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hardboiled

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE!

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...because we're family
-richard tran

...because hb provided me not only
an outlet for publicizing my views,
but also a forum for self-discovery.
-jingchen wu

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ABOUT THIS COVER
For its staffers, editors and readers, hardboiled has been a progressive space for education, discussion and action. This issue's cover is a much needed expression of our gratitude to the magazine. Important as it is, it is difficult to find room within our pages to reflect upon just how lucky we are to have this established outlet that amplifies our thoughts and opinions and ensures their recognition in our surrounding community. Long live hardboiled!

editor's note

Community. It's what **hardboiled** stands for and it's certainly been the theme of many campus events for the past month.

If you meet our members, you'll come to find that they often spread themselves too thin. They're active in possibly every single organization on campus because they want to make change not just on this campus, but in this country. This was definitely not what I expected when I first dropped into the DeCal meeting that Wednesday night two years ago.

At first I joined **hardboiled** for the journalism experience because I thought that writing feature articles would be my contribution to the world and that photography was my opportunity to become an artist. Now, I realize that I'm lucky if I can write a coherent sentence or take a picture that isn't washed out. For a while, I seriously considered leaving and relieving **hardboiled** of my lack of talent. But while I do sometimes wonder what use I am to the group, I do not doubt what **hardboiled** has taught me.

This organization supports you in all your endeavors just like how your friends would make it a priority to make it to your first performance because they know it means the world to you to simply have them standing in the crowd cheering their lungs out, all for you. And that's what this club is doing and has been doing the last thirteen years – for you. **hardboiled** was out there campaigning for our very own alumni, marching against UC privatization, and screaming for this month's mass of culture shows.

hardboiled cares. We genuinely do. And it is the

passion of my fellow staff and core that fuels my own motivation. I don't say this because I should. I have no reason to, especially after having spent some pretty pathetic Friday nights this past year putting the issue together before it went to print. I say this because when I walk down Sproul, I think of that morning last year when Eunice chased me down to chat. I say this because when I walk by Chipotle, I think of Cecilia and Kat's bottomless stomach. I say this because when I'm miserable in NYC this fall, I'll have Monte convince me that professional school is awesome despite the fact that we're freezing and in debt.

In every issue, **hardboiled** is angry, advocating and promoting dialogue. We do this through our writing and through our design, hoping that something will grab you, our readers, and inspire you to pass on the knowledge. We're a community. It's safe to expect us to be there for you, to believe in you, and to want to see you succeed. This is why I've stayed around for so long. And this is why you should fall in love with **hardboiled** just like I have.

But breaking up is inevitable and now it's time for me to move on with my life. It's not you **hardboiled**, it's me. I have to graduate and move across the country, but I know that you will continue making your mark as always. I hope that I can find something just as great in the Big Apple.

Always here in spirit,
Julie Tse
Layout editor

Liked what you read? Feel like joining our staff? Want to send us angry letters? Then contact us!

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THE WORLD IS WATCHING: A BREAKDOWN OF THE ASUC DIVESTMENT BILL

by annie kim noguchi

Divestment. It's been a pretty big word here on campus these past few weeks. It's a word I have seen people cry about, people scream about, and people pray about. It's a word that has inspired within me both a profound sense of hope and an acute sense of urgency.

All of these emotions come from a bill proposed by the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) in ASUC Senate. This bill is SB118A, "A Bill in Support of UC Divestment from War Crimes."

What is SB118A?

The bill does three main things: it details and condemns war crimes committed by Israel; it urges UC divestment from General Electric and United Technologies as well as any other companies which materially support or profit from Israel's war crimes; and it creates a task force to investigate whether the ASUC or UC invests in any companies which aid in war crimes worldwide.

However, while the bill passed 16-4 in Senate on March 17th, a week later it was vetoed by ASUC President Will Smelko.

The bill was then brought up again in Senate in an attempt to overturn the veto. After a nine hour Senate meeting and turnout of over 400 people, the Senate tabled the bill until its next meeting on April 28th. The senators collectively received over 25,000 emails both in support of and opposition to the bill. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and leader in the South African anti-apartheid movement, even commended the ASUC for the bill's initial passage.

What does this bill have the potential to do?

You may ask, "How are the results tangible? What exactly will divestment do?"

Some of our tuition to the University is directly invested in General Electric and United Technologies, two companies which manufacture the weapons used by Israel in war crimes. While the ASUC does not invest in General Electric or United Technologies, it can advocate that the University divest the \$135 million it has invested in these companies. In addition to saving lives, divesting from General Electric and United Technologies will signal to other universities and to the world that as global citizens and intellectuals, we will not condone war crimes.

As Naomi Klein put it, this is the beginning of building a "grassroots, non-violent movement to end Israel's violations of international law." By building this movement to divest, we can save the lives of Palestinians who are attacked by machines built and supplied by U.S. companies supported by the millions of dollars that we contribute to the University every year.

How exactly do Palestinians suffer?

A few of the war crimes (taken from the United Nation's Goldstone Report) detailed in the bill include the following:

- A 32 month blockade on Gaza, including a tightening of policies regarding permission to exit Gaza for medical purposes.

- A severe shortage of medications and medical supplies for thousands of Palestinian patients.

- Electricity, water, and fuel denied to 1.5 million people, 90 percent of whom depend on aid for survival.

- The January 4th killing of Palestinian medical aid workers by General Electric assault helicopters.

- The bombing of schools, homes, and civilians by United Technology Blackhawk helicopters.

However, while SB118A has the potential to change thousands of lives, it is not without opposition. At the Senate meeting to overturn the veto, there were a number of arguments against the passage of the bill. While I'm not discounting the individual experiences of the students on this

campus who testified, I do have to point out a few things about some of the common arguments that I heard.

"This bill is anti-Semitic. It makes students feel unsafe on campus."

At the Senate meeting on April 14th, a number of Jewish students spoke emotionally, describing how the passage of this bill would make them feel unsafe, oppressed, and the target of anti-Semitism on campus.

Although they may feel this way, many other Jewish students as well as students of many other communities also spoke in favor of the bill. They explained how if the bill DOESN'T pass, they will feel unsafe on a campus which refuses to, in essence, denounce war crimes when it has the chance.

In addition, it's important to note that Palestinians who are denied access to clean water are OPPRESSED. Palestinians who have bombs dropped on them and undergo continuous helicopter attacks feel UNSAFE. Palestinians who are refused access to medical care or medication and die are TARGETED. Palestinians are oppressed, endangered, and targeted. Their lives are threatened every day.

This bill is NOT an attack on the Jewish community. It is not anti-Semitic to criticize the Israeli government because it has committed war crimes. This is about rejecting acts of violence that violate international laws and not about denouncing a people. It is about sending the message that America cannot turn a blind eye to Israel's actions regardless of their geopolitical alliance.

"This bill causes divisions on campus."

Rather than being wholly divisive, this bill has brought together over 40 student groups who supported divestment. It is creating a way for diverse communities to come together for a common purpose. In recognizing the injustices and human rights violations experienced by Palestinians, the ASUC is sending the message to other marginalized communities that their issues are important as well. By recognizing the plight of the Palestinians, the ASUC sends the message that it stands for justice for all communities, whether or not their struggles are heard or legitimized by the U.S. government.

However, the reality is that the divisions on this campus made apparent because of SB118A had existed long before the bill was even drafted. Yes, some students are divided. Some students disagree with each other, and some students are even arguing with each other. However, the lives and well-being of Palestinians are far too important to maintain the status quo just so that people who disagree can stop arguing for the time being.

As it stands, regardless of whether or not the bill passes, students on this campus will be crying – either in happiness, because their university has taken a moral and ethical position to stand up to war crimes and denounce the killing of people, or in sadness, because they feel that the ASUC Senate has passed a bill with which they disagree politically and personally.

Not everyone can be pleased, but I hope that on Wednesday we listen to those who have the most at stake. The war crimes, the violence, the killing, and the denial of basic needs must stop, and the ASUC has the power to begin this end.

"This bill unfairly targets Israel, while ignoring Palestinian war crimes."

SB118A does focus specifically on Israeli war crimes. While both Israeli and Palestinian war crimes are well documented in the United Nation's Goldstone report, the focus of this bill is on Israel because the University is directly invested in companies which provide weapons to Israel. Because Hamas, the Palestinian governing body, is classified as a terrorist organization, no American company would ever be able to legally build

weapons that go towards Palestinian war crimes.

This bill does not claim that Palestinian war crimes do not happen, nor do any of its advocates support violence against Jews or those living in Israel. This bill is about divestment, not about placing blame or keeping score on who has committed the most war crimes.

If we are concerned about taking sides, the fact of the matter is that we are already on a side by having these investments. This bill is primarily about where we, as students, are allowing the University to invest our money in our name. The most neutral thing to do would actually be to divest because we're already invested. To divest would be to remove ourselves from Israeli/Palestinian issues. Why not do so and put our student fees elsewhere?

In addition, the bill also calls for the ASUC to investigate if any of the ASUC and/or UC funds are being invested in companies which support war crimes, and to make recommendations of additional divestment policies involving these companies. The bill lists Morocco and the Congo as two other places in which war crimes are occurring and that the ASUC could possibly divest from.

As a student and someone who does not support war or violence, I hope it will be the first of many bills which lead the ASUC and the University to be more socially responsible in their investments.

What now?

And so this is what I ask of you: What will you do to put an end to all of this?

What will YOU do to stop YOUR money from being used to fund the weapons and machinery used to kill Palestinians?

How can you, in any way, justify not doing ANYTHING within your power to put an end to this?

Let me remind you again that we're already financing the weapons used in war crimes through our student fees. We're already guilty in our complacency. We're already guilty in our inaction, and we're twice as guilty if we sit around and let this bill fail. In our inaction we are supporting Israeli war crimes.

Actually, let me give it to you straight. Let me tell you exactly how I see it, through the complex arguments, flowery language, and emotional manipulation. Let me lay it out for you: Do you or do you not condone people dying? People being killed? Forget the term "war crimes" even. The reality of "war crimes" is that 711,000 Palestinians have died since 1948. In late 2008 and early 2009, over 1,400 Palestinians were killed during the Gaza War by weapons that we, as UC Berkeley students, have funded. Is this okay with you?

I sure as hell know it's not okay with me. I understand that doing the right thing is rarely easy or popular. Challenging the status quo is always a messy business involving loud and persistent critics. Injustices exist because it's often easier to walk away than it is to challenge these critics.

However, I urge you NOT to walk away. I plead with you NOT to be complacent. Be angry, be upset, be sad, be outraged, be scared, but whatever you do, don't be complacent. Don't let SB118A fail. You are guilty in your complacency. You are implicated in your complacency. In your complacency, there is blood on your hands and THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING. The whole world is watching, and in the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

What Can I Do?

- Write a letter to a senator explaining why you want him or her to support SB118A. Drop it off at the Senators' mailboxes located on the second floor of Eshleman, or go to www.asuc.org.
- Come to the Senate meeting on Wednesday, April 28th at 7:30 p.m. in Pauley Ballroom in the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Union.
- Educate your friends and promote dialogue on SB118A.

Creating an Enemy out of China?

China-bashing on the yuan a disgraceful political move

by diane ling



Take one look at recent international headlines and you know that China-bashing is back in fashion. China once more is being blamed for everything going wrong in the U.S., from job losses to poisoned food and toys. Granted, some of the criticisms may be warranted – such as those on its spotty human rights track record and its notable lack of democracy. But the surge of politicians blaming China's supposed manipulation of its currency exchange rate for the U.S. recession is just downright sad. With all this China-bashing, it seems as if the yuan were the sole source of all the U.S.'s economic problems!

This egregious trend is not only misguided, it endangers the U.S.-China relationship, and furthermore, has the potential to create tension between Chinese Americans and the rest of the U.S. population.

The rhetoric of China-bashing is omnipresent in the media, but is used particularly heavily by labor unions such as the AFL-CIO, who are ever anxious to invoke protectionist principles in order to decrease foreign competition, and by Democrats, who seek the electoral support of the labor unions.

The accusations are coming from all levels of Washington. This March, President Obama urged China to adopt "a more market-oriented exchange rate." Shortly afterward, 130 Congress members signed a letter to the Treasury demanding that unless China lets the yuan rise in value, the U.S. impose tariffs on Chinese goods – wonderful, let's start a trade war between the two largest economies in the world.

Critics of China's current exchange rate policy claim that China is keeping the yuan undervalued in order to gain unfair advantages in international trade. A cheaper yuan makes Chinese goods less expensive in the United States and American goods more expensive in China. This apparently encourages Americans to indulge in cheap imports from China, critics say, making business more difficult for American producers.

However, the situation is more complex than many critics make it seem. For one, the apparent loss to American producers is coupled with a gain for the millions of American consumers who prefer to pay less for their goods.

I do not think that China has been pursuing an unfair currency policy. China follows a fixed exchange rate system, in which the value of the yuan is pegged to the dollar. There is nothing inherently wrong with this policy. Contrary to Obama's statement above, a recent Wall Street Journal article explained that "there is no free market in currencies, as there is in wheat or bananas. Currencies trade in global markets, but their supply is controlled by a cartel of central banks, which have a monopoly on money creation."^[1]

A fixed exchange rate system is in fact used in numerous other countries, including most of Europe. Why? In order to reap the benefits of stable exchange rates. This is what China is doing, and for over a decade it has been a boon to the world economy, leading to increased international trade, higher U.S. living standards due to availability of cheaper imported goods, and economic uplift for tens of millions of Chinese.

Even the U.N. Conference on Trade

and Development has supported China's control of the exchange rate, stating that China has "done more than any other emerging economy to stimulate domestic demand in order to mitigate the crisis."^[2] It advised China not to give in to pressure from Western countries. This international stance certainly says something about the direction the U.S. is going with this currency-bashing.

Stanford professor and renowned economic expert Ron McKinnon says that forcing China to appreciate the yuan is ultimately a misguided economic policy. He urges economists and politicians to "discard the false theory that one can use changes in the exchange rate to control the net trade balance in a predictable way."^[3]

In fact, McKinnon says, the huge trade imbalance between the U.S. and China does not have anything to do with the exchange rate. Instead, it is largely caused by the discrepancy in investment and savings rates between the two economies. In the last decade, the real personal saving rate in the U.S. has been near zero, while that of China has been between 30 and 40 percent.^[4]

Perhaps the best way to begin fixing the trade deficit with China is by admitting that the U.S. has been living beyond its means for decades. Unless Americans change their investment and savings rates on an aggregate level, the trade deficit is not going to change.

Another point to ponder is the fact that the savings China accumulates through trade with the U.S. are invested in U.S. Treasury securities. According to one of our own Congress reports, "given its relatively low savings rate, the U.S. economy depends heavily on foreign capital inflows from countries with high savings rates (such as China) to help promote growth and to fund the federal budget deficit."^[5]

So when U.S. politicians complain about the undervalued yuan, their message to the Chinese essentially translates to: Stop lending us money.

The U.S. anti-China sentiment resulting from China-bashing in the media does not bode well for the future of either nation. Both nations are inextricably intertwined in an international relationship of immense global significance. Moreover, clear changes in the power dynamics of this relationship have emerged in the 21st century. While China has depended greatly on the U.S. in the past, experts warn that this dependence on the U.S. is decreasing as China strengthens its ties with other nations. At the same time, the U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on China in multiple respects, including the foreign investments mentioned previously.

Both nations must learn to adjust to this ongoing shift in the distribution of global power. China will need to exert caution in how it presents itself as a rising global superpower, avoiding policies that may be seen as a threat to global stability or hurt long-term national interests. Meanwhile, the United States must learn to display a more humble attitude toward China, instead of viewing it as an easy scapegoat to pile insults upon for the purpose of garnering votes at home. As Washington attempts to sift through its enormous budget deficits, it would behoove politicians to think carefully before creating an enemy out

of one of the nation's biggest creditors.

As a country, we need to strive for a mutually beneficial instead of an antagonistic relationship with China. Instead of viewing China as a rising enemy to be stifled, we need to view it as a valuable partner to cooperate with on solving imminent global issues.

Yet that is not happening, as current media sentiment makes clear. Much as some would like to deny it, racial attitudes still lurk behind U.S. politics involving China and other Asian nations, and by extension, that involving Asian Americans. The concept of "Western is best" is consistently reflected in American foreign policy as well as in the attitudes of much of the general American public.

As Asian Americans, we have much at stake in a stable and positive U.S.-China relationship. Hostile national attitudes toward Asian nations often translate into racially motivated incidents of physical

and intellectual violence against Asian Americans. This fact was brought to light most plainly in the infamous case of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man beat to death in 1982 by Detroit auto-workers who thought he was Japanese and who were resentful of the job losses caused by the success of Japanese car manufacturers in America.

In another illustrative case, during the Cold War the U.S. saw China as an ideological enemy to be contained by all means. This resulted in the racialization of national security: Chinese Americans became suspected internal enemies and national security risks by virtue of their racial origin.

These historical examples demonstrate the oft-underplayed but key role that race plays in linking U.S. diplomatic policies toward Asia with the treatment of Asian Americans domestically.

So when when we have high-profile individuals like CNN commentator Jack Cafferty calling the Chinese a "bunch of goons and thugs,"^[6] how detrimental is that to the image of Chinese Americans here at home? How much more absurd, ignorant, and racist can voices in public media get?

It's a shame that U.S. politicians and the U.S. media are choosing to walk the path of China-bashing for the sake of carrying out their own political agendas. Not only is such propaganda a poison to American citizens' minds, it endangers our national relationship with an important rising country that we cannot afford to create an enemy out of, and it creates a leeway for domestic anti-Asian American sentiment – which we can very little afford either if we wish to retain our image as a progressive, respectable modern nation that practices what it preaches.

[1] The Yuan Scapegoat. (2010, March 18). *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405274870474340575127511778280940.html>.

[2] Koo, G. (2010, March 25). Opinion: Senators find China bashing easier than making good policy. *Mercury News*. Retrieved from http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_14758898.

[3] McKinnon, R. I. (2009, February 13). China's Dollar Link Could Be a Depression Stopper. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123448695637080213.html>.

[4] Llosa, A. V. (2009, February 2009). End the China Bashing. *Real Clear World*. Retrieved from http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/02/end_the_china_bashing.html.

[5] CRS Report for Congress. (2008, January 9). China's Holdings of U.S. Securities: Implications for the U.S. Economy. Retrieved from <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/99496.pdf>.

[6] Beck, Lindsay. (2008, April 17). China calls for "sincere apology" from CNN. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSPEK27931220080417>.

LIVING HISTORY: THE HOME FRONT UNDER ATTACK

by denise wong and carmen ye

Popularly conceived as homes to cheap food and commodified trinkets, the historical Chinatowns of New York City and San Francisco, while vastly different, have undergone similar struggles due to their complementary roots.

Both neighborhoods, home to both authors, hold substantial significance for the Chinese American community. San Francisco's Chinatown is the oldest, established in the 1840s, while NYC's is the largest, covering about two miles.

Though characterized by dilapidated tenements and brightly colored buildings with stereotypical pagodas, the two communities share commonalities deeper than their superficial media depictions. Their origins lie in the 1849 Gold Rush, which attracted the first huge wave of Chinese immigrants to California. When the Gold Rush died down, these immigrants often had no means of returning home and were forced to permanently settle here. Faced with discriminatory laws, such as outright exclusion, some Chinese immigrants moved to the East Coast for employment.

Chinatowns were created as protection against xenophobia and pervasive anti-Chinese sentiment, but soon developed social networks and self-sufficient businesses. With the 1965 Immigration Act, grassroots organizations such as Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) and Chinese Staff and Worker's Association developed youth advocacy, immigrant labor organizing, and bilingual tenant rights' programs.

Ironically, both cities' Chinatowns, initially formed due to isolation from mainstream society, are exploited today by gentrification. Euphemized as "revitalization," this urban phenomenon refers to the takeover of low-income property by wealthier entities buying in and driving up prices. For example, the Ellis Act in San Francisco allows a landlord to evict tenants on the premise of bankruptcy. Although the landlord must keep the property empty for at least five years after eviction, he or she is then able to sell it for a higher profit.

The cost of living becomes unaffordable for the original residents, often resulting in the mass displacement of affected communities. Gentrification has already wiped out Manilatown, a once thriving Filipino community in San Francisco that died out in the 1960s due to development in the financial district.

Are Chinatowns headed down the same path?

NYC's Chinatown emerged as a Chinese ghetto in 1870, amidst a diverse immigrant enclave in Manhattan. However, its post-1965 explosion into a national landmark generated conditions that have forced gentrification onto the community for decades. The simultaneous influx of low-income Chinese immigrant workers, professional businessmen, and overseas investors in the 1970s stimulated unprecedented growth.

Given its new immigrant labor force, the neighborhood developed an economy anchored in the restaurant and garment industries. However, Chinatown's garment industry collapsed in the mid-1990s, as increased competition from imports closed down many factories. Chinatown residents were out of work, and investors began to engage in real estate speculation to profit from the rising immigrant population. Fewer jobs and higher rent prices have rendered the neighborhood unstable in recent years.

These historical enclaves may be the closest thing to a physical space that holds our unique history and culture.

September 11th catalyzed the urban colonialism of Chinatown in the name of "economic redevelopment." Immediately after the attacks, city officials tended to Wall Street and TriBeCa, which are affluent white neighborhoods near the World Trade Center; Chinatown, also a nearby community, was ignored by the government until its residents protested. Officials also blocked off parts of Chinatown for weeks due to soot in the air, crippling local businesses.

The city proposed to ameliorate Chinatown's economy by pushing its overdevelopment and promoting its commodification. The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) prioritized luxury development and augmented Chinatown's tourism industry. Policy measures such as the 2008 Rezoning Plan of Community

District 3 have expedited Chinatown's destruction. The rezoning measure granted height protection to the East Village, allegedly to protect it from overdevelopment. The plan deliberately excluded

Chinatown and the Latino Lower East Side, the other two constituent neighborhoods of CD3, promising to develop a "separate plan." NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg has passed other, similar plans that have uprooted communities of color, but this one is especially detrimental due to Chinatown's unique post-9/11 experience.

The Rezoning Plan hastened assault on Chinatown in the form of luxury construction and tenant harassment. Corporations have attacked the area due to its position amidst wealthy white neighborhoods and appeal to tourists. Given developers' aggrandizement of Chinatown as a historical and cultural treasure, it is not surprising that NYC has failed Chinatown, allowing it to disintegrate into a Disneyland version of itself and threatening to dissolve a beautiful community famed for its living history.

San Francisco's Chinatown faces a different reality. Less of a Disneyland and more of a network of extended families, it is the second most densely populated neighborhood in America. [1] While gentrification has not ravaged this Chinatown to the degree that it did in NYC, the community still bears the costs of urban renewal.

Chinatown sits on prime real estate, bordered by the wealthy neighborhoods of North Beach, the financial district, downtown, and Nob Hill, reflecting the dynamics of NYC's Chinatown. After the 1906 earthquake devastated the city, Chinatown was under threat of relocation.

City officials proposed exporting Chinatown to the city's southern outskirts, like a dispensable commodity. The suggested location rested on what is now Hunter's Point, a chemically hazardous area. As a clear example of environmental racism, in which communities of color are subjected to environmentally unsafe conditions, this was a pre-cursor to the gentrification that later hit NYC and transformed the lives of residents there.

However, unlike those of NYC, the residents of San Francisco's Chinatown pressured the city government to rethink their proposal by reminding them of their neighborhood's contribution to the tourism industry, the city's top source of revenue.

Look Tin Eli eventually commissioned two white architects to design a new Chinatown in the likeness of a "little" China, resplendent with bright colors and pagodas.

Yet the average building in China neither sports a roof with gently curling edges nor is decoratively painted. Look Tin Eli did what he had to do for the sake of preserving Chinatown, creating a landmark based on the inaccurate imaginations of two white men.

Since Chinatown's reconstruction, pressures to redevelop properties into more profitable ventures have been combated by the 1986 Chinatown Area Plan. This plan set zoning heights, restricted the commercial use of space, and emphasized the area's cultural and historical significance. Deland Chan, a senior planner at CCDC, notes the 1986 Area Plan "has helped to prevent San Francisco's Chinatown from undergoing the same fate as New York's" by effectively limiting spaces for corporate use.

The catastrophic events of 9/11 also set the two Chinatowns apart. NYC's government pumped money into Lower Manhattan to revitalize the tourism industry there, while as Chan states, "San Francisco's Chinatown never got that sort of attention." San Francisco was spared the gentrification that befell NYC and the related decline in affordable housing for tenants.

In San Francisco, Chinatown's residents pay for their fairly impressive stock of affordable housing in other ways. A report by Sherman Gee, a youth educator in Chinatown, indicates "the hidden costs of keeping affordable housing in Chinatown have been a lack of repairs, dangerous living conditions, and the high incidence of housing violations." [2]

Over 60 percent of housing consists of Single Room Occupancies (SROs), an eight by ten rental unit lacking a bathroom and kitchen. Tenants share communal bathroom and cooking areas, retreating to a room cramped with other family members. Dimly lit and poorly maintained, these buildings have landlords who are either apathetic to their tenants' needs or live abroad.

Though NYC's and San Francisco's Chinatowns are indeed homes, they are underprivileged and underserved. The very heterogeneity of the Asian Pacific American identity necessitates that all APA groups take part in this struggle for equitable resources and political representation.

These historical enclaves may be the closest thing to a physical space that holds our unique history and culture. Particularly for youth in the area, Chinatown is both a gateway to our distinctive identities and an organizing space to address hidden systemic problems.

This significance is frequently lost to developers who see only dim sum and dollar signs. While anti-gentrification efforts have built solidarity within our diverse and often fractured community, it has become a seemingly losing battle on the home front.

But gentrification is not inevitable. It is largely carried out by such projects as the LMDC and can be effectively combated, as demonstrated by the 1986 Chinatown Area Plan. The challenge now is not only to preserve Chinatown as a historical and cultural relic but also as a community.

NYC has failed Chinatown, allowing it to disintegrate into a Disneyland version of itself.

[1] <http://www.sfexaminer.com/local/Funding-runs-dry-for-attorney-projects-6471562.html>

[2] <http://bss.sfsu.edu/urbanaction/ua2007/articlesPDF/chinaTown.pdf>

photo courtesy of wilson so



photo courtesy of wilson so



photo courtesy of wilson so

fei tian culture show

by tawny tsang



photo courtesy of wilson so

On Friday, April 8th, Fei Tian's Dance Showcase "Calligraphy in Motion" artfully depicted strength, beauty, grace, and ease. The showcase was not only a celebration of culture but also of diversity and community. This was powerfully conveyed by the choreography and guest student group performers, which included Cal Hawaii, Kal Ki Awaaz, the erhu decal, and Cal Wushu. The synchrony and coordination of the dancers demonstrated a somatic communication that translated into a poignant story for the audience. The costumes of the dancers were beautifully constructed and emphasized cultural idiosyncrasies of the dance. Like the costumes, the program was not restricting. It carried the audience on a journey through space and time as it featured dances representing various Chinese ethnic groups. Moreover, the guest student performers provided a nice contrast to the dances, to make for an overall experience that equally satiated all the senses.



photo courtesy of wilson so



photo courtesy of justin gonzaga

pilipino culture night

by montague hung



photo courtesy of justin gonzaga

The Pilipino American Alliance presented UC Berkeley's Pilipino Culture Night on April 11th, 2011. Many intricate traditional dances were incorporated into the show, which showcased unique aspects of Pilipino culture such as the Singkil, Igorot, and Maria Clara dances. PCN was not only very cultural but political as well. The themes of the show consisted of issues important to the Pilipino American identity today, such as education, sexual orientation, cultural history, homeland economics, and personal identity. And of course, who wouldn't want to see **hardboiled**'s beautiful Denise Wong shaking her sexy thang in PCN Modern's Love Team set? All in all, the fantastic production really exemplified how a student group should put on a professional culture show.

photo courtesy of justin gonzaga



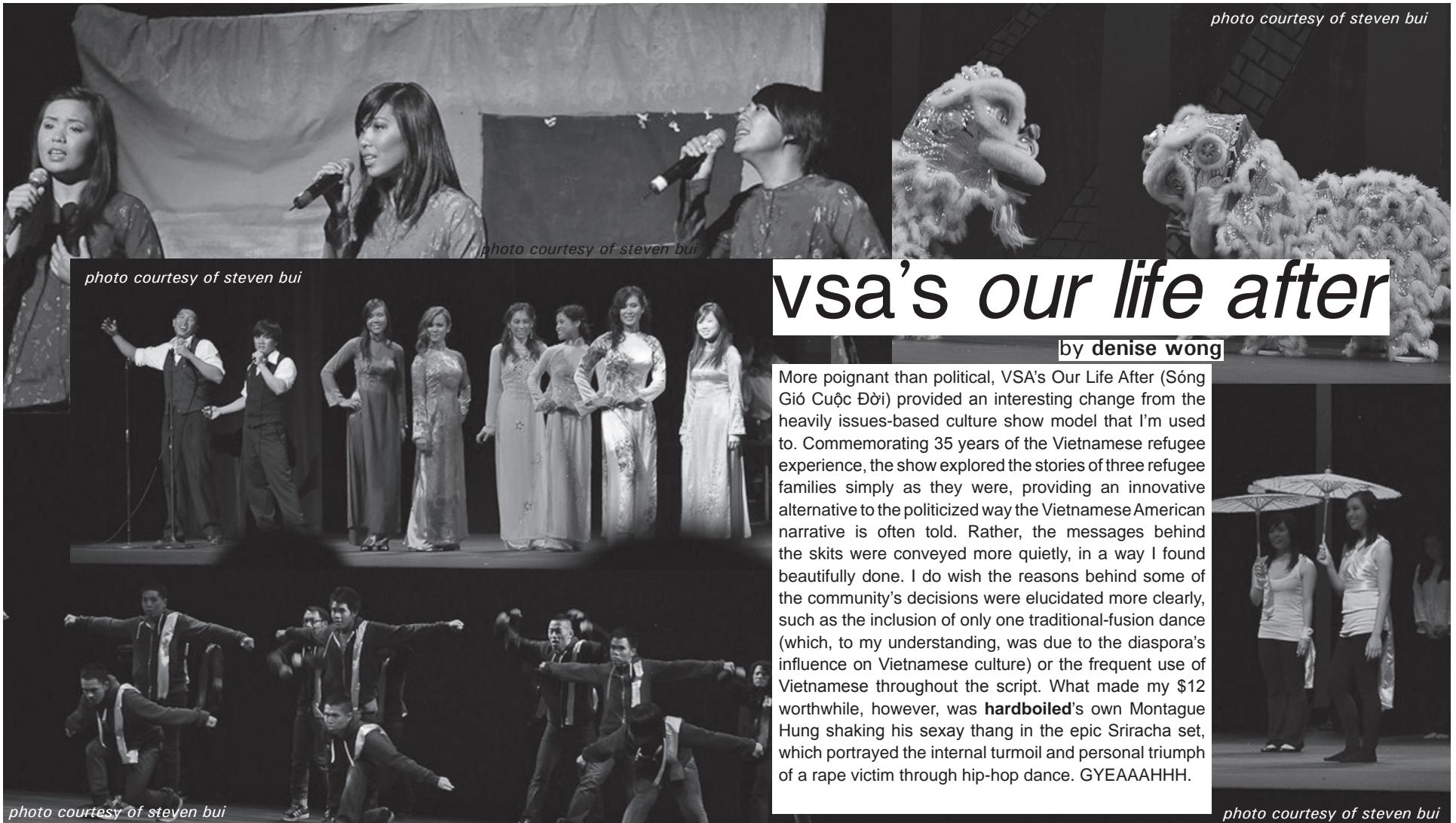


photo courtesy of steven bui

vsa's our life after

by denise wong

More poignant than political, VSA's Our Life After (*Sóng Gió Cuộc Đời*) provided an interesting change from the heavily issues-based culture show model that I'm used to. Commemorating 35 years of the Vietnamese refugee experience, the show explored the stories of three refugee families simply as they were, providing an innovative alternative to the politicized way the Vietnamese American narrative is often told. Rather, the messages behind the skits were conveyed more quietly, in a way I found beautifully done. I do wish the reasons behind some of the community's decisions were elucidated more clearly, such as the inclusion of only one traditional-fusion dance (which, to my understanding, was due to the diaspora's influence on Vietnamese culture) or the frequent use of Vietnamese throughout the script. What made my \$12 worthwhile, however, was **hardboiled**'s own Montague Hung shaking his sexy thang in the epic Sriracha set, which portrayed the internal turmoil and personal triumph of a rape victim through hip-hop dance. GYEAAHHH.

photo courtesy of steven bui

photo courtesy of steven bui



photo courtesy of matt schriock

photo courtesy of matt schriock

cal raijin taiko annual spring showcase

by julie tse

Cal Raijin Taiko, the campus Japanese drumming ensemble, held its third annual spring showcase, "Unleashed," on Wednesday, April 14th. Having attended the last two shows, I had high expectations – the group has previously created flawless, entertaining showcases. The group itself did not let me down. Watching it perform, I was pumped as they delivered non-stop energy with every kiai and beat. However, the venue somewhat lowered the quality of their performance. The lighting used in Pauley Ballroom led to some slightly awkward scene transitions. Nevertheless, this shortcoming was later compensated by Kenny Chen and Stephanie Chang's duet on the cello and odaiko. The weaving of two different cultures and their respective forms of music brought about a heightened level of elegance and beauty to the show.

photo courtesy of mitchell masuda

photo courtesy of matt schriock

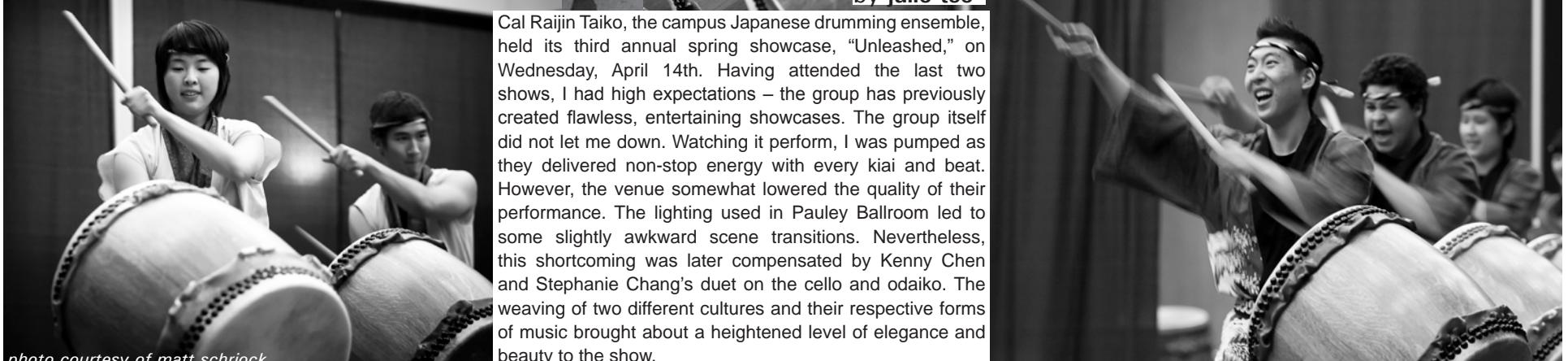


photo courtesy of matt schriock

CULTURAL EXPRESSION THROUGH PHOTOS

Every spring, different student organizations put on culture shows. Although each group shares a unique story, they all tell tales of cohesion, solidarity and community. It presents an opportunity for students to showcase their talent and cultural values in a positive environment. **hardboiled** was able to attend a few of these culture shows and offer a recap on the following.

by tawny tsang

hb 13.4 April 2010 7

All the Right Moves?

ABDC's Season 5 winner Poreotics not exactly reppin' it legitly in the spotlight

Poreotics. This six-member dance crew of witty humor specializing in popping, choreography, and robotics – hence the name Po-reo-tics – started in Westminster, California in 2007. However, it was not until this year that they really shined on the radar screen, recently being crowned champions of “America’s Best Dance Crew,” Season 5. Throughout the show, Poreotics made sure that they represented their name well, incorporating a fierce energy into their meticulous acts of popping and robotics and their creative choreography.

I’m not particularly an avid fan of “America’s Best Dance Crew,” but I was happy to see a crew from somewhere close to home. If anything, they were reppin’ Westminster! Holla to one of the epicenters of genuine Vietnamese cuisine and culture.

During week one, Poreotics made their official debut into the competition by busting out isolations and offering their own twist to none other than the sickest track topping the hip hop charts: “Love Story” by Taylor Swift. After they did their thing on the dance floor, the host of the show, Mario Lopez, asked Poreotics member Can Nguyen why they decided to wear sunglasses in their performance. Nguyen responded in a mock accent, “because we da Asian...and we have da small eye...and we like robots.”

In a previous interview, the crew had explained that the signature sunglasses made them look like robots. So, what Nguyen said was obviously a comical move – right? However, what might have not been obvious is just how much this self-deprecating comment costs to instigate a few laughs. The reaction from the audience was pretty much positive, but what about the reaction from the Asian American community and the implications on racial stereotypes?

We get it that these guys are funny and extremely talented, but to resort to backing racial stereotypes as a means of entertaining the crowd is a bit unnecessary, to say the least.

Personally, when watching dance competitions, race rarely crosses my mind. With all the slick action going on center stage, all I can think about is, how many hours did they need to perfect that? In particular, in a show like “America’s Best Dance Crew” that allows viewers to vote for their favorite teams, people generally look at skill level stemming from hard work as their main basis to root for a certain crew.

But, when Poreotics brings up these racial stereotypes on national television and the host responds with “you guys really are funny,” they are exploiting something offensive to create something laughable. Sometimes the best way to get over something is to laugh it off, but in this case, finding humor in racial stereotypes only exacerbates the problem and acknowledges the stereotypes as “truth.” It creates the notion that it’s okay to laugh at how certain races look, and suggests that the fact that they laugh at themselves too means they accept it.

In week seven of the competition, Poreotics took on the Hip Hop Nation Challenge, which required them to combine various hip hop forms such as the New Orleans Bounce. That week, Poreotics announced that they had ABD: “Asian Booty Disease” – which meant that they did not have a fanny pack to dance with.

Maybe this is just another one of Poreotics’ funny moments, but it seems that the joke may be on us – the Asian community. Is this the way that we want to be represented?

After Poreotics performed, judge JC Chasez said, “you guys did it right. It was funny to see you guys do that.” But what is that supposed to mean? Chasez’s statements sounded to me as if he were saying that Asians don’t do that kind of dance because they can’t, and that seeing them try was comical.

This whole exchange demonstrates the feedback loop that I believe occurs in the perpetuation of racial stereotypes. Poreotics makes a joke of themselves as Asians and the audiences takes that joke and runs with it. I suppose it’s nice that this is a performance environment

where appearances don’t really matter as long as you can prove yourself on stage. But in the “real world,” these stereotypes are the barriers that prevent many individuals from being able to take the stage and prove themselves. By taking moments like this lightly, we continue to enforce the stereotypes that plague our community.

Just earlier this month, numerous instances of what seem to be random acts of violence occurred in San Francisco in a series of attacks on the Muni. In a recent incident, a surveillance video captured a group of individuals terrorizing a rider along the Third Street Muni line. The attackers were teenage boys and the victim was a 57-year-old Asian woman. The most devastating incident occurred last January, when 83-year-old Huan Chen was kicked and beaten as he left the Muni stop at Third and Oakdale and later died from his injuries. In all of these incidents, the assailants were African American teenagers and the victims were Asian.

Although we may never hear from the attackers exactly why they carried out these crimes, we can deduce that some form of hate was involved. Since these attacks were committed by teenagers, it is disturbing to ponder who and what may have planted ideas of hate in their minds. Media is very influential nowadays, and it is crucial to keep in mind how we want to portray ourselves to others, especially on shows that target teenagers such as “America’s Best Dance Crew.” By making such racially stereotypical remarks, Poreotics propagates the same ideas that community leaders have tried to eradicate.

“America’s Best Dance Crew”’s track record of winners has shown that Asian Americans definitely are in these dance competitions to win them. Actually, all of the crews except one that have won the competition were comprised of Asian members.

For this reason, starting with the next season, the show has banned all groups completely composed of Asian members from the competition and limited the crews to having a maximum of two Asian dancers. Producer Randy Jackson explained, “we think it’s only right to give other races a fighting chance within the show.”

Just kidding. That didn’t happen. But this was an actual rumor that circulated the Internet. What is interesting is that many people actually believed or were hesitant to call it out as false when they first heard it. This suggests that the winning streak of Asian dance crews did not pass unnoticed. However, these champions were not notorious – if anything, they demonstrated that barriers could be broken when people reach a common ground with their passions and respect others on substantial grounds such as talent.

But it is clear from the acceptance of this rumor that racial diversity is not celebrated, but rather, viewed as a competitive threat.

Dancing has always been a powerful means of self-expression. Watching these groups perform on “America’s Best Dance Crew” has always gotten my blood pumping faster and has even been slightly inspiring. After watching these performances, I am usually at awe because every move seems perfected and I feel that there is nothing I would change if I were a member of one of the teams.

However, after hearing the comments made by Poreotics, there are a couple of things I would change. Poreotics had the chance to represent themselves and the Asian American community, but they degraded themselves and chose to find humor in racial stereotypes when they could have propelled a more positive and empowering view on Asian Americans and racial diversity in general.

As a member of the Asian American community, I would like to think that we, too, are a crew... that we are a team. So, I felt disappointed and actually offended to hear such stereotypical remarks made by people who were representing the very subjects of those remarks. It may just have been the entertainer side trying to humor the crowd, but it was a move on the dance floor made for all the wrong reasons.

photo courtesy of abcglobal.go.com

isang bagsak: 25 years of building a community

by cher padua

“The recruitment and retention of Pilipinos into higher education” is the mission statement of UC Berkeley’s Pilipino Academic Student Services (PASS).

On March 13, 2010, 25 years after its inception, PASS celebrated its achievements throughout the years and looked ahead to what the future holds.

The theme of PASS’s 25th anniversary was “Lifted as One,” highlighting the ability of the Pilipino community to extend an open hand to their members and achieve their goals together. This name is an extension of the phrase “isang bagsak,” which translates to “one down, one fall.” When one from the community falls, all fall with him.

At a time when it’s easy to take a student organization like PASS for granted, this celebration reminded the Pilipino community and beyond what a strong coalition of bright, confident students is capable of.

PASS Executive Director Kaegy Pabulos put it best: “From its conception, PASS actively endeavored to recruit and retain Pilipinos into higher education. Facing countless struggles in advancing through the intricacies of the educational system, PASS, with its communities, flourished and evolved. Today, without the motivated members that revitalize and foster the organization, PASS would not exist to celebrate its 25th year.”

I have been in and out of PASS for the past few years. I can’t say that I know all the goals of this student organization, nor can I accurately describe how they are all executed. What I can do, however, is recount the ways in which I have witnessed PASS contribute to the advancement of Pilipinos in and around the UC Berkeley campus.

I first encountered PASS in my senior year of high school. A student organization from Berkeley contacted me and a number of Pilipino students to participate in something called Senior Weekend, during which prospective Berkeley students of color spend a weekend in Berkeley and discover what it has to offer. PASS participates in this event along with other student organizations under the Bridges coalition, such as the Black Recruitment and Retention Center (BRRC), the Native American Recruitment and Retention Center (NARRC), the Raza Recruitment and Retention Center (RRRC), and the Asian/Pacific Islander Recruitment and Retention Center (REACH!). During that weekend, high school seniors across California were exposed to a variety of political and resource workshops, as well as campus tours.

“We’re giving them the opportunity to see and experience Berkeley so they can see what is the right choice for them,” said third year and 2007 Senior Weekend attendee, Precious Guan. “What college to go to is one of the most important decision[s] a high school student has to make; Senior Weekend helps them make that decision.”

Many students have been positively impacted by Senior Weekend, not only in their decision to attend Cal, but also in getting involved with student organizations. Current PASS Executive Director Kaegy Pabulos was one of them.

“What made me want to get involved [in PASS] was the empowerment and inspiration it can provide to others,” said Pabulos.

PASS intern Arjunels Ducusin has experienced the type of empowerment Pabulos mentioned.

“My first semester, I was struggling academically with the transition from high school to college,” explained Ducusin, “but PASS showed me that that’s normal and not only gave me the resources to fix that, but also gave me comfort and support when I felt like I didn’t have any.”

PASS achieves its goals through three separate components of the organization: internal, retention and recruitment. The internal component works on the internal structure of the organization, including but not limited to finance, public relations, internal support and oversight. The recruitment component is in charge of reaching out to potential students, ranging from elementary to community college students, through events such as the aforementioned Senior Weekend. Finally, there’s the retention committee, which fosters social, political, and academic awareness amongst individuals and the community as a whole.

“PASS’s mission statement would forever be bigger than our roles as students,” said Pabulos, “The organization plays

[continue on page 12]

A NEW TWIST ON HATE

Years of hate drive a man to murder

by alex tagawa

Most hate crimes we hear about are motivated by racial hate. One famous example is the Vincent Chin case. Although Chin was Chinese American, his murderers thought he was Japanese and targeted him because they resented Japan's success in the auto industry.

However, rarely discussed are the crimes committed by people in reaction to some sort of discrimination they experienced in the past. Should people who commit such crimes be held completely responsible for their action, or can their past experiences of discrimination somewhat mitigate their responsibility? This is the question that will determine the case of Steven Ronald Honma.

On March 20, 2010, Honma was charged for murdering Norman Schureman, an instructor at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. The murder occurred at a Persian New Year party in Westlake Village. During the party, Honma became upset after someone referred to his wife as a "Christian white whore."^[1] Honma left the party with his wife after the slur, but he later returned with a knife and two guns, and shot Schureman in an ensuing scuffle.

Honma's attorney, Dmitry Gorin, claims that his client's actions are a corollary of years of racial harassment. Gorin stated that his "client was 'scared' by 'tremendous' discrimination during childhood as one of only a few Japanese-Americans in the San Fernando Valley at the time." Gorin also said, "Mr. Honma has never hurt anyone before in his life. Mr. Honma has been married for over 18 years and is respected, beloved by his friends and family."^[2]

Gorin considers Honma's actions a "textbook heat-of-passion incident," which means that they lacked the premeditated element of a crime, instead arising due to sudden anger or sadness.^[3]

Even if this is the case, it is important to investigate deeper into the causes of this incident rather than just looking at the surface. Honma committed murder over a racial and sexual slur, but most people do not murder over a single comment. Honma claims that years of discrimination and prejudice have "scarred" him. Perhaps this is true, and that comment was just the last straw for Honma to reach his breaking point.

Victor Hwang, managing attorney of the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, argues that "it is important for us to believe that the world is controlled by rationality. By assigning reasons to why bad things happen, we can learn from our experiences and change to avoid a reoccurrence."^[4] Perhaps Honma was never able to rationalize why he was racially discriminated against, and therefore was unable to learn how to "avoid a reoccurrence" of discrimination, which led to a mental breakdown resulting in murder. It is important to remember that Honma did not murder Schureman because he hated Schureman; Honma murdered him over a single comment made by somebody else.

Because Honma's defense is based on emotional and psychological arguments, it will be difficult to convince the court. There is no hard evidence that the jury and judge can see from the defense. It may even appear to the court that Honma's attorney is desperate to come up with ways to defend his client. Thus, there is a high potential that Honma's past experiences of discrimination will not be factored into the final decision.

However, just because there is no hard evidence does not mean racial discrimination should be overlooked. Doing so would imply that ignorant comments like the one that brought about this murder are acceptable.

Dr. Alvin Poussaint, a Harvard Medical School professor of psychiatry, suggests that racial violence by victims of discrimination occurs because people who are racially discriminated against are usually made to feel inferior, and that they often need to find someone to blame for their inferiority, which ultimately leads to "paranoia and blaming others for your own failures."^[5] Racial violence is not as simple as a "heat-of-passion incident." It is something that is built up over years of abuse.

As this case illustrates, lifelong racial discrimination really does affect the mentality of its victims. It is important for us to remember the power of words, and that what we say and do has the potential to affect people around us for the worse. Honma's case is an indication that today's society still needs to be educated on the potential of ignorant comments to affect – and even take away – people's lives. As a hardboiled reader, it is important to educate others around you that racial comments are a serious matter that should not be tolerated.

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[4] Hwang, Victor. (2001). The Interrelationship between Anti-Asian Violence and Asian America. In Anti-Asian Violence in North America: Asian American and Asian Canadian Reflections on Hate, Healing, and Resistance (pp. 43-67). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

[5] Martin, Michel. (2007, September 13). Poussaint Explains the Psychology of Terror. NPR. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14380947>

As soon as I introduce myself, I can feel the judgments people are making.

At Haas, business students usually ask a follow-up question, curious as to how my other major will be of any use in the future. In ethnic studies spaces, people assume that I am aiming to land a corporate job, making bank right out of college.

I used to feel like I did not fit the image of an "ideal" member of either community. I felt like I did not have enough knowledge or insight to contribute to my ethnic studies space, and I was especially afraid of being criticized for not being politically correct or showing any signs of conservatism. Within my business space, I never felt an immense desire to pursue consulting or investment banking like most of my peers did.

However, after a while I began to view the intersection of my two very different majors from a new angle. I no longer viewed myself as not fitting in, but rather, as the connection between two spaces that rarely interact. For example, very few people at Haas witnessed the March 4th strikes or the Blackout on Sproul. And if they witnessed it, they were confused as to why those events were happening. Some have made ignorant and insensitive comments as a result, but I found it difficult to blame them.

I know it appears unfair that the business school is able to provide so many free things that I do not even take advantage of while other departments are always in fear of cuts. However, in exchange for these privileges, Haas creates an environment which deters students from engaging in student activism.

Business courses are structured in a way that teaches students to accept the knowledge that is presented to them without challenging it. In essence, this overall mentality keeps students from being politicized and aware. There was never a discussion or announcement in any of my classes about the walkout strikes at all, and it doesn't help that Haas is on the edge of campus, isolated from Sproul.

Furthermore, Haas professors sent out emails discouraging students from participating in the strike on March 4th. The message was that these strikes could jeopardize our academic future and that this crisis did not concern Haas students.

The tragedy is that this crisis concerned Haas students even more than most others because of the proposed differential fee that would raise tuition by an additional \$1,000 for those enrolled in the Haas program.

On the other hand, Ethnic Studies is structured and functions in a completely different way. The courses teach students to be critical of the information they receive and engage in dialogue. Students learn to critique the actions of the school administration, and in the process, become politicized through student activism.

As a member of this community, I was informed of when, where, why, and how the Blackout and March 4th were happening through classroom announcements and emails sent by students who were involved in organizing the two events. In addition, I was also able to gain a deeper insight by participating in dialogues that discussed the events inside and outside the classroom.

However, I am often disappointed to find that the opportunity to actively participate in ethnic studies discussions is only available to those who have adopted ethnic studies vocabulary. Throwing around terms such as "privilege" and "social constructs" can be intimidating and people outside that circle, such as business majors, may feel uninvited to participate.

As part of a community that is fighting to be included, I find it hypocritical that there is an invisible rule that allows people to contribute only the knowledge that will earn snaps while holding back from making controversial statements. This not only goes against the principle of inclusivity but also inhibits the growth of knowledge. Just as we are critical of society, Ethnic Studies majors need to be critical of their own behavior.

Although the difference between the two majors creates a gap between the two respective communities of students, these communities can be bridged. I can speak from personal experience. I am pleasantly surprised that when I try to educate my Haas peers on why these events are happening and why Ethnic Studies is valuable, they listen and show a willingness to learn more. Ignorance exists, but there is also hope to eliminate ignorance through education.

Given the ongoing campus-wide financial and political turmoil, now is especially a crucial time to break down the walls between the two fields and to collaborate across spaces in order to further advance our struggles within higher education.

"Hi. My name is Sunny, and I'm double majoring in Asian American Studies and Business."

by sunny kim

MAJORS CLASH

STAND IN SOLIDARITY

Let us demonstrate grassroots movements at its best

by maitria moua

For those unfamiliar with the history of the Hmong people, I do not blame you. The Hmong people are not only small in numbers, with about 188,000 Hmong in the United States according to the U.S. 2005 Census, but also lacking in public representation. So for those that don't know, the Hmong are an ethnic group who traditionally live in the highland regions of Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Burma.

Because there are no written records of early Hmong history, it is difficult to trace the origins of the Hmong people. However, Southeast Asian linguistics expert Martha Ratliff states that there is "linguistic evidence to suggest that [the Hmong] have occupied the same areas of southern China for at least the past 2,000 years."^[1]

At the close of the 17th century, many Hmong migrated southwards, primarily towards Laos, to seek richer soil for farming and political liberation from the Chinese government.

In the early 1960s, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's Special Activities Division recruited and trained indigenous Hmong people in Laos for the purpose of fighting in the Vietnam War. The men, or rather boys, that were recruited ranged from 15 to 25 years of age. This group was what the U.S. so creatively called the "Special Guerrilla Unit" because of their competence in fighting using guerrilla tactics.

With the Hmong population at the time just shy of 400,000, over 100,000 Hmong people died as a result of the war.^[2] It wasn't until May 15, 1997 that the U.S. officially acknowledged its involvement in the Secret War by designating the Laos Memorial, located in Arlington National Cemetery, to recognize Laotian Hmong veterans.

While the Vietnam War officially started in 1961, another war that occurred during the time was the so-called Secret War. This was a civil war that took place in Laos from 1953 to 1975 between the Communist Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao Government. Both sides were heavily endorsed by world superpowers at the time. The Royal Lao Government

was supported by none other than the United States. When the Pathet Lao finally won the war, however, the Hmong were seen as a threat and have been persecuted in Laos ever since.

As a direct result of the ethnic turmoil initiated during the Vietnam War and the Secret War in Laos, Thailand has become an asylum country, hosting thousands of Hmong as internal refugees awaiting relocation to a safer country. Surviving Hmong people who did not seek refuge in places such as Thailand or other asylum countries remain scattered throughout the jungles of Laos. Though it is hard to tell due to the lack of the Hmong population's visibility, it is estimated that the Hmong currently make up about 10 percent of the

population in Laos and one percent of the population in Thailand.^[3]

Now, enough with the history chat. Let's get real. Just recently in December of 2009, Thailand forcibly repatriated over 4,500 Hmong back to Laos. Repatriation, which in this case describes the forceful return of Hmong refugees back to the homeland they fled from, is a violation of humanitarian principles laid down by the United Nations, the U.S. State department, and human rights groups.

Thailand's plan for repatriating the Hmong involved a deal with Laos. It is important to note that Laos has not allowed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to monitor the repatriation of the Hmong – reasons as to why (since this would be Laos' chance to demonstrate its policy of humanitarian treatment) remain open to interpretation.

The U.S. State Department reported in late December of 2009 that many of the Hmong were in need of protection and that returning to Laos would "imperil the well-being of many individuals."^[4] This is to say that the Laotian government would continue its retaliation against the Hmong, specifically Hmong veterans affiliated with the Vietnam War and Secret War, who are called "traitors" by the government.

Additionally, by forcing repatriation of the Hmong, Thailand broke the international principle known as non-refoulement,

which protects refugees from being forcibly expelled by asylum countries. Hmong refugees, who had thought they were "safe" from harm under the "protection" of the UNHCR and "alliance" with the U.S., suddenly found themselves falling into a pit of quicksand with no one and nothing to hold on to.

Despite knowledge of this information (or even more information than this), the UNHCR and the U.S. State Department released pathetic statements such as, "Although [we have] no formal presence in Laos, [we] hope to get access to the returned Hmong."^[5]

Why is it that when there is a tragedy in Asia, such as the Hmong genocide or the Cambodian genocide, it is seldom largely covered, if covered at all, in the

U.S. media? Come on! Wake up! While I respect the gathered support for crises such as Haiti, can't we also deal with the problems we started elsewhere around the world?!

A Hmong genocide is currently taking place because of the Laotian government's search for retaliation. This issue has been incubating for over thirty years, and there still has not been any positive change.

This is far from being over. This is an ongoing fight. I am here. You are here. You are probably asking: Why should I care about some unknown group of people? My answer is this: because this issue is bigger than just the Hmong people. This issue of oppression, suppression, and the application of ignorance has plagued and is plaguing many other ethnic



Hmong hilltribe refugee children stand in front of a guard at Ban Huay Nam Khao camp in Phetchabun province, Thailand, July 30, 2009.

groups out there – big or small, known or not.

The fact is we are all here. So let's stand in solidarity. Let us demonstrate the power of grassroots movements and the boomerang model theory at its best. Tell friends, loved ones, and neighbors about the issues that so many people face around the world but that no one speaks of. Why shouldn't we take advantage of our ability to rally support against the repatriation of the Hmong, not to mention the deaths, injuries, and emotional traumas that are resulting from it?

Sites such as Facebook Cause or Chase Community Giving are just a few of the many networks that we can utilize to draw attention to and empower change on this problem. This issue may not be the "top story" in the media, but that definitely doesn't make it any less important.

This issue is more than just an "issue." We are talking lives here – mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters that are possibly dying. We need to sit the U.S. down like a bad child and interrogate the shit out of them. This is a salient problem that we need to hold the U.S. accountable for.

We can take the first step by being proactive and exerting pressure on the political system through spreading grassroots awareness to our local Congressmen and government officials.

An organization that is currently tackling this issue is the Hmong International Human Rights Watch (HIHRW), along with a few non-governmental organizations that are allied with the HIHRW such as the Relief Logistics International (www.rilingo.org), Médecins Sans Frontières (<http://www.msf.org>), and International Rescue Committee (<http://www.theirc.org>). Please, if you are interested or concerned, I encourage you all to research for yourselves the story of the Hmong people.



Courtesy of AFP

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So... why are you an Asian American Studies major?

One student's perspective on the value of Asian American Studies

by casey tran

"What's your major?"

"Asian American Studies."

"Oh...uh...why?"

As an Asian American Studies major, most responses I get when I tell people my major are condescending and ignorant.

People often have a hard time understanding the value of Asian American Studies. I've encountered people who have gone so far as to say that the entire discipline of social sciences has no value whatsoever, and that the math and sciences are somehow inherently more valuable.

I seriously want to smack these people upside the head when they tell me this. I just want to write them off as ignorant and never speak to them again.

But then I remind myself that doing this would be counterproductive. Just writing someone off as ignorant does not change the fact that there are so many others out there with the same mindset. So I have two choices: I can try to share my perspective and hope that they will listen, or I can walk away. Fight or flight.

I choose to fight. Because the social sciences are essential to the world in which we live.

Asian American Studies challenges students to think critically about society. Why is it that U.S.-born Chinese and Filipina women under age 55 have higher rates of cancer than white women of the same age group?^[1] This isn't just a statistic. This is just one example of the kinds of issues that Asian American Studies investigates – issues that affect you, me, and our communities.

Contrary to popular belief, social science is not just about writing bullshit papers. It is about addressing issues that plague our country. It is about advocating for our communities. It is about social justice. The social sciences critically examine why people behave and think the way they do. We question and analyze existing paradigms because we can't change them without studying them.

Now, the jaded and cynical student would argue that social justice, just like the social sciences, is bullshit as well. Many believe that it's just human nature to be selfish and tyrannical; even if we tried to advocate for change and social justice, human nature would win out.

I find this sort of cynical attitude to be part of a vicious cycle of apathy. Apathy (and perhaps ignorance) is at the root of a lot of issues in this country. People use their cynicism as an excuse for not acting, and therefore nothing changes. We need to break out of this vicious cycle.

I realize that realistically we as individuals cannot transform the world into sunshine and puppies. It's too much for any one person to tackle every pressing issue out there. So we often have to choose the issues that matter the most to us.

Advocating for change is hard work. There are some days when I would like to just throw in the towel and join the ranks of the apathetic. But I choose not to. Because choosing not to act is choosing to condone injustice, which I personally cannot accept. This is why I study Asian American Studies.

People may think Asian American Studies majors are naïve for wanting to make a difference in their communities. I would say that this drive for change is better than sitting on our apathetic asses and doing nothing. There is nothing wrong with being idealistic. Even if we don't necessarily reach those ideals, we at least have something to strive for. It's better than settling for a system that we know is flawed and broken.

Change is often intangible. It isn't always a vaccine that eliminates AIDS. It may be difficult to see the progress that emerges from Asian American Studies because it often is not a tangible product. However, that does not mean the progress does not exist.

The passage of the 1965 Immigration Act is an example of past social progress. This act eliminated the National Origins quotas, which had limited immigration from Asia to token levels. The 1965 Immigration Act was a watershed in Asian American history because it allowed, for the first time in American history, waves of immigration from Asia into the U.S. Although policy makers at the time did not intend for the act to benefit Asian immigration, it is an example of the amount of power that policy makers have. This is why we need socially conscious policy makers in office whom we can trust to advocate for social progress.

In my conversations with non-social sciences majors, I've often encountered the questions, "Well, what can you even do with a B.A. in Asian American Studies? Can you even make money with that?"

I'd like to point out that what you major in will not necessarily become your chosen career. Mike Judge graduated from UCSD with a B.S. in physics. Did he become a physicist? No. He ended up creating one of America's beloved cartoon series, "King of the Hill." He followed his passion and was innovative enough to create a career from it.

Law, education, non-profit work, journalism, politics, social work... Asian American Studies majors have the chance to do something worthwhile. For example, Jane Kim is the President of the Board of Education and a civil rights attorney in the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. As an undergraduate, she double majored in Asian American Studies and Political Science at Stanford. Kim is an example of someone who followed her passion and used her Asian American Studies major to advocate for the API community in San Francisco. As director of the Chinatown Community Development Center, she developed the Adopt-an-Alleyway program, which was responsible for cleaning up the alleyways in Chinatown that the city government neglected.

I have also encountered the argument that math and science majors have a heavier workload, and therefore these disciplines are more valuable. There is an inaccurate perception that social science majors have it easier because all we do is read and write. I'm not going to argue that one discipline is easier or harder than another. This is a moot point because engaging in that debate is counterproductive. I don't see why we have to organize the disciplines in a hierarchy.

Each discipline has its own unique value.

Unfortunately, this attitude isn't reflected in this university. Just last year, the University proposed drastic cuts to the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. The proposed cuts would have reduced Japanese language courses by 40 percent, Chinese courses by 54 percent, and Korean courses by 66 percent.^[2] In this time of budget cuts, we have to ask ourselves, why are the humanities and social sciences always the first courses to be cut? What does this say about our society?

American culture has the tendency to value the math and sciences over the social sciences. We're taught as a society that math and science are more useful because they produce tangible products that we can see and touch. Part of growing up, however, is learning to think critically about what we've been taught.

Berkeley has had a rich history of activism leading to social change. And social change starts with critical thinking and questioning, which the social sciences facilitate.

The hard sciences can only fix certain aspects of the issues plaguing our society. What we need now is for individuals and society to validate the social sciences. We need social progress as much as we need scientific progress. We can produce all the AIDS vaccines that we want, but if the communities that need these solutions the most such as the API community are not receiving the benefits, then what is the point of all this scientific progress? If certain communities are not benefitting from science due to unfair policies, then we are not truly making progress.

The hard sciences go hand-in-hand with the social sciences. These disciplines are most effective when applied together. Berkeley offers over 300 undergraduate and graduate programs. We need to embrace the diversity and wealth of knowledge in this university and work across disciplines in order to find solutions to not only issues that affect our university, but also issues that we will encounter in the outside world once we graduate. Disciplines in order to

find solutions to not only issues that affect our university, but also issues that we will encounter in the outside world once we graduate.



The Third World Liberation Front advocated for the creation of a Third World College in the 1960s. Due to their efforts, Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, and many other disciplines were founded.

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Keeping Language Learning Alive – Chinese as an example

Alternative Methods for Maintaining Foreign Language Programs

by tawny tsang

The ironic thing about saving \$17 billion is the potential residual costs of doing so. President Obama's proposed federal budget will cut or eliminate 121 federal programs^[1]. This includes spending on education, despite the present need for intellectual resources in the workforce.

According to the New York Times, a recent government poll showed that thousands of public schools have stopped teaching foreign languages in the last decade. While this may be monetarily beneficial in the present economic state, it will constrain America's future economic and political development. Language barriers may impede the U.S.'s capability to establish strong global business and diplomatic relations in years to come. In short, multilingualism and opportunity go hand in hand.

Others beside Washington have recognized the importance of language learning, however, and this has led to alternative sources of funding for language education. For instance, in a national trend that policy makers seem to have overlooked, the Chinese language is currently receiving increased attention from public and private funders of education. The emergence of this trend coincides with the increased economic development of China; according to the World Economic Outlook Database, China's GDP increased by roughly 325% from 2000 to 2006 alone.

The Chinese government has been one large contributor to the trend. With help from the Chinese government, more U.S. primary and secondary schools have been able to offer Chinese in the past couple of years. The Chinese Language Ministry has been sending teachers from China to schools all over the world. Because the Chinese government is paying a portion of their salaries, this puts less financial stress on school districts. This also allows the U.S. and China to engage in cultural exchange by providing teachers and students unique learning opportunities.

Educational television has also been picking up on this trend. Television is certainly an instrumental and influential venue that can serve as another alternative medium to promote language learning and cultural exchange. For example, Nickelodeon has an animated series named "Ni Hao, Kai-Lan," which introduces elements of

Chinese language and culture to its viewers. Prior to that, from 2001 to 2002 PBS Kids aired a series called "Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat" based on a children's book by Amy Tan. This program familiarized the audience with Chinese cultural values such as collectivism and filial obligation. Moreover, PBS is publicly funded by viewers, suggesting a general consensus on the importance of language learning.

Despite the national cuts to educational funding, the increase of interest in Chinese has been reflected in school curriculae as well. Currently, the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington estimates that of the American middle and high schools offering a foreign language, the proportion offering Chinese is up to 4 percent from 1 percent since three years ago. Including Chinese in foreign language curriculum not only mirrors the global economic trends, it provides a space for children to continue to develop skills learned from early educational television programs.

It is extremely interesting that the fastest growth in number of schools offering Chinese is occurring in states like Ohio, Georgia, and Utah. The demographics of these regions, primarily Caucasian, contrast with that of Chinese heritage communities, which are primarily located on the East and West coasts. As we can see, even individuals with no Chinese ancestry are interested in learning the language – and for a good reason, as doing so will surely open up potential opportunities in the next ten years.

A similar trend in growth of interest in Japanese language and culture occurred in the 1980s when Japan emerged as an economic powerhouse in the automobile and technological industries. However, after the economic growth slowed down, the initial interest in Japanese language and culture quickly declined.

Unlike Japan's case though, certain Chinese industries that have penetrated the global market face little competition. These include industries in precious metals such as gold that cannot be substituted or replicated. Therefore, America's interest in the Chinese language may prove to be longer-lived than that it held in Japanese.

In fact, AP Chinese

was introduced three years ago, and according to College Board it has now surpassed AP German as the third most tested AP language. Offering an AP Chinese test not only encourages students to learn Chinese continually throughout high school, it also serves as an extra incentive for individuals seeking college credit.

It would be a shame to have learned a language starting from preschool years only to have to stop in college because that language was not offered. College is supposed to provide richer learning opportunities and expand on individuals' interests – including interests in language. This is especially important because language is best retained through constant exposure. Learning language not only gives insight into cultural backgrounds but also fosters a greater appreciation for diversity.

Although the government is no longer a sufficient source for educational funding, Chinese language programs are now supported by private and public sources, as we can see through the above examples. This offers hope to our own educational crisis with the recent cuts to the East Asian Language and Culture Program (EALC). Given the world's increasing globalization, the inherent benefit of learning foreign languages is apparent. Knowing this, I predict that if the University continues to not support EALC, someone else will.

Aside from global economic ties, international cooperation is required in efforts towards world issues. An example of one pressing global issue is energy conservation. As each year passes, the global population increases but available resources decrease. Given the scope of the environmental and energy issues, they cannot be solved by having everyone in the United States switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs. While there isn't any quick or easy method to approach this issue, one inevitable way to begin is to foster linguistic and cultural understanding with other countries and work together towards a global solution. And the first step in this process may just be learning to say "Ni hao."

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courtesy of josh jimenez

Group snapshot at UC Berkeley's celebration.

a major role in attempting to challenge the educational system and the structures it imposes on students of color."

And this is only scratching the surface. There is still so much more to learn about PASS and how to contribute to its mission. With just a year left in my college career, there seems to be very little time to do so. But this isn't the case. My commitment

to PASS doesn't have to end when I receive my diploma, or when I leave the Berkeley campus to pursue a career.

This is exactly what the 25th anniversary celebration showed. Cal alumni and past PASS participants reunited to illustrate the mission statement set down for this organization a couple of decades ago: to recruit and retain Pilipinos into higher education, and to keep an unbroken dialogue about issues that pertain to such.

"In an effort to reconnect the lines that bound each of us to the overarching purpose of the organization, we hope that this occasion served as a testament to the colorful stories and experiences each of us have gone through," Pabulos said. "Pilipinos, alongside [other] communities of color, have faced inequities that were rarely acknowledged by the institutions around us. However, we unite and channel our energies to support and carry each other. With our collective voices, we are lifted as one!"

I may not constantly voice it, but PASS played a major role in my final decision to attend Cal. Senior Weekend allowed me to physically place myself on campus and was the final push for me to sign my SIR. This is why I give back. This is why many give back. There are students and kids out there in the same position as I was, and having PASS as a resource may just be the catalyst they need to reach for Berkeley, and more importantly, higher education.

"For my part, seeing the inequalities happening in under-resourced schools, [such as] lack of resources and counselors telling students they do not deserve to be in a UC, motivates me to give these students a voice," stated Pabulos. "Though there are times when programming can be stressful, knowing that we as community members can impact lives [of people from] children to college students makes the experience priceless."

Which is why a mere month after celebrating its 25th year, PASS geared up for one of its most important yearly events: Senior Weekend. This year, PASS organized countless members of the Pilipino community from PASS, PAHC (Pilipino Association for Health Careers), and other PilOrgs around campus. These volunteers worked round the clock to ensure an exemplary experience for the high school seniors visiting Cal.

"Every year we are able to put out these big programs like Senior/Transfer Weekend through careful planning and mobilizing volunteers and interns," said PASS Youth Mentorship Coordinator Gil Navarro, "These programs can't be done unless we are able to motivate the community that we serve to give back and help out."

That's what makes an organization like PASS, and the Pilipino community in general, so extraordinary. While each organization has its own separate mission statements, activities, and events, the community as a whole is able to marshal enough energy and drive to work towards the same goal and exemplify "isang bagsak."

Pabulos notes, "'Isang Bagsak' underlines our efforts to ensure that each student is given the opportunity and recognition to achieve higher education and succeed."

"Programs such as Senior Weekend and Transfer Weekend directly tie into everything that all the other PilOrgs do," said Guan. "These transfers and freshmen are going to be the future members and leaders of the Pilipino community. It's only right that we invest in them."

This year's Senior Weekend theme declares "i AM the UNIVERSITY," reaffirming the sense of unity and cooperation the Bridges coalition hopes to symbolize. According to Navarro, each year's theme is open to the interpretation of attendees and volunteers alike. One interpretation of "i AM the UNIVERSITY" is to provide high school seniors with a sense of belonging and entitlement to a community, sharing both struggles and accomplishments.

Navarro states, "What I make of it is that students are claiming their stake here in UC Berkeley. Despite the economic crisis and all the budget cuts that have been happening, the essence of UC Berkeley is still the students."

After 25 years of hard work and dedication, PASS is proud of its current members and past alumni's commitment, while future attendees demonstrate that PASS's continued efforts are both valuable and necessary.

"The point of PASS is to meet the needs of the community and to [increase] the representation of Pilipinos in higher education," Ducusin said. "Hopefully, one day these goals will be met and then there would be no more need to have PASS."



courtesy of josh jimenez

Conversing at the 25th anniversary celebration.