



Letter from the Board

As this semester comes to a close and the days get warmer, remember to stay focused on your priorities and keep track of your goals. Of course, we hope that your goals can be reached with the confines of JCU - the Lemon Tree Courtyard, any of the terraces, the library. Good luck to the graduating class of 2013 and to those who will be suffering through either of the Summer Sessions. The Matthew staff would also like to thank all of its contributors and readers. Have a great Summer!



Still Too Hot or Cold at JCU

By Jennifer Samson
Contributing writer

For the past few semesters students and faculty at John Cabot University (JCU) have been complaining about the temperature inside the classrooms - either extremely hot or cold - but the issue has not been resolved and it may never be.

Study abroad student Bree Loethen said she is forced to dress in layers because she finds it impossible to find a happy medium. She said her 8:30 am class is sometimes so chilly that she can't even focus on the course material. For example, "I wear my down winter jacket, a sweater, a tank top under that, and a scarf. You

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In Total Diversity, Two Unlikely Groups Coexist and Connect

By Lauren Cater
Contributing Writer

They call themselves the Mosaic Project, in memory of a church in Michigan that lost its footing. This is John Cabot University's (JCU) new Bible study group, founded by Paul Dickens, fondly known as "Pastor Paul" around campus. The group of eight students gathers in the Guarini student lounge to study, dissect and discuss the Bible on Wednesday nights.

Meanwhile, the LGBT-Straight Alliance Club meets up at lunchtime on Mondays in the Tiber classroom T.G.3 to discuss an entirely different set of issues. The group of 10 breaks down news articles hot off the press related to gender issues, gay rights and same-sex marriage and discuss how to better the community. They end with an open forum, providing support to anyone who needs it.

Even though they have different sets of principles and ideas, the Mosaic Project and the LGBT-Straight Alliance Club share remarkably similar goals in that they are trying to create unity at JCU.

"I see so much good that can be done," said Dickens, 20, leader of the Mosaic Project from Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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JCU Attendance Policy(ies)

By Abigail Lewis
Contributing Writer

Students at John Cabot University (JCU) question the validity of the attendance policies enforced by their professors and feel that it should be their responsibility to decide whether to attend class and not their professors. There are mixed opinions about whether there should be one uniform university policy or if the policies should remain in the hands of professors.

"It should be uniform," said Diletta Luminari, a degree-seeking international affairs major from Rome. Luminari said that the amount of unexcused absences allowed per semester change from professor to professor, making it hard to remember. "The attendance policy should be better defined so that students know what is going on," she said.

The JCU Handbook states that the requirements for attendance "are the prerogative of the instructor and will be stated in the course syllabus. The responsibility for meeting the instructor's

attendance requirements rests with the student." This illustrates that JCU has no "official" attendance policy and that each individual professor creates his or her own.

Handel Durham, a degree-seeker majoring in humanities at JCU, described this non-policy as "academic freedom," which is an important value in the American university system. "Teachers are artists, and human creativity is essential in order to create a comfortable and engaging teaching environment in which students are inspired to attend and learn," Durham said.

Giulia Cilluffo, a study abroad student majoring in Italian Studies at Rutgers University in New Jersey, said back home there are no specific attendance requirements, especially since classes are held in large lecture halls, and students decide whether to attend or not.

She said the attendance rules were not clearly defined by her professors this semester. "They haven't really talked

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New Logo for the Student Leadership Conference



To the JCU Community

JCU Student Government has chosen a new logo for the International Student Leadership Conference (ISLC). We would like to thank Professor Sabrina Schmidt and her students for creating the logo options for our conference. The chosen logo was made by Kelsey Manning, a visiting student. The ISLC is a

platform where student leaders from American universities abroad come together for three days of seminars that focus on leadership skills, building through negotiations and the use of media.

On Behalf of JCU Student Government,
Liridona Malota
President

In Total Diversity

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He put his basic philosophy simply: "Love your neighbors as thyself." Dickens was quick to eliminate any negative ideas that students may have about the Bible group and their sentiment towards the gay community.

When Dickens approached John Casselberry, 21, president and founder of the LGBT-Straight Alliance, the two made an immediate connection. They found a common link in their desire to create open, friendly and approachable outlets for students in need of community.

Casselberry was taken aback by Dickens' desire to interact with the LGBT-Straight Alliance. "Paul came to an LGBT meeting; he sat in, and then extended himself and wanted collaboration with the Alliance and the Mosaic Project," he said.

The Mosaic Project's welcoming attitude towards diversity and the LGBT's embrace for the liberal has grown into a great bond. Their goal is to create an atmosphere for the JCU student body that endorses coexistence. They want JCU to see their bridge and encourage students to connect. LGBT and Mosaic Project hope to organize an open forum where students can ask questions about their relationship and ideals.

The groups do have many similarities but there are some factors that separate them. The LGBT-Straight Alliance is an official club, which means that it receives funding - 250 euros per semester - from the university that can be used for events, excursions and projects. It has an official advisor, Kathryn Fedele, JCU's Chief of Staff, and it has access to the clubs and organizations room at the Tiber campus.

The Mosaic Project recently became recognized as an official student group. It does not receive any kind of funding from the school. The group is hoping to become a permanent fixture at JCU and has reached

out to the U.S. Embassy to cultivate relationships outside of school.

The group does have an interest in becoming an "official" club at some point, but Dickens said he doesn't see this happening anytime soon.

Even with several mutual members, a bond between the group leaders and an agreement to coordinate future events together, there is still some uncertainty.

"There is absolutely a living tension present because it [discrimination] occurs at a global level. It doesn't have to be this way, but it is. People bring that tension from all over the world to this tiny university," said Riley Callaway, 20, the standing vice president of the LGBT-Straight Alliance.

She, however, remains optimistic. "It is beautiful though, because they bring it into a condensed environment where they can work it out. It may get heated, but sometimes you need heat to bake the bread. The only way the tension will be diffused is by the Mosaic Project directly reaching out to the Alliance and ensuring that there is no hostility."

Despite the varied opposition, both groups do have a great amount of support around campus. Samira Nuru, 20, a study abroad student from San Francisco, said that she appreciates the availability of both groups. "All clubs are support groups and both of these benefit the community. It would be absurd to outcast either."

Rocco Mandeville, 20, a degree-seeking student and a member of the LGBT, said he was pleased the Mosaic Project was created. "This is a multicultural environment. They are representing a part of the spectrum we didn't have. Religion is not addressed at John Cabot. If we generalize and stereotype the Mosaic Project, then we are hypocrites."

Mandeville hopes the stereotyping towards both groups will end. "This is an international setting. You need to take what you learned, your basic beliefs and values, and be more open at John Cabot. If you don't, you limit yourself in friendship and growth as a person,"

he said.

Anat Ziff, professor of Leading Multicultural Negotiations, Business Negotiation and Interpersonal Communications at JCU, said both groups play important roles for the JCU community.

Ziff posed an interesting question about the Mosaic Project, "Who says the Bible is religion? It can be mythology, theological, literature, anthropological. It can be read in other ways." She also added that placing labels on these groups can be dangerous, "That's what happens with the politics of identity. It prohibits diversity."

Co-founder of an NGO that promotes healthy, peaceful communication amongst diverse groups, Ziff said both the LGBT and Mosaic Project can impact college students positively. "The university is a social place. More so, these are formative years in terms of age. Students ask themselves, 'What will I do with my life? Who am I?' People are trying to see themselves. Student groups fulfill the opportunity to explore and also interact outside of the group. These groups are often transitional."

Ziff's take on the so-called 'clash' of the two groups: "On a superficial level, they negate each other. This is a very superficial level. But, there is also action between people; people following their heart. On a substance level, they can be very close."

Hot or Cold

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wouldn't think that many layers would have to be worn inside a classroom," she said.

William Thompson, a study abroad student at JCU, is also dealing with the odd classroom temperatures. "Sometimes when I walk into class it's as though the previous class was aiming for some sort of melting, tropical paradise," he said.

Finding a solution should not be difficult - open the window or lower the heat - but the problem is that everybody has a say in what temperature the room should be and people have certain preferences as to how many layers they want to wear, Thompson said.

Professors have also been pulled into the temperature issue. Alessandra Seggi, a lecturer in the communications department, said the fluctuating temperature sometimes represents a challenge when she's teaching as the students are complaining a lot. "It's not only inefficient economically, but inefficient ergonomically," she said.

Peter Sarram, a professor of communications who has been teaching at JCU for 10 years, agreed and said there is no

"average" temperature at the university. "I can't stand teaching when it's really hot," he said. "I think students are affected, but I don't have any concrete proof. Heat seems to put people to sleep, where as one would when the classroom is chilled, students tend to stay more awake."

Carolina Ferrarello, a student assistant in the Front Office at the Tiber campus, said there are in-room controls at the Tiber campus classrooms, but at the Guarini campus the front office adjusts the temperature.

Students Call for More Course Options

By Alexa Shearer
Contributing Writer

Some John Cabot University (JCU) students find that the university's course options are limited and would like to see more diversity in the offerings each semester.

"There is not much to choose from," said Noelle Tabone, an 18-year-old degree

seeker from Malta and New York. Tabone would like to take some science classes, but they are not available. "I really like how small the classes are. It's great to have more one-on-one time with the professors, I just wish there were a few more choices."

Humanities major Kelsey White, who would like to become a teacher, expressed her disappointment and said, "I want to take some education courses but there's nothing I can do here to learn how to be a teacher." White said she would transfer out of JCU soon because she cannot study what interests her most.

JCU, a liberal arts university located in the heart of Rome, has 1,044 students, 481 of them are degree seekers and 563 study abroads. JCU offers Bachelor of Arts degrees in 13 majors: art history, business administration, classical studies, communications, economics and finance, English literature, history, humanistic studies, international affairs, international business, Italian studies, marketing and political science.

The student body and faculty are diverse and professors hold degrees from

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JCU Attendance Policy(ies) Continued From Page 1

about it [and] didn't stress the importance of it," she said. Cilluffo added that most of her professors don't even take attendance, so she has "no idea what is going on" with the different attendance policies.

Camilla Carlini, an international business major and transfer student from Philadelphia, finds the attendance requirements to be troublesome, since they differ from course to course. She said that the number of excused and unexcused absences should be more clearly defined. She said she was asked to drop Leading Multicultural Negotiations because she missed a week of class due to a fever. The course syllabus weighs attendance and in-class participation at 10 percent of the final grade. The class participation and attendance guidelines state that, "The course requires attendance and active participation in discussions and exercises."

"She [the professor] didn't say that I had to drop the course, but she said it wasn't feasible for me to catch up since I missed a week of class when I was sick," Carlini said.

She is now taking fewer credits than she wanted to this semester. "It's not the fact that I have to take summer courses now—it's that I paid for 15 credits-- and I don't get my money back. And the worst part is that she judged me based on attendance," she said.

Ramzi El Rifai, a 22-year-old degree-seeker from Dubai majoring in international

business, said that the university and its professors should tell students: "Do what you want." "You are supposed to be responsible enough to attend your classes, and if you aren't, that's your own problem," he said.

"I feel like a f***** kid," said El Rifai in response to professors taking attendance.

Professor Daniel Connelly, who teaches Public Speaking, Shakespeare and Introduction to Theatrical Performance, has found a viable solution to the ambiguity of the attendance policy. Connelly assigns a five-minute presentation to each student as a way to assess their class participation. This way he said, "As long as you give it a go you get the points for it. Everyone knows what you've got to do to get your credit."

Connelly also said that it's the student's responsibility to show up for class,

regardless of the professor's policy. However, he believes that the faculty should create a warm environment in which the students want to be in. "It is about having mutual respect. Not being old dinosaurs who get cross at students for not showing up."

"I never missed class because I was a geek and really wanted to be there," said Connelly. "If you like your professors you just go the extra mile. I never wanted to let them down. I wanted to show them that I was worth their attention."

Meanwhile, Michèle Favorite, a professor of Business Communications at JCU, said, "Professors need to have some independence in establishing rules that apply to their classes." She said that attendance is more necessary in certain classes and that a top-down policy would not help. For example, lecture based classes can be more easily picked up as opposed to classes with constant interaction.

Favorite does not take attendance every class period. "I don't. If we were in elementary school I would, but we are in university," she said.

Professor Louis Bayman, who teaches popular Italian cinema at JCU, said that attendance should be a university wide policy. "I think that would help clarify things for the students."



Political Changes in Venezuela

By *Federico Grossmann*
Contributing writer

In South America there is a young Republic. A Republic that was born from the destruction and the vanished dream of a united South America, the dream and political project of Simón Bolívar. Its separation from La Gran Colombia' in 1830 established the departure point from a history of local leaders who imposed their will through force of arms. The history of Venezuela is one of *Caudillos*, a term used to label influential men in search of more power. The 20th century was characterized by the discovery of oil, which made Venezuela an emerging economic power, and numerous coup d'état that painted its history red with the supposed democracy that took place in the '60s.

However, the death of one of the last *Caudillo*, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, who was in power for 14 years, was announced. His influence created a new political movement that shaped the country and its institutions in ways that are still indescribable. After participating in a failed coup d'état in 1992, he was considered a hero to those who viewed the Democratic bipartisan system as a way to justify the wealth of a few and the misery of the majority. The hero of

the past, without a doubt, became the tyrant of the present. After winning the election at the end of the '90s he started rebuilding the country, which modified everything that represented for some the tyranny of the few from the past.

Chavez is a hero for some, but a dictator for others. His government promoted violence and social division to justify his political agenda and the creation of an imaginary enemy was his best strategy to maintain the support of its citizens. A charismatic figure with noteworthy discursive abilities. Internal conflicts within the opposing political force that disallowed them from competing in an organized manner, and the strategy of chaos, which is a deliberate abstention from the government that allowed criminality and violence to rise and consequently generated a massive loss of lives increased Chavez's government's power.

At the moment you can hear the cries and sorrow of a certain sector of the population, and the celebration of another. Regardless of the tears or the shouts of joy, the truth is that uncertainty now pervades the future of Venezuela. The present is shadowed by the convenience of the corrupt minority that took the place of the previous one. Without invoking divine intervention, the country's fate now resides in the hands of the people, as it always has been.

France Loses a Hero, Stéphane Hessel has Died

By *Diane Bayeux*
Contributing writer

In late February a rally was held at Place de la Concorde in Paris to commemorate the death of Stéphane Hessel, an inspirational French writer and concentration camp survivor. He was 95-years-old, and is survived by his wife Christiane Hessel-Chabry and three children from a previous marriage.

In 2010 his manifesto "Time for Outrage," in which he called for "resistance" and expressed outrage at France's treatment of illegal immigrants and the damage to the environment, was welcomed with open arms. Many said the manifesto where he wrote, "To create is to resist, to resist is to create," inspired the Indignados protest movement in Spain and the international Occupy movement.

Hessel, a Jew, was born in Berlin in 1917. He was the son of Franz and Helen Hessel, who inspired two of the characters in François Truffaut's "Jules And Jim." At the age of eight, he arrived in Paris where his family joined the intellectual Parisian society, of which the poet André Breton, the photographer Man Ray, the sculptor Alexander Calder and the writer Jean-Paul Sartre were members of. Sartre had a great influence

on Hessel with the message: "You must devote your responsibility, you become a human being only when you feel your responsibility."

In 1941, he moved to London where he met Charles de Gaulle and joined the resistance, the same year France fell to the Nazis and his father died. On a mission in Paris in 1944 to contact underground activists, he was arrested

participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. He also worked in Vietnam in the 1950s and Algeria in the 1960s.

"His capacity for indignation knew no bounds other than those of his own life. As that comes to an end, he leaves us a lesson: to refuse to accept any injustice," said French President François Hollande.

He helped write other books, including a 1997 autobiography "Dance With the Century." He remained an activist his entire life, defending the European Union and the oppressed in France, and ever befriended French politicians of the left. As François Hollande said, he was "a great figure whose exceptional life was dedicated to defending human dignity."

During a radio broadcast on RTL in 2011, Hessel said, "Death is something to savour, and I hope to savour mine. In the meantime, given that it has not yet happened and that I'm generally getting around normally, I'm using the time to throw out some messages."



by the Gestapo, tortured and eventually sent to the Buchenwald and Dora concentration camps. He was almost hung, but switched identities with a French soldier who had a typhoid fever. He managed to escape the camp and return to Paris, already liberated at the time.

He became a diplomat and worked for the newly formed United Nations, where he

Faculty: One of the Strongest Aspects of JCU

By Katherine Frazier
Contributing writer

Students at John Cabot University (JCU) find that the faculty is one of the university's greatest assets. In a small university, with just over 1,000 students, a great number of students said it's easy to establish professional relationships with their professors.

"Most professors are approachable and now that I have been here for a while, I know who I should contact and for what," said Aleksandra Rakonjac, a degree-seeking student at JCU. "I have never gotten the impression that professors do not want to talk to me or help."

She also pointed to the diverse backgrounds of the professors that makes them interesting to talk to inside and outside the classroom.

Mary Rideout, a fourth-year degree-seeking student, feels the same way and added, "We get a very unique experience in that we are taught by professors who are knowledgeable in their field and have experience. Because of this, they are able to bring into the classroom more than just what you find in a

book."

One of the must-haves in order to be hired as a JCU professor is field experience, but there is much more.

"The most important criterion for a future employee is the ability to communicate with students and to teach," said Associate Dean Pamela Harris. "In the interview process, we pretend to be students in order to get a feel as to how the candidate teaches,"

Harris added that JCU looks for individuals who understand the culture of an American university. It is good for the professors to have experience and stories, but teaching experience is equally, if not more, important. "We are not here to get good evaluations; we are here to push the students and challenge them to learn something," she said.

The JCU degree-seekers seem to have stronger relationships with the professors and also the staff. "It's a community. Everyone, from the maintenance team to the president, including the professors, is invested in you and cares about you," said Rideout.



More Course Options

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prestigious universities including Columbia University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, the London School of Economics and Political Science, the University of Bologna, the University of Munich, the University of Rome "La Sapienza," the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford.

Bjanka Jusufovic, a freshman from Serbia, who is studying communications believes there are many options, but some don't make much sense. "I find some courses such as astronomy to be random and out of context with the rest of the options," she said.

Gabriella Di Benedetto, 21, from Naples, believes that JCU's course options are more than adequate. "I think there could never be enough options when it comes to making choices about your future," said Di Benedetto, who is majoring in communications.

She compared JCU to the local Italian universities. "Here you are not a number, you actually have your own identity. You are rewarded for your hard work and every student has the possibility to be in the spotlight." "It [communications] is exactly what I want to do with my life; write, critique, analyze and debate," she said.

Mary Merva, Dean of Academic Affairs, explained that courses and majors are carefully chosen through an on-going academic planning process that includes meetings with the academic council, faculty, senate and student government.

Merva does believe that the current majors and course options are indicative of the JCU community. "We try to address the interests of the students and the expertise of the faculty," she said.

The number of courses offered is based on expected

enrollment. For example, Merva said, "If we expect 1,000 students, then we offer about 270 classes to meet an average class size of 15. Of these classes, we allocate to accommodate all of our students' needs to the best we can. It is not easy to match so many students' needs as it is very difficult to predict which classes students will take."

She added that the university's academic strategic plan serves as the guiding framework for curriculum development. The addition of French and Spanish, which will begin in the fall semester, arose from student requests for more language classes and the development of the video courses in the communications department arose from the student forums.

"While we always keep open the options of adding more course selection and perhaps majors, we need to keep in mind that JCU is a small liberal arts university, meaning that it focuses on quality and small classes covering the basic fields that a liberal arts university should cover," she said.

MUN - A Great Opportunity Offered to JCU Students

To the JCU Community.

This semester the Model United Nations (MUN) Society attended the biggest organization's conference in Melbourne, Australia.

WorldMUN is organized every year by Harvard University and it spans the globe. This year JCU sent four students to represent Afghanistan in two different United Nations committees. The committees in which the JCU delegates were placed in were related to Disarmament and Security (DISEC) and Social and Humanitarian issues (SOCHUM). The topics discussed are always relevant to contemporary political events. It is always a great opportunity to participate in the simulations organized by the United Nations because in addition to being a great learning experience, it is also an opportunity to visit new and interesting countries.

Dodi Gomez Paloma

MUN Secretary

The Girl On Cobblestones by Maheen



The girl could say that there was something about the timelessness of the city.

She was walking home from class one morning, passing something different every moment, experiencing a higher power of culture that swept her in.

Crossing the Roman Forum she saw remains of lives gone by. The temple of Julius Ceaser, who had for her always been just a character of the great works of Shakespeare, but in the moment she saw the site of his cremation, she witnessed him come to life, she witnessed the literature she thrived on throughout her childhood come to life.

The girl had never known that anything could be endless, all her life she had been taught that change was the one overpowering, overwhelming concept that loomed over all, but here, she sat in a city that overcame that change.

She walked up the Palatine Hill, seeing fragments of days gone by. It reminded her of her city, Karachi - the city of lights. A city that in this moment seemed to be floundering in its midst but a city that she knew would never fall, a city-like Rome that would always keep rising, always with the help of its past, with the silent shove from its roots that always had a hold on its present.

She realised that things in this city don't ever really disappear, they blend into the surroundings-slowly creating a mesh of the past and present that she didn't even know could exist. And in actuality-this mix rarely did- but here, she now lived in it, she walked in it, she became a part of it-that city of ever eternalness, over ever timelessness.

French National Assembly backs Gay Marriage Law

By Diane Bayeux
Contributing Writer

France took a vital step in its commitment to equality last month and became the ninth country in the European Union to legalize gay marriage, joining countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway.

The bill passed by a vote of 329 -229. It must now win final approval in the Senate. The bill was supported by French President Francois Hollande's socialists and other left-wing MPs.

The bill is an example of the big changes that Hollande announced when he was elected in May 2012. Along with gay marriage, he promised to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, add more jobs and provide significant funding for the less developed regions of the country.

A poll conducted in June 2012 found that 63 percent of the French people were in favor of gay marriage and 55 percent supported adoption rights, but there was also some significant opposition.

The opposition came the Roman Catholic population and other religious groups in France, including Buddhists, Muslims and Jews. In mid-January, thousands of protesters marched on the streets of Paris to publicly express their disapproval of the Hollande's decision to make advances towards gay marriage and adoption.

"It would be a transformation of marriage that would affect everyone and failing to recognize gender within marriage and the family would be a deceit that would rock the foundations of society and lead to discrimination between children," said Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois, the archbishop of Paris, at a meeting of French bishops in Lourdes last year.

The passage of this bill is considered France's most important social reform since the abolition of the death penalty in 1981.

In September 2012, Hollande's popularity had fallen, only four months after he took office. Only 43 percent of French voters were happy with the Socialist president. Gerard Depardieu, a famous actor who refused to pay the taxes recently imposed on him, and his departure from the nation showed how citizens were concerned about the economy, industrial layoffs and high unemployment rates.

The military intervention in Mali, widely praised at home and by allies, only gave him a slight popularity boost.

If the Senate approves the gay marriage bill in May or June, his popularity might improve and he could secure a stronger future.

Women's Day

By Katherine Frazier
Contributing writer

Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are those well-known holidays that are recognized and celebrated by people everywhere, but International Women's Day was a surprise this year to some students at John Cabot University.

"I have never heard of that before," said Elle Irwin, a study abroad student. "I wonder if there is a men's day somewhere. That is interesting."

Every year on March 8, International

Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world in a number of different ways. It is a day to honor women and their achievements. In some countries, it is a national holiday in which schools and public offices are closed. In Italy, *mimose* flowers are given to women and a number of lunches and dinners are organized.

However, some do not consider it a holiday. "I view it more as a day to reflect, not a holiday," said Sofia Martuscelli, a student.

Martuscelli is part of a student club called Ipazia, named after a female Greek scientist. Ipazia members discuss and dissect why there is so much violence against women.

Martuscelli is a big supporter of Women's Day, but wants it to be more of a day of awareness instead of just flowers and candy.

She celebrated Women's Day by participating in the university's gathering in which there was a small debate and discussion on women's rights and the different things that Ipazia supports. Food and drinks were also offered.

"I'm not celebrating it, but I'm hoping someone will give me a flower or something nice," said Bianka Jusufovic from Serbia. She views it as more of a casual version of Valentine's Day.

The articles on the following pages were submitted for the **The Albert Walker Fuller Prize in Communication**. They have not been edited and have been published as is.

Good luck to all the participants!

Shake Your Zip Code Shake Your Life

By *Silvia Bezzi*

August 19th, 2010. My feet at 41° 52' 2'' N; 87° 36' 25'' W.

Amazing what a bunch of numbers can mean to us. Freedom, fear, happiness, growth, commitment, challenge, change...

Chicago's skyline is stretching skyward in front of me. I'm home. A fourteen-hour flight away from my hometown, a webcam and fingertips away from my loved ones, in a Country where nobody speaks Italian, I'm home.

When I left, scared and in tears, I begged my parents not to let me go. I was sure I would feel lost, homesick and lonely. Two-hundred-ten days later, on my way back to Italy, I knew I was right. However, I was so glad I took that chance. I did feel lost occasionally, but having the greatest time of my life beat the hell out of feeling safe.

My pulse speeds up, my legs are shaking. I have a knot in my throat and my heart in my stomach. As I step foot onto the United States of America, I'm still not sure I will survive this.

My gut says "no". My heart says "run!" My mind says things I can't repeat. Yet I walk around with this big, dumb smile that just won't go away. If you've lived abroad you know the feeling. If you who haven't... you must.

Casting yourself thousands of miles away from your "ordinary

life" will rank among the craziest, and most rewarding things you'll ever do. It will be challenging. Something will tear inside of you, and you won't survive this unscathed. You will push away the old world and allow yourself the joy of being absorbed by the new one or you will live in a state of perpetual compromise. You will learn how to balance to lives in different geographies, to change language as if it were a dress.

Learning new words wasn't enough for me, I wanted to commit my body and soul to English. I wanted to think in English, get angry in English, dream in English, fall in love in English.

I felt like I was playing a character that I knew was not entirely me. Someone who was a little stronger, more confident and adventurous than I knew myself to be. I played the role, and I fell in love with it. After months of acting, I realized I wasn't pretending anymore. I had become that person. In Italy, entire regions of my life were missing. But in the USA I was fine. I was home. I healed.

I wanted to drag the feet of that "new me" everywhere, even onto those coordinates that made me want to leave in the first place. But truth is, in each of these countries there is a "me" that doesn't exist elsewhere...

41° 52' 2'' N; 87° 36' 25'' W.

When I arrived I thought all I wanted was a taste. But that day, bare footed on the Adler Planetarium grass, seven-thousand-five-hundred-thirteen kilometers from home, I realized I was wrong. I had discovered the power of travel and I knew there would never be such thing as enough. Now the glass is bottomless and all I want is more.

Call Me Italian

By *Camilla Spallina*

If any of you has not noticed yet, Americans love Italy. From East to West Coast, from South to Midwest, they are just crazy for it. Nothing personal, but many Americans also think they are Italians. A few days ago, I met an American boy from California and we had an interesting conversation about his origins. He proudly exclaimed, "I am half Italian," but when I asked him which part of Italy his beloved grandmother came from he did not even know the region or the area. Nevertheless, he considered himself Italian.

Where does this trend come from? Certainly, one case cannot constitute a trend, but half of John Cabot's American population loves to act like Italians. Clearly, my reflections are the result of a personal examination based on blatant examples, quotes, and circumstances. Every day, at John Cabot University in Rome, an American heart of stars and stripes switches off and an Italian spirit suddenly turns on. I have a name for the protagonists of this phenomenon: I call them "CMIs" (Call Me Italian). There is an unknown mechanism that, at a certain point, makes Americans understand until what time it is legal to drink a cappuccino or when it is appropriate to gesticulate excessively, like a real Italian.

Jersey Shore, an American reality television series in which

eight dramatically young housemates with questionable Italian heritages spend their summer at the shore in New Jersey, had an incredible success since its first episode. Its protagonists embrace their "Guidos" identities making and Italian everything but proud of his/her origins. One of the cast's members, Mike, is so proud of his gym abdominals that he calls them "The Situation." The girls are gummy and glossy drunk machines looking for the perfect Guido. Is this the magnetic attraction for Italianism? If so, it's quite "a situation".

Some CMIs have a particular attitude to correctly pronounce the double "t" of "spaghetti", which is usually pronounced by Americans as an "r", but this is still not sufficient. Donna Leon, an American novelist, said, "Italians know about human nature - they understand human nature perhaps better than anyone else does. They know that people are weak and greedy and lazy and dishonest and they just try to make the best of it; to work around it." This is the best part of being Italians, to me.

Try to put away pizza, mandolins, spaghetti, and all of those stereotypes that pop up in your mind anytime you pronounce the word "Italy." Use your sensational ability to read between the lines and take the more you can from this culture, environment, and country. The motto is "one from many," as you said, and there will always be something to learn.

People`s Voice: The Rebirth of a Country

By *Francesco Piluso*

Television, the bewitched box that benumbs our minds and makes us easy victims of the oddities of our society. This is always the same old issue, by which we are too much bombarded to take it in serious consideration - even if we should. Thus, I want to talk about the positive power of television, of which we never hear about, with the hope of a greater attention. I'm not talking about TV of quality, but of the quality of TV effects, the good strength of television.

This is the case of Afghan Star, a media product with the same format of the well-known British Pop Idol, a program that for American and European people would be immediately poured in the awash and insipid pot of the talent shows. Instead, Afghan Star has represented a real cultural and political revolution in Afghanistan. We all know the dolor of this land, victim of oppressions and deprivation. Since 1992, Taliban's regime has forbidden Afghan people to dance, listen to music and sing. Afghan Star has given back Afghan people their voice, the possibility to express themselves freely. For a country such as Afghanistan, also a simple song can mean much, a little big step towards freedom.

The great opportunity is not only for contestants, but especially for the audience, which can express its own preferences through vote. Well, all this looks so banal for us, but if we try to change perspective, we can realize that for most Afghan people this is the first possibility to vote democratically for something. Therefore, even if we are simply talking about a TV show, the value of a simple gesture is really precious.

Can we talk about democracy in miniature? Probably it is still too early to say, but for a country that needs to rebuild its damaged ground, every little thing has a great importance for a new start. Unity is the key word in the process, and we have seen how the great media, for better or for worse, have always had a great deal in this. Havana Marking's documentary film *Afghan Star* (2009) shows how this program has contributed to create a shared sense of belonging to the country, beyond the regional boundaries and disputes.

We are only partly aware of the power of television: we have always considered its effects in our world, today, overlooking its role in the past and in other places. In Afghanistan, a land so raped, but just for this reason, so ready to rebirth pure, television is not (so far) a corrupted tool of wild consumerism, but a sheer experiment for freedom, democracy and unity. There is still much to do, but Afghan people begin to dream, or more simply to sing.

I Appear, Therefore I Am

By *Matilde Brunetti*

In the XVII century, the Cartesian motto "I think, therefore I am" was sufficient to explain the existence of the individual: the identity of anyone was determined by his thought. In the globalized world of today, in which the mass media are the main interlocutor of the common people, the thought is no more sufficient: appearance has taken his place. The pop culture, narrative of the mass media, at the same time describes us and defines our identity. Consequently, an issue arisen with this social revolution is the one of the visibility: if the mass media do not tell about you, you do not exist.

A mis(s)representation largely acted by the mass media is currently towards the lesbians. Unlike men couples - who have conquered a space in the common culture even if limited and often biased -, lesbians appear in the TV exclusively in two contexts: the denouncement of homophobia, and the sexist environment as an object for the male pleasure. The consequences of this subtle form of censorship are huge: on the one hand, lesbians become invisible women, who feel the necessity to wear a social mask to protect themselves from discrimination in the several environments of their everyday life; on the other hand, the political agenda is negatively influenced by this media defect, and the lesbians see their rights denied.

What is really missing in the popular culture is an actual narrative about lesbians: a story of their normality and peculiarity,

habits and attitudes, their dreams and fears. Everything that we usually know about a traditional couple man/woman - and in some extent man/man - has to be told about a relationship between two women. The point is that this narrative has to be told through the mainstream media channels, the ones which play as the real interlocutors of the common people in the everyday life, as the background of a family's dinner, for instance. They have to be mixed with the pop media contents, and earn a place in the entertainment media, through the mainstream language, the language of the pop.

Personally, I see the very problem in a mutual refusal of the mass culture and the lesbian subculture. Only when lesbians will cease being a subculture in contrast with the pop, they will be able to free their identities from the heavy mask they have to wear right now. In order to undergo this gap, it is necessary to change their cultural products: their artistic outcome can no longer be an intellectual and unconventional discourse produced and consumed by the same, closed, community of lesbians, but it must become a popular and mainstream product, both educational and entertaining, consumed by the common people in the everyday life.

This is the real key for fighting discrimination and ignorance: the popular culture has to be improved in order to play as an educational, democratic tool for the common people, including subcultural and unconventional contents.

Is Taylor Swift Really a Good Model for Young Women?

By April Rich

In America's current pop culture scene there is an abundance of over sexualization of women. Pop stars such as Katy Perry and Lady Gaga have this strong persona of sexuality with songs using clever and catchy sexual innuendos. Perry's song "Peacock" has lyrics saying "I wanna see your peacock, cock, cock, your peacock" and Lady Gaga's song "Love Game" where she sings "I wanna take a ride on your disco stick. The oversexualization of their image does not end with their lyrics but they also present themselves in extremely revealing attire for their shows and performances. Taylor Swift has rebelled against this overly sexual image with her "innocent" and "real" persona, and is therefore regarded as being a positive role model for young girls in society. But is Swift really a good role model? Taylor Swift is a talented young musician who writes her own music, and yes it is catchy, but is her image really a positive one to young girls?

Her audience is primarily preteen and

teenage girls, an impressionable age in which young adults are highly influenced by the pop culture in their attempts to define themselves as a person generally as well as sexually. The reoccurring theme of relationships with boys in her songs gives off the message to young girls that they need a boy in their life to fulfill and validate themselves. And it is not just her music that suggests this; Swift is often in the media for her constantly changing relationships in which she plays the victim in these failed relationships. She gives off the impression that women are weak and highly dependent on men. The most troubling of Swift's lyrics is the line from her song "Fifteen" where she sings: "And Abigail gave everything she had to a boy who changed his mind". She uses the word "everything" as a sort of euphemism for virginity and suggests that everything a woman has is her virginity.

Not only does she suggest that a relationship with a boy is what defines you as a person but she also gives teenage girls

fantasy-like ideas of what a relationship should be like. Swift relates relationships to fairytale scenarios in her songs "Love Story" and "White Horse" with lyrics like: "Now it's too late for you and your white horse to catch me now". She holds relationships in this delusional light of being like cinematic fairytales with notions of happy endings involving finding one's prince charming as the ideal happiness.

We need more inspiring pop music in our culture. One inspiring female pop group that I grew up listening to was Destiny's Child. Two popular songs were "Independent Women" and "Survivor" with the themes of overcoming challenges and independence. "Survivor" with lyrics saying "I am a survivor, I'm not gonna give up, I'm gonna work harder". Preaching how crucial it is to have a boyfriend and reducing young women to the status of their hymen is not the messages of a good role model.

The Importance of Being Positive

By Camilla Amato

Bobby McFerrin said, "In every life we have some trouble, when you worry you make it double (...) don't worry, be happy." Positivity is one of the most powerful skills someone might have; it increases happiness, it creates possibilities, and it results in a healthier life.

Positive psychology studies small practical actions connected with people's main strengths, such as courage, humanity, love, wisdom, knowledge, and temperance, which are able to make people happier. Those activities lead by internal motivations and optimistic attitudes are, in fact, able to produce a sense of enjoyment and achievement. The human mind is, therefore, able to determine people's decision to live a "good life."

Positivity increases possibilities; it makes people think they are able to achieve everything, overcoming any obstacle that might get on the way. The American writer Maria V. Snyder wrote, "Positive thoughts lead to positive results"; each day a person generates an average of 25,000 to 50,000 thoughts; how much power do we have to

change the thousands of thoughts produced by our minds? If we learn how to train our intellect, by positive thinking, then we will be able to modify our attitude toward a more optimistic perspective. If while you are walking you smile at somebody, that person will surely be affected by your action. The artist Victor Borge said, "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people." Smiling and laughing are, in fact, able to influence relationships; it is much easier to have more friends with an enthusiastic attitude rather than a negative one. A positive outlook increases motivation and initiative and it encourages people around you to start smiling and sharing your point of view.

Being positive is a way of living. Studies have demonstrated that two outcomes of positivity are health and longevity. A recent study published on the "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology," surveyed first-year law student about their optimism toward their first semester; the research described how more confident students had, after a few months, better functioning immune cells than the worried students. The theory affirms that a positive

attitude enables people to deal with stressful situations, which are harmful to the body. Harvard University carried out 200 studies focused on positivity, finding out that they are able to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by 50%, which, according to the American National Vital Statistics reports of 2011, causes one out of four deaths.

Emotions are so powerful that are able to change the matter around us. The Japanese scientist and writer Masaru Emoto managed to document how water crystals get their different shapes depending on the kind of vibrations they are exposed to; the structure is harmonious if the person is positive, instead, it is chaotic if the energy is negative.

If being optimistic is so powerful to change something's shape, why couldn't it change the shape of our own lives? Someone once said, "Every day may not be good, but there is something good in everyday." We should always find that good; a positive thinker will always achieve what everybody else thinks is impossible!

What Mothers Want

By Lorena Nardozi

Italy is a land of poets, saints, and mammoni! If some woman considers Woman's Day as the perfect occasion to receive all the attentions and cuddles that she deserves from her adorable Italian boyfriend or husband, there is something that she probably needs to know. Flowers, chocolates, and sweet messages on the phone are just deflating attempts: the hard truth is that, whatever she does, the only very important woman in an Italian man's life is his mother. Trying to compete is useless. There are no exceptions, and all the reassurances are lies: mother comes first and just after all the rest. The word *mammone*, in English *mama's boy*, refers to the typical hyper-coddled Italian son. Indeed, overprotection of the Italian mothers, as well as their exaggerated attachment to sons, is known and criticized all over the world. The close relationship, especially with males, is related to the Italian idea of family that has as main goal to create

permanent link among its members. The mother is the dominant figure, and she usually runs every aspect of domestic life by dedicating all her time to her sons and her husband. Indeed, the overprotective attitude delays the process of becoming an adult, which implies taking responsibilities. This education system is the cause of spoiled and useless sons completely reliant on their mothers. According to the data collected by Coldiretti/Censis, 31% of Italian adults live with their parents. In particular, 60.7% of young people between 18 and 29 years old, 25.3% between 30 and 45 years old, and 11.8% between 45 and 64 years old cohabit with their family. Since the Italian mothers clean, cook, wash, and iron the clothes for their forty-year-old sons, such statistics is not surprising. These data suggest that Italian men do not wish to become independent because life with parents is too comfortable. However, since finding a waitress-wife takes a lot of

time, such a treatment is often the reason why Italian men get married so late. The unhealthy attachment to the mother causes also a large number of divorces. An Italian mother can be very intrusive. Italian men see their mothers almost every day, and when they cannot, they talk on the phone especially when an important decision has to be made. On the other hand, mothers can call her son just to say goodnight or to be sure that he ate well. Moreover, when in Italy the mothers cry at the wedding of their son, usually the reason is not happiness: they feel devastated because he has chosen another woman. As soon as they get married, the mother-in-law can become a real nightmare. She usually loves to continually critic her daughter-in-law as well as give her opinion on married life. Statistics by Istat show that 30% of Italian divorces are caused by intrusiveness of mothers-in-law. Thus, the faithful alliance between *mammoni* and their mothers can be detrimental to private life. Nevertheless, whatever another woman does, the mom's lasagna will be always the best.

A New Vecchio Harbor

By Edoardo Francini

Since 1000 BC Italy had been the land where every merchant dreamt to go to. In order to do some business, merchants were landing in Italy, "the harbor of the Mediterranean Sea", coming from the three continents bordering the Mediterranean Sea. This multicultural exchange shaped the behavior and mentality of people living in the *paeninsula Italica*. The trade and the contact with foreigners made them using some instinctive human "tools of communication" to make the trade more effective. Hence, they become open-minded and friendly, and used a lot of gesticulation to be understood by foreign speakers.

Those traits inherited from the predecessors make contemporary Italians so original and creative. One of the countries that had been influenced the most by the "Italian traits" is the US. The first symbolic influence was the "discovery" of the American Continents by the Italian explorer Cristoforo Colombo. The "Italianness" of the Americas it is even showed by the name America itself as it refers to the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Another way Italians changed the US society, still by sea and still through ships leaving from that same

"harbor of the Mediterranean Sea" is by the large-scale migration of Italians to the US of the early 19th century. This migration made possible a massive integration of the Italian population and culture into the US.

Back to the "harbor", another element shaping the Italian traits was the Roman Empire. In fact, the geographical and political unity and greatness of the Empire made possible a massive multicultural exchange so that people necessarily had to be open to different traditions. However, after the end of the Empire, Italy had been fragmented into many different independent regions. The inhabitants of these regions developed different regional peculiarities, becoming different from one region to another. Yet, they also become close-minded and provincial.

However, even with the Italian Unification, Italians were not completely united yet. The unification was geographical rather than social. Therefore, Italians still needed an event that would have forged their identity forever. This chance appeared in 1943, during the Second World War, when the American Allies troops came to the south of Italy and created a strong sincere connection

with Italian inhabitants to the extent that the large majority of Italians moved from joining the Axis Powers to the Allies Powers. The bond between those two populations made easier the victory of the Allies over the Axis. Thus, thank to the US intervention and the consequent end of the war, Italians started over from the ruins of the devastation of the war.

Until today, Italians did not totally remove yet the provincialism and close-mindedness inherited from the predecessors living in the time period between the Roman Empire and the end of the Second World War. On the other hand, the positive historical and contemporary linkage with the US is pushing Italians into taking back the old values of those merchants and Romans of "the harbor of the Mediterranean Sea". It leads us into embracing a new *vecchia* identity.

On Sleep

By George Minot

Spring is the season of baseball, rain, and unrequited love – as night is the gift period of unconscious genius unleashed and of love as you imagine it. And of rest. Dreams and their transformative boon form an ever-present and overlooked potent cloud solution for all that ails you. Any system of anything human that doesn't put this incredible resource of untapped energy and insight first is compromised..

Who isn't sleep-deprived? We pick up a book at the end of the day, enter into the same paragraph that blocked ingress the night before and put us to sleep, and again the spell repeats. You read a line again, to make sense, instead of just saying the words to yourself, maybe repeat the effort, and it's like an incantation, sprinkling the sands of sleep over your weary, day-battered psyche. You're asleep again. An unclimactic orgasm, ushering you over to the other side.

A student nods off in class. The teacher keeps yawning great delicious apologetic gulps. Workers and mothers everywhere, to start their engines, down their coffee first thing in the morning, as if gassing up the car. Coffee break. Lunch break. We grope from break to break.

How about nap break? It's a little-known fact that baseball players sleep in the dugout between innings. This is why they

have to wake up, under the lights or the sunlight, in the on-deck circle. Note how they shake out the cobwebs, sluggishly swing a couple of bats together, as if confused, look around, dazed, to get their bearings. To wake up. Batter up!

Baseball is off the clock. Unlike football, basketball, hockey, which, like workplace scenarios, are on the clock. Goals to be met. Now! Go! Baseball takes its time. You start at home and try to head out. If you get nowhere, no biggie. You get another chance in an inning or two. And if you do get on base, the goal is to come back home, so you can go back into the dugout cave – where they welcome you back with pats on the ass – and go back to sleep with your snorting, spitting caveman family.

Thou sweet embalmer of the still night, what if your sweet slow nectar were the fuel and guiding principle of all workplaces, schools, organizations? Couches beside cubbies, cots in classrooms, the boardroom tables enormous beds, for sharing a snooze -- and waking at peace, the solution magically arrived through the backdoor unconscious, while you slept.

So let's wise up – if not wake up, since we're too tired, still, to wake up all the way – and crawl under the dugout shelter and huddle together warm before the rain rains down her mean cold sharp million bullet point recriminations. Close your eyes, block your ears and hear the music of the spheres revolving revelation over the beat our one heart walking slowly, steadily, home. For home is always right here, where we live with ourselves. Mobile and mortal. Nature bats last.

Monday, April 15: The Night of Art Exhibits Curated by JCU Students

Professor Illaria Gianni's Curating Museum and Galleries class is happy to present a night of art exhibits curated completely by JCU students.

Facets of Time

6:00pm-9:00pm

John Cabot University, Via della Lungara, 233, Classroom: G.G.1

Artists: Giorgia Accorsi, Alessia Armeni, Michela De Mattei, Silvia Giambrone

Curators: Adriana Bautista, Jesse Borlen, Catherine Carragee, Susan Good, Jennifer Plake

Symbiosis

5:30pm-8:30pm

Arteque, Via Giulia, 13

Artists: Valeria Gianpietro, Alessandro Cioria, Matteo Nasini, Roberto Timperi, Alessia Armeni

Curators: Daria Hassan, Samuel Rogers, Maura Newell, Claire Spears, Bryce Jone

Collective Actions!

6:00pm-9:00pm

Cinema America Occupato, Via Natale del Grande, 6

Artists/Collaborators: Finishing School, thisiswater Productions, A.L. Steiner and A.K. Burns

Curators: Jerelyn Huber, Jahan Genet

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