiting till morning.” The officer shakes their head in disapproval. Unfortunately, this is not a rare story for those arriving at PATH.

Natural, the process can cause tension between employees and clients. “I don’t like working here,” said another DHS employee who’d rather stay anonymous. “These guys are assholes. They make us feel dirty, like it’s our fault. But it comes from up high. They’re the ones maneuvering everybody.”

Occasionally tempers will escalate to the point of confrontation. Other times the DHS officers find themselves dealing with all sorts of situations. “It’s more than just police work,” said Masullo, as he keeps his eyes trained on the clients entering the building. He then adds “We’re translators, babysitters, referees, everything.” The other officers smile grimly, nodding in agreement.

Whatever the case may be, one thing is clear: the city’s cost of living is rising, and salaries aren’t following as closely. Worse, families, for various reasons that some are responsible for and others not, are getting caught in a web of problems that can’t be solved easily; they are estranged and made affordable not just for the rich, but for the average New Yorker.
Summer Movie Preview

By Karen Tabin

With summer approaching, there are plenty of movies to watch out for. 2008 was a blockbuster year for movies, and if all goes as planned it looks like this year will continue the fun. There are plenty of movies to be excited about this year, and many of the ones you are most looking forward to will be out this summer. Here’s a list of what you should keep your eyes open for.

The month of May has a lot of long-awaited action releases. Starting off the month, “The Spirit” (May 1), is directed by Frank Miller, based on his comic book character. Another movie to look forward to is “The Da Vinci Code” (May 14), based on the Dan Brown novel. 

Now all you Terminator fans will finally get your wish with the much anticipated “Terminator Salvation” (May 21), starring Christian Bale. May might have a lot of action, but it has comedy as well. “The Brothers Bloom” (May 22) starring Paul Dano and Adrien Brody as the best con men in the world who take a beautiful heiress, Rachel Weisz, on the adventure of a lifetime. If you have kids they will enjoy “Up” (May 22nd), a sweet and comical animated movie about an old man who is surprised when his home takes sudden flight due to balloons tied to his house, and even more shocked when he discovers he is not alone. Another one that both kids and adults can enjoy is “A Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian” (May 22nd).

With the success of the first one, they managed to pull even more stars into its already all-star cast. If you’re a fan of Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, Amy Adams or Robin Williams, I strongly suggest seeing this movie. June is going to be the month that will make you laugh, with many comedies like “The Proposal,” starring Ryan Reynolds and Sandra Bullock (June 12th), which involves a marriage specifically arranged to escape deportation to Canada and “Year One,” with Jack Black and Michael Cera (June 19th), a story of two banished hunter-gatherers.

No year would be complete without having laughed your head off because of Will Ferrell, right? Last year it was “Step Brothers” and this year it will be “Land of the Lost” (June 5th), where, he, his assistant and a survivalist get sucked through a vortex and end up in an alternate universe where nothing is like it was back home.

“As Away We Go” (June 5th), a comedy about a couple searching for the best place to raise their first child and “The Hangover” (June 5th), a comedy about three groomsmen who lose the groom during a drunken escapade both look very promising. Also in June is the remake of “The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3” (June 12th), starring Denzel Washington and John Travolta. I think the highlight of the month will be when Shia LeBeouf and Megan Fox join with Optimus Prime again in the sequel “Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen” (June 24th).

July seems to be the month that has a little of everything. With the return of “Ice Age” anyone who enjoyed that little squirrel’s fight to the death to save his acorn will no doubt enjoy the third installment of the series, “Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs” (July 1st). On the same day you can catch Christian Bale and Johnny Depp in “Public Enemies” (July 1st), an exciting crime drama based on the real life story of when the Fed’s tried to take down gangsters John Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson and Pretty Boy Floyd during the 1930s crime wave. Remember Sacha Baron Cohen’s hilariously brilliant performance in “Borat”? Good news, you can catch him again in “Bruno” (July 19th) where he plays the second of the three characters he portrayed on his HBO show “Da Ali G Show.”

For those of you who do not know this character, Bruno is an overly flamboyant Austrian fashionista who comes to America. July’s climax will be the release of “Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince” (July 15th). With the all-star cast returning for the sixth installment of the series, the excitement of the fans could not be higher. July will end with a good laugh when “Funny People” (July 31st) hits theaters. With a cast of, yes- you guessed it- funny people, this movie sounds like a sure win. Nothing bad can come when you put Adam Sandler, Seth Rogen and Leslie Mann together.

In August, our solemn hearts are readying our goodbyes to summer, there will be some dramatic movies to match our mood, and others to pull us out of it. “Julie and Julia” (August 7th), which stars Meryl Streep and Amy Adams, documents the life of Julia Child. Okay boys, as I am sure that this will be of no interest to you, Paramount planned accordingly.

Grab your favorite childhood action figure and sit him next to you so you can both watch “G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra” (August 7th), starring Channing Tatum, Sienna Miller, Demiss Quaid and Marlon Wayans. Last year he was aging backwards, this year he is killing Nazis, catch Brad Pitt in the Quentin Tarantino’s “Inglourious Basterds” (August 21st), where Jewish-American soldiers try to scare the Third Reich by killing Nazis. If you liked Rob Zombie’s remake of “Halloween,” wait for his sequel “H2: Halloween 2” (August 28th).

As far as the summer goes, there are many movies that are worth watching that summer job for. If you are looking to laugh, try, be scared, or a little of each, then there are movies that will meet your needs. So, remember these dates and don’t forget to save up for the all too expensive concession stand. See you at the ticket booth.

Well, that’s it for the summer movie preview. I hope it’s as exciting for you as it was for me. Until next year, keep your eyes open for more movie news.