



Volume 2 | Issue 6
March 2009

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO



MCC
MULTICULTURAL CENTER

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ATOG Simply Kat

The talented poet-vocalist comes to Cal Poly

February's poet, Prentice Powell sent a good message to the ATOG audience at the start of Black History Month. Holding a double bachelor degree from San Jose State, Powell laced his messages of awareness, education and activism through all of his pieces. At first, Powell appeared to be a laid back and calm guy in a purple shirt, but as soon as he was behind the microphone, his passion for what he was saying was more than evident. Before a couple of his pieces, he spoke about the historical background and personal inspiration for each, including the history of African Americans and their roles in the United States. He also encouraged audience interaction, asking about their personal experiences as they related to his poetry. At one point he even went out into the crowd to give someone a hug for being so willing to share his experiences. Powell took the time to thank all the open mic-ers, especially Dorothy, the 11-year-old daughter of the MultiCultural Center Coordinator, for having the courage to speak what they wrote, emphasizing the importance of the necessity to write what you feel.

Simply Kat will be at Cal Poly in March for Women's History Month (aka Herstory Month). Performing since she was 17, Kat has performed

for colleges, festivals, workshops and group homes, and for all age groups. When she was 21, she entered her first slam competition, and won a spot on the 2005 Hollywood Slam team. Since then she has actively been competing in the Los Angeles area. She was the Slam Champion of the Highways Theater Poetry Slam in 2006 and 2008, a member of the 2006 and 2008 Hollywood slam team, and a member of the 2007 Los Angeles Slam Team. Kat has also been featured on commercial and college radio stations across country. She also performed on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, and had a role in the documentary "SPIT."

Kat is also one of eight coordinators of A Mic in Dim Lites, a weekly open mic event in Pomona, similar to our ATOG. Called "The Alumni," these eight perform their poetry and have workshops for group homes, high schools, colleges, summer camps and jails, as part of active effort to improve literacy and creativity in youth.

Kat continues to tour throughout the country while concurrently writing a play and a children's book.



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

Looking Back at Black History Month

One Man's Dream Continues Decades Later

Following the kick off of Black History Month with ATOG's Prentice Powell, the MultiCultural Center continued with a variety of events celebrating the art and culture of African Americans.

Gospel Night was held on Friday February 6 and featured a several local musicians. Members of Cal Poly's Intervarsity SLO (IVSLO) and Breakthrough Ministries of San Luis Obispo sang and played a wide range of gospel music, including both solo and group pieces, ranging from the soulful gospel to more modern hip hop-infused gospel. The audience was standing, clapping and singing along as the words of each of the songs were projected on a screen on stage. A couple skits were also performed by members of IVSLO about interracial friendships and cultural pride.

University of Southern California professor of jazz and African-American studies Dr. Ronald McCurdy presented the Langston Hughes Project on Wednesday February 11. Along with a group of musicians from Los Angeles, McCurdy presented the project that Langston Hughes created as a tribute to those struggling for artistic and social freedom during the 1960s. Hughes created "Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz" as a twelve-part poem set to a wide range of music and coordinated with an image slideshow. Though the Langston Hughes Project was never performed during Hughes' lifetime, McCurdy made sure his message was transmitted well to the audience.

On Tuesday February 17, potato soup and penne pasta warmed students and staff on a rainy day as Doctor Denise Isom of the Cal Poly

Ethnic Studies Department presented her ongoing research project on the difference between ethnically and culturally different churches within a single Christian denomination. In conjunction with Student Life & Leadership's weekly Soup and Substance presentation, Dr. Isom highlighted the differences between a black Baptist church and a white Baptist church in Michigan, and how both view religion in relation to race. The discussion was unlike most other Soup and Substance presentations in that Dr. Isom greatly encouraged active discussion and participation of the audience throughout her presentation, as opposed to limiting it to the end. The presentation raised questions about racial segregation within churches that students continued discussing even after the presentation.

That same evening, the short documentary "System Failure" was shown to bring up concerns revolving around the juvenile justice system. Following the discussion, Professor Christopher Bickel of the Social Science department lead a discussion about the ideas presented in the film. Professor Bickel's life-long interest in the prison system and gang culture was evident in how much he had much to say on the topic. In addition, many of the students attending were glad to offer their personal stories of experiences with law enforcement and the disparities in sentencing between racial groups, even for the same offense on the same day.

On Wednesday February 18, the last event of Black History Month discussed the African American tradition in the craft of quilting. Cal Poly's own Denise Campbell of Student

Affairs brought in three of her quilts. Following a brief history of African American quilting in the United States, Campbell explained the craft and technique behind each, as well as of African American quilts in general. She explained the intricate overlapping of traditional American quilting techniques and African American quilting techniques, ranging from choice of fabric, stitching techniques and fabric arrangement and placement. She also acknowledged that the current "best quilter in the country" is an African American woman living in the South. Lavalie Campbell, a prominent Los Angeles artist and sister to the Coordinator of the MultiCultural Center Renoda Campbell, also displayed one of her large quilts, as well as two smaller ones. The large one was of great importance to her as it was a representation of slave trade boats, with one side representing the perpetrator (made of white cotton and satin), and the other representing the victim (made of blood-stained burlap), with a whole cut in the center. The quilt was personally important in that her own great-grandmother was brought to the United States on an all-women slave ship, and she told stories of how every night the captain would bring a woman up for the crew to use as they wished and used a quilt similar to the one she made so that their skins would not touch.

We hope you enjoyed this year's Black History Month, and hope to see you again next year! To comment or send feedback about any of the month's events, email us at mcc@calpoly.edu

Poetry Out Loud Comes to Cal Poly

Local High Schooler Poets Compete for Regional Title

In 2006, the National Endowments for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, in association with the California Arts Council, began a high school poetry and recitation competition following the recent interest in slam poetry and performance art. Poetry Out Loud allows students an opportunity to perform their written poetry at various levels in the hopes of reaching the national competition. Arts Obispo, the local sponsor of Poetry Out Loud, wanted the opportunity to expose the competitors to the variety of poetry that spoken word encompasses, and

has decided to host this year's local competition at Cal Poly in conjunction with March's Another Type of Groove.

English classes at seven local high schools have recently studied famous poets, and have given their students the opportunity to perform these poems in their own style for their student body. Those that were chosen to represent their schools will perform their pieces for the chance to represent the Central Coast Region at the statewide level. The regional competition will take place immediately before the ATOG performance, allowing the

competitors the opportunity to see a variety of local and college amateur poets, as well as the month's featured professional poet.

Poetry Out Loud was last hosted at Cal Poly in 2007, and the competitors were able to meet and speak with the featured poet about what poetry means to him and the power of spoken word.

Poetry Out Loud will begin at 6pm in Chumash Auditorium on Wednesday, March 4, 2009. Entrance is free and open to the community.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Woman of the Year Luncheon
Friday, March 6, 2009
10am - 2pm

The Women's Center presents...



Herstory Month

Luna Fest Film Festival
Saturday, March 7, 2009
4pm - 9pm

Visit <http://womensprograms.calpoly.edu>

Students Mix it up with S.A.L.A.D. Club Members Break Stereotypes and Examine Campus Diversity

The MultiCultural Center's annual Cross Cultural Meeting was held on Saturday February 21 and discussed issues of diversity. With help from the facilitation group SALAD, students participated in a variety of events that brought up ideas of values, stereotypes, diversity and social relationship.

With representatives from nine different Cal Poly clubs and organizations present, the discussion began with both positive and negative stereotypes about each group. The facilitator then allowed those group members the opportunity to speak on the group's behalf, sharing what their values are.

A salad bar was served for lunch, but that too included an activity. Participants were in groups of three to five, based on membership size of their respective organizations. Each participant was given a certain number of tickets, with each ticket allowing them to add a single topping to their salad. The tickets being a metaphor for recourses, the participants from larger clubs were given many more

tickets than those from smaller clubs. Those with fewer tickets had to figure out how to best use what was given to them to allow everyone in their group to have a more substantial salad than just lettuce. This brought up the discussion of disparities in resources between small and large organizations, as well as the different problems each has to deal with, even in similar situations.

Following lunch, groups were given case studies of events related to campus life, and had to brainstorm ideas as to how they could be handled best. These were then discussed as a larger group to further brainstorm ideas of how to respond to these types of situations.

A discussion of individual organization values helped participants realize how many Cal Poly organizations hold many of the same values. This was made very clear when groups were given a certain amount of "money" to bid for their values, and each group had different bidding strategies. Some went big and bid on only a couple, while other tried

to get as many as they could.

The meeting wrapped up with personal statements of commitment to diversity and change, and left several participants wanting to further the discussion. Feedback from everyone was very positive and we hope you enjoyed the discussion.

Next quarter's CCM will focus on biracial and multiracial identities. Look for more info in April!

