



# ROOTS

Volume 2 | Issue 5

February 2009

CAL POLY  
SAN LUIS OBISPO

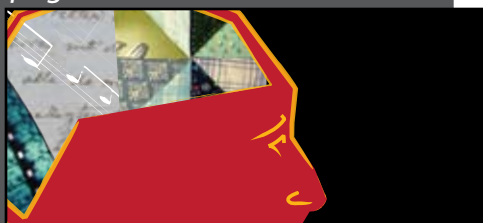




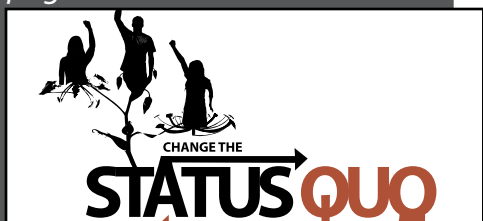
## In This Issue:



ATOG: Prentice Powell  
page 2



Black History Month  
page 3



Change the Status Quo  
page 4



Lunar New Year  
page 4



Cross Cultural Meeting  
page 5



N\*W\*C\*  
page 5

## ATOG: Prentice Powell

### Oakland poet and activist comes to Cal Poly

Gina Loring, the January ATOG poet, lit up the stage of the first ATOG of the year. Chumash Auditorium was filled with students, community members, and the soulful and rhythmic voice of Loring herself. Following a handful of student and local amateur poets, Loring started out with a musical prayer, singing about a conversation between herself and God. Loring's pieces ranged in language and style, but all of them dealt with issues of politics, beauty, self identity, religion, life, love, family, current events, race and individual internal struggles. She also included a cappella versions of pieces from her recent CD, *The Git Back (Lovely)*. Her lyrics and vocal power were so moving that Loring received a standing ovation from the audience following her last piece and sold over a dozen copies of her CD after the show.

February's poet is Bay Area artist Prentice Powell. Prentice began his poetry career in 2003 when he wrote his first poem "streets" and was unaware that he had been signed up to perform that poem during open mic at Oakland's Black Box. In the weeks to follow, Prentice found his therapy through poetry and began writing a new poem every week.

In 2006 he was named the Oakland/San Francisco Grand Slam Champion and was awarded the Spoken Word Artist of the Year by the Black Music Awards for the following year. He is currently a member of Hot Water Cornbread, a group promoting in enabling the "poetical guardians of the frontline" with spreading a message of passion, commitment and purpose throughout the community and across generations.

Powell is a firm believer in practicing what you preach, and giving back to the community. He began to host Mouth Off Wednesdays in 2006, a weekly spoken word and open mic event in downtown Oakland. In November of 2007, he traveled to South Africa performing and lecturing for universities, youth groups, and churches, as wells as doing radio interviews. He also dedicated multiple days to workshops with the children in the Lindelani jail (8 to 13 year olds), as well as the men of Poolsmoore Prison. He is also highly involved in art education in the Bay Area, including work as an art education consultant for a nonprofit organization, organizer of creative writing and spoken word workshops, and organizer of afterschool programs in both Oakland and San Francisco.

*continued on page 3, ATOG*



100% Organic Cotton ATOG shirts  
available at the door for \$10

Powell is also a member of the Epsilon Mu chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, at San Jose State University. During his time at SJSU, he became the organizer for an annual poetry night hosted by the fraternity. He has also been seen on the stage at the 2008 Black Entertainment Television step show, stepping for his chapter. Powell now joins the ranks of influential members of his organization, along with famed brothers like Duke Ellington, Lionel Richie, Jesse Owens, Thurgood Marshall, Frederick Douglass and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



ABOVE & RIGHT: Loring during her performance; BELOW: Loring signing CDs during intermission



## February: Black History Month

### Celebrating Black tradition in visual, performing and written arts

After the kickoff of Black History Month at the end of January, the MultiCultural Center will continue to provide a variety of events through February. The theme of this month's events revolve around Black tradition in the arts.

Gospel Night is scheduled for Friday, February 6. Local gospel musicians will come to Cal Poly and perform a variety of gospel pieces. The performance will be held in the PAC Pavilion from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

The presence of derogatory caricatures of African-Americans in the pre-Civil Rights Era media will be discussed following the Emmy award winning film *Ethnic Notions* to be shown on Tuesday, February 10. Cal Poly's role in furthering these images as late as the 1950s will also be discussed. The film will be shown in San Luis Lounge (UU221) from 7:30

to 9:30pm. Cal Poly Ethnic Studies professor Jane Lehr will facilitate a discussion following the film.

A highlight of the month will be the *Langston Hughes Project*, to be held on Wednesday, February 11. The event celebrates African American artistic heritage in the early 20th century through spoken word, live jazz, and images from the Harlem Renaissance. The project is co-sponsored by the Cal Poly Music Department and will be in the PAC Pavilion from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

On February 17, Cle Sloan's documentary *Bastards of the Party*, will be shown in San Luis Lounge at 7:30pm. Sloan's documentary, co-produced with Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*), chronicles the history of Black gangs in Los Angeles and the effect they have had on both gang members and the community. Sloan,

a former member of the Bloods, calls for a radical change in gang culture, pointing out the fact that most members do not even know the history of their own gang. A discussion led by Professor Christopher Bickel of the Social Science Department will follow the film.

Denise Campbell and Lavalie Campbell (no relation) will be at Cal Poly on Wednesday, February 18, displaying and explaining the proud tradition of quilting within African American culture. The quilters will be in the PAC Pavilion from 5 to 7pm.

Join us for the celebration of Black History Month! Visit the MCC's website or stop by the MCC for more information.



# Change the Status Quo

Workshops provide Cal Poly a new outlook on a variety of issues

Student Life and Leadership's 7th annual Change the Status Quo (CSQ) will be held the weekend of February 27 and 28. CSQ provides students a variety of workshops that discuss current controversial topics, call them to question the status quo, and offer ways to help change it. Workshops will be hosted by the MultiCultural Center, Pride Center, Women's Center, and Student Community Services, as well as other Cal Poly Clubs and local organizations. The MCC will host two different workshops, both facilitated

by Cal Poly professors.

Professor of Ethnic Studies, Dr. Jane Lehr brings the prison system to question with her workshop "Race, Class, Gender & the Prison Industrial Complex: Critical Perspectives on the 'War on Drugs.'" After a discussion about the problems surrounding the prison system, Lehr will have participants dive deeper into issues related to the "War on Drugs" and its effects on the prison system and on the prisoners themselves.

Professor Rachel Fernflores of the Women's and Gender Studies

Department and the Philosophy Department will host a discussion titled "From Melting Pot to Mosaic: Why don't *they* just get over it?" Fernflores will discuss the historical oppression of minorities in the U.S., with the goal of providing participants a better understanding of why they "can't get over it."

Registration for students is \$10, and \$15 for non-students. A local, organic breakfast and lunch will be served on Saturday. For more information, and to register, email [changethestatusquo@gmail.com](mailto:changethestatusquo@gmail.com).

## Coming Soon...



## Celebrating the Year of the Ox

CP Lion Dance Team blesses the University Union

On Tuesday January 27, the MCC hosted a celebration of the Lunar New Year. The MCC was decorated in traditional red and gold ornaments, and traditional candies were placed throughout the lounge. The Cal Poly Lion Dance Team came to bless the Office of Student Life & Leadership with a performance upstairs in the UU.

The entire upper floor stopped for ten minutes as the lion went through the study tables and MCC to the beat of drums, interacting with students and staff. As always, the Lion Dance Team was a crowd-pleaser and was a great way to start off the lunar new year.



# Cross Cultural Meeting

## Discussing issues of privilege with SALAD

Every February the MCC continues the discussions of race and privilege at the Cross Cultural Meeting. The day long workshop facilitates an open discussion between attendees in regards to the idea and manifestation of privilege. The Campus Speak facilitation group

S.A.L.A.D. will help students through these discussions in a variety of activities throughout the day, looking at stereotypes and core values of various groups. A salad bar lunch will be provided, and will also be used as a starting point for discussion about availability of resources.

The meeting will be on Saturday, February 21 from 11am to 4pm. Space is limited, so an RSVP is required by Wednesday, February 18! Email the MCC at [mcc@calpoly.edu](mailto:mcc@calpoly.edu) or call (805) 756-1405 to save your spot.

## N\*W\*C\* Encourages Difficult Discussions

### Performance brings up issues of Race and Identity

N\*W\*C\* came to Cal Poly on January 27 for a special performance after finishing touring last March. Despite outcries from the campus about the play's title, nearly 1000 Cal Poly and community members filled Chumash Auditorium on January 27 to watch the play "whose name nobody wants to say."

The play opened with "The Chant," a short skit using only the three words of the title. Each actor was dressed as and acted out stereotypical images of each one's ethnicity. Initially, the only audience members were those about who identified with each group found the performance entertaining, but the rest of the audience soon lightened up, and felt comfortable in the dialogues and situations being presented.

The three actors, Miles Gregley, Rafael Agustin, and Allan Axibal, discussed issues of self identity, and mainstream society's beliefs about each minority group. Following the comedic opening, each of the actors told their personal stories about their experiences with their own cultural and self identities, and at what point in their lives that they realized that they were "different." Though the stories were pretty heavy, there was still comedic relief laced throughout so that the audience remained comfortable in the discussions. The three went on

to talk about what they love the most about the other ethnicities. Axibal told of how he wanted to have the confidence of being black, Agustin wanted "the Asian invasion," and Gregley shared "The Top Ten Reasons Miles Ellington Gregley Wants to be Latino."

The show wrapped up with a discussion about how "there's only one race...the human race," and how though we're all very different, it is possible to live and work together, and celebrate each other's differences. At the conclusion of the show, a question and answer session was opened up, and audience members had the opportunity to ask some questions about the actors, the show, and how their message can be spread to the rest of the campus. Following the show, the three were outside Chumash Auditorium greeting the crowd, signing autographs and taking pictures.

The day following the show, the trio came back to campus to hold a workshop deconstructing the play and the topics discussed. Each told their personal journey towards the formation of the play, and how it has been received throughout the country since the first showing at UCLA. They also discussed the social construction of the concept of race, noting prominent scholars and popular

comedians to explain how they wanted the show to be informative and comedic, without being a lecture or without substance. With help of director and co-writer Steven Seagle, the movements and dialogue of two scenes within the show were broken down, allowing those present to recognize the intentional decisions throughout the show that the actors and writers wanted to include as subconscious messages and images.

The MCC would like to thank everyone that came to the performance and made it a huge success!



# FEBRUARY Events

Monday **2** Student Achievement in a Globally Competitive World PAC Pavilion 7pm



Wednesday **4** ATOG: Prentice Powell Chumash Auditorium 7:30pm

Friday **6** Gospel Night PAC Pavilion 7pm

Tuesday **10** *Ethnic Notions* UU221 San Luis Lounge 7:30pm



Wednesday **11** *The Langston Hughes Project* PAC Pavilion 7:30pm

Monday **16** **No School - Washington's Birthday**

Tuesday **17** *Bastards of the Party* UU221 San Luis Lounge 7:30pm



Wednesday **18** African-American Quilters PAC Pavilion 5pm

Saturday **21** Cross Cultural Meeting UU220 11am



Friday **27**  
Saturday **28** Change the Status Quo

