

Volume: 1 Issue: 4 March 2008

Volume: 1 Issue: 4

March 2008

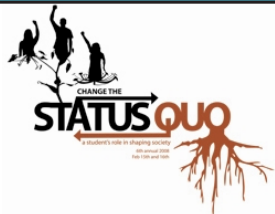
Women's

HERSTORY

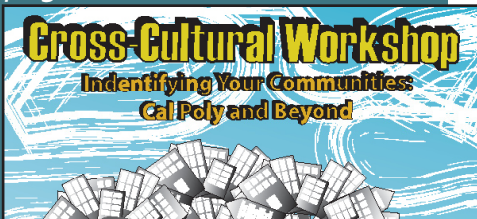
Month

Month

In This Issue:



Change the Status Quo
page 2



Cross Cultural Workshop
page 2



Cultural Club Profile
page 3



Talaam Acey Interview
page 4



ATOG: Mahogany Browne
page 5



Newsletter Layout/Design by
Brian McMullen, MCC Publicity
b.man.beats@gmail.com

All stories written by Brian McMullen except
when otherwise noted.

Brown Sugar Was Oh So Sweet Black History Month Events Jam-Packed

The MCC would like to thank all those who attended our Black History Month events - and there were a lot of you.

The MCC's first February event, African-American Jeopardy, was a hit. San Luis Lounge upstairs in the University Union (UU) was jam-packed for the game. Five teams competed for gift certificates to local restaurants and gas stations by answering questions about music, the civil rights movement, entertainment, black firsts, and sports. The next day, the Mustang Daily ran an article detailing the event.

The second event was an even bigger hit. A large crowd turned out for the step presentations at the Spanos Breezeway. Various Greek organizations stomped and strolled. Also, video cameras from an online news site documented the event. The story can be found on www.thepalestra.com and features an interview with the MCC's own Mickela Gonzales.

That same night, the MCC showed the step dancing film "Stomp the Yard" to a packed San Luis Lounge in the UU. Before the movie, members of the Black Student Union presented the history of step dancing and performed a step that received great applause from the crowd. At one point, the dancers stomped out the beat to Busta Rhyme's hit song "Touch It."

For the next event, the MCC showed CNN's documentary "The Noose: An American Nightmare." The film is an investigation into the recent display of nooses on college and high school campuses. Many in attendance expressed shock at the graphic images of lynchings. Following the credits, Dr. Jodi Jaques

led a discussion in which many students brought up good points and expressed valid opinions. Black History Month coordinator Brenton Smith said there was minimal tension during the discussion and that the event was a success.

The final Black History Month event, the Crown City Rockers' UU hour performance had student's heads nodding as they responded to the MC's (vocalist's) calls. The band, consisting of a bassist, a drummer, a keyboardist, a sample machine player and an MC, rocked the crowd with improvised solos, fast rapping, and an all-around great performance. MC Raashan Ahmad finished off the set by encouraging the audience to fight for social justice in an acapella rap that touched on inter-ethnic and political issues.

Thanks again to all those who were able to attend, we look forward to seeing you again at our future events.



Top Right: Black History Month Coordinator Brenton Smith sells t-shirts at the step presentation. Bottom Right: Omega Xi Delta dances during the step presentation. Bottom Left: The African-American Jeopardy game board and contestants.

MCC on the web www.studentlife.calpoly.edu/mul

Cross-Cultural Workshop Defines Community

Written By Shariq Hashmi

The cross cultural workshop focused on breaking down the social constructions of race, class, and gender with respect to one's membership of social communities.

The workshop explained that communities are often built in compliance of these boundaries. To initially challenge this, the facilitator Gary De La Rosa staged a personality survey for students. Participants were separated into different personality type groups and were challenged to answer a list of questions concerning potential conflict, strengths, and weaknesses when working with other personality

types based on their characteristics. This activity was used to transition into redefining diversity.

Diversity, according to Mr. De La Rosa is always changing according to a community's members and their environment. So then, reconciling the unequal power distribution in the socio-political structure does not have an "answer." Each situation must be examined on its own circumstances, without our prepackaged, predefined pedagogies for how communities "should" be "diverse."

The message of the workshop was a radical one, despite its simplistic appearance: to build authentic com-

munity, independent of our socially constructed boundaries. I believe that if we were to examine the boundaries of our communities with respect to race, gender, and class, we would find that we are not as inclusive as was testified in the workshop.

The event concluded with a discussion focusing on how individuals should go about building communities that span across race, class and gender. This, of course, is the two-million dollar question. Despite our disagreements, participants were challenged to more closely examine how their communities are built and which boundaries they adhere to.

MCC on the web www.studentlife.calpoly.edu/mul

Changing the Status Quo One Issue at a Time

Written By Shariq Hashmi

The MCC's involvement in February's Change the Status Quo conference consisted of two workshops.

Ethnic studies professor Dr. Grace Yeh presented at the first workshop titled "The Model Minority". This workshop examined the "model minority" myth and its effects on Asian American communities. The workshop had three components: "dirty laundry" in which participants voiced their preconceptions with Asian Americans and the model minority myth, a presentation by Dr. Yeh, and a discussion component in which participants analyzed and conversed about the presentation materials.

Among the materials presented, we examined newspaper articles

from the 1960's concerning Asian American communities. We then contrasted the ideas expressed in the article with current U.S. census data in the areas of educational attainment, occupation, median household income, and poverty rate by age group for different Asian American groups (as defined by the U.S. census). Analysis of the articles and the census data was augmented with personal stories from different Asian American individuals that attended the workshop.

Participation and discussion in this workshop went exceptionally well. This workshop will be repeated for Asian American Pacific Islander month in May.

Sociology Professor Chris Bickel presented the second workshop titled

"America's Prison System: A New Form of Slavery." This workshop addressed the social ramifications of America's current criminal justice system. The workshop consisted of analysis of the adult and juvenile detention systems.

Throughout the presentation, participants were encouraged to ask questions and discuss disagreements as a community. The workshop included many statistics which illustrated the effects of current criminal justice policies on different communities, particularly communities of color.

Many participants described the workshop as "informative" and "eye-opening."



Cultural Club Profile: Muslim Students Association

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) is a cultural club not just out to host fun events, but to give people a perspective they often do not see.

"A lot of times what you hear on the media is not from Muslims but people who have their own agenda who want to defame Muslims," said Naiyerah Kolkailah, Biology senior and former president of MSA.

"People have associated Islam with terrorism and just the different political issues going on right now and what we want to do is understand Islam from the Muslim perspective and go back to the sources of Islam," she added.

Asked what kind of events the MSA puts on, Kolkailah said, "we do a variety of things ranging from personal development, study circles, to educational events for people to learn more about Islam and to understand Islam from a Muslim perspective."

She added that the MSA also does community service events.

"This year was our third annual fast-a-thon which takes place during the month of Ramadan, Muslim's month of fasting," she said, "we invite people to fast with us from dawn to sunset on one of those days and we have local sponsors in the community that donate a certain amount for every person that fasts and then all that money gets donated to a certain cause."

Kolkailah said that the event has benefited Hurricane Katrina victims, the San Luis Obispo Food Bank, and this year the victims of the genocide in Darfur.

As far as educational events are concerned, she said that they range from political issues like the Israel, Palestine conflict to Islamic Awareness. She added that the issues of what Islam says about

women, the concept of Jihad, Jesus in Islam are also topics for educational events.

Kolkailah said that Jihad "is not holy war, it's the struggle of bettering yourself and a struggle of self defense. Whenever Muslims are being attacked or their land is being taken away, their homes are being destroyed; you have not only a right, but a responsibility to struggle back. Islam forbids aggression; you can't just randomly go out and kill people who are not of your faith. That's not sanctioned within Islam."

On the topic of women in Islam, she said, "there's a misconception that women are oppressed in Islam, they don't have a voice and that men control everything and that the hijab, the head covering, is imposed on women." She then added, "We want to make the statement that no, women do have a voice. Yes there might be some oppression here and there in different parts of the world, but we want to distinguish between what certain governments do versus what Islam really says about women and about the hijab."

Kolkailah said that MSA has roughly 10 to 15 members that show up to meetings on a regular basis, but "usually when there's social events or food a lot more people show up as usual. A lot of clubs experience the same thing." She said that the type of events she was referring to are barbecues, picnics, and hikes.

She also said that the club is planning to have a booth at Open House and a table in the University

Union every Thursday next quarter. "Also, we were thinking next quarter of doing some workshops, maybe one or two-day workshops or teach-ins about different topics in Islam, maybe women in Islam or maybe Jesus and Islam, they'll be maybe led by students and invite students to come and talk and it'll be really informal," she added. However, she said that nothing is concrete at this time.

For More information on the MSA e-mail msa@calpoly.edu.



At an MSA event, Dr. Nisha Abdul-Cader, local pediatrician and co-founder of the UMMA clinic, the first free health clinic started by Muslims in South Central Los Angeles, speaks about the relief work that Islamic Relief is doing in South Asia.

A trip inside the mind of poet Talaam Acey

Talaam Acey, Another Type Of Groove's February featured poet, is remarkably comfortable on stage. He engages the audience with his joking banter, but also with his poems, which deal in the socio-political climate of the world, as well as sex and love.

Asked how he got to be so comfortable on stage, Acey said, "You know I've always been comfortable in front of people. The ironic thing about me is that actually it's the other way where I have much more difficulty talking to people one-on-one."

This statement didn't seem to hold true during the interview as he had sharp responses to almost every question.

For instance, when asked about the tattoo of Harriet Tubman on his forearm, he said, "she's somebody I admire a great deal, the fact that she risked her life over and over again trying to save other people's lives and in many cases had to convince the people they should try to free themselves and in other cases, it was at gunpoint." He then added, "She traveled with a shotgun and it was like 'if you want to go back there's two ways, there's either this gun, or you go north.' So once you were on her watch, you didn't have a choice anymore, and I just thought that was gangster."

Asked if Tubman's power to motivate people to make a change is somehow connected to his powers as a writer, Acey said, "it's connected to all of us I mean every molecule is the same, every body, every thing; every piece of matter in the world is all built on energy, so you can do with that energy what you want."

And though he has appeared on television and in magazines and published a novel, he said that his greatest achievements are the poems themselves.

"I consider the poems themselves the achievements, I mean the fact that other people recognize my work, the fact that this person wants to put it on television, put me in this big show with 6,000 people or give me this award or that award, that's an honor, but that's not an achievement on my part because that was their decision to do it," Acey said.

So how does he judge his achievements? How does he know when he's written a good poem? Acey said that it's part confidence, and part audience reaction.

"I write meticulously, so in the writing of the poems I'm confident that they're good, but I don't really know until I recite 'em," he said, "the whole point of communicating is trying to communicate what's inside of me to everyone else and to the extent that I do the poem and everybody's looking at me like 'what the hell are you talking about?' Then it wasn't a powerful poem in my opinion."

He later added, "and like they say, communication ain't what I thought you heard, it's what you thought I said."

Some of his poems seemed to communicate a concern about materialism and the state of hip-hop. Asked about the difference in power between rap artists and spoken word artists, Acey said, "It's not about your art form; it's about what you need. So if your needs are quick wealth and fleeting objects then you're

somebody who's going to be taken advantage of and your whole life is going to be fleeting, I mean you're going to have a temporal existence because you put yourself out there, 'I need this, I need that,' and people see what you need and they manipulate you based on what you need and then when the smoke clears, you're standing there just as broke as you were."

Asked if he feels spoken word artists are given less respect than rap artists, he said, "I'm fine with my respect, but I guess it depends on how you define respect. I don't want to be looked at as how some of the rap artists are looked at now. I'm good man, I'm good."

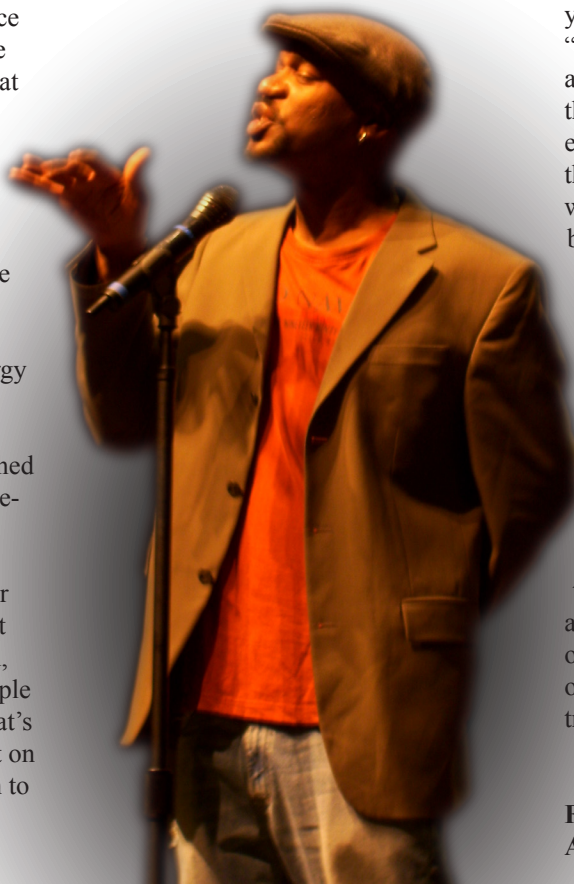
He then added, "I don't want people to adore me. I don't want to sell a billion ring tones simply because I'm the flavor of the month; I want to be appreciated long after I die."

During a break between poems, Acey told the audience that he thinks too much. Asked what he thinks about most, he said, "the significance of life and trying to put it in perspective that 'you do what you can do while you're here.'" He added, "but it's a mistake to believe that this is all there is, there are other existences and the point is not to listen to what somebody else is telling you what you need to do in this world and where you're going to go when you die. The point is to just try and be the best you can be and when this is all said and done, you take it as it comes."

The last question Acey answered was an abstract one: which comes first, the meaning or the words?

"The truth is, first the first line starts with the words and then I try and get the meaning of those words but then every other line it's the meaning,"

he said, "The first line is usually something just like, 'I can tell where the scars are just by the way you walk,' and it's like 'wow.' And then you dwell on it, you think about that. But then every other line, it's more about a feeling, you're trying to put the feeling into words."



For more information, you can visit Acey's website at www.taalamacey.com.



ANOTHER TYPE OF a ROOVE

open mics. open minds.

Poetry is... **CONTAGIOUS**

Featured Poet
Mahogany Browne

Currently the Educational Program Director
for Hip-Hop Poetry at
New Professional Theatre in NY City

WINNER OF

- Harlem's phenomenal SugarShack Slam -
- Hottest Poets Slam @ Jimmy's Uptown -
- Njozi Magazine's Slam -
- Tri-State Team Slam -

word.

SPOKEN WORD POETRY

Wednesday, March 5
7:00 to 9:30 pm

PAC Pavilion (Bldg 6- Rm 128)

