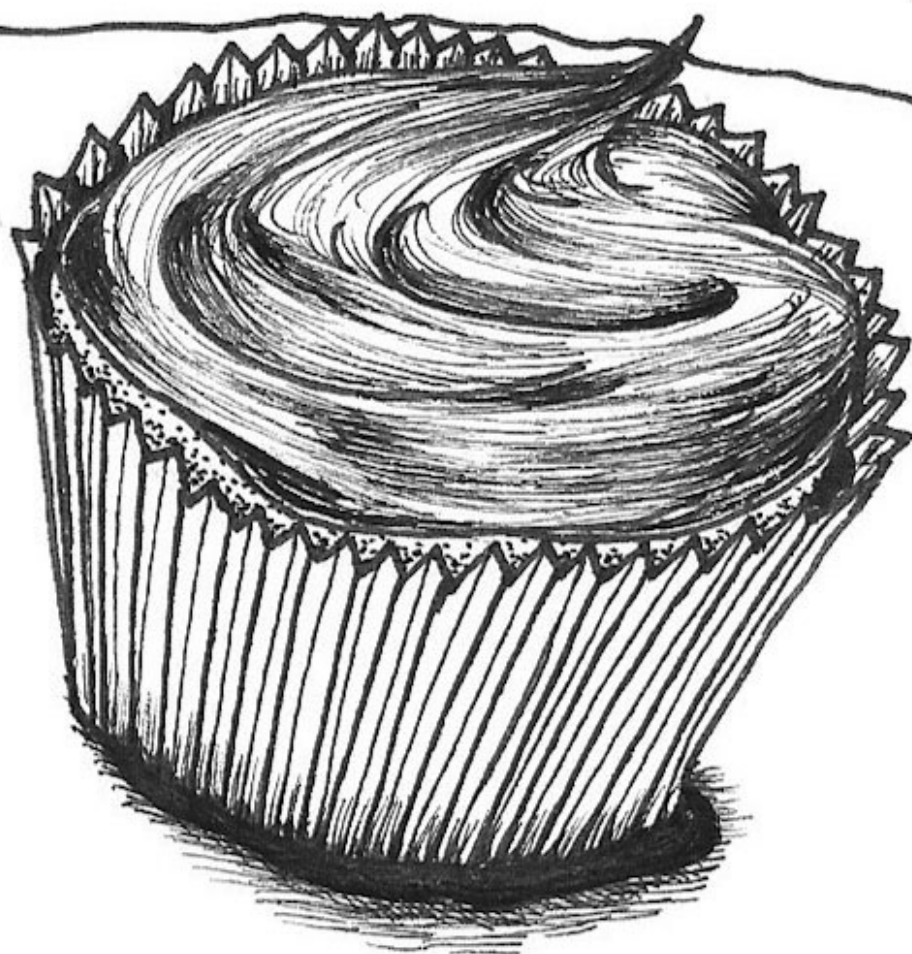


15.1!



happy birthday hlb.

hardboiled

THE ASIAN-PACIFIC-AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE!

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ABOUT THIS COVER

editor's note

15 years ago, voters passed proposition 209, effectively abolishing affirmative action in the state of California.

15 years ago, three students created **hardboiled** in response to the discourse surrounding prop 209 and affirmative action. The founders of **hb** were dissatisfied with the coverage of the issue by the Daily Cal and other mainstream publications, both on and off campus. They sought to create a publication that would capture the voices of the progressive APA community on issues from affirmative action to immigration.

15 years later, the discourse surrounding affirmative action hasn't changed much. We have students who think it's okay to hold a racist, incredibly fucked up bake sale mocking the historical oppression and present-day struggles of communities of color. We have students who think it's a fashion statement to "dress up" as a Native American. The mainstream discourse surrounding affirmative action is still as ignorant as ever, with students in my class thinking that affirmative action is some kind of quota system, meant to oppress the white man.

15 years later, **hb** continues to educate, politicize, and mobilize our communities through our developing field studies course and publication. **hb** continues to be a counter narrative to the master narrative. Through all the racist, marginalizing, oppressing, and just plain fucked up institutions, organizations, events, and people in the last 15 years, **hb** has always been **bold**.

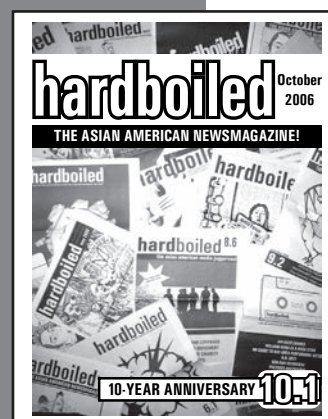
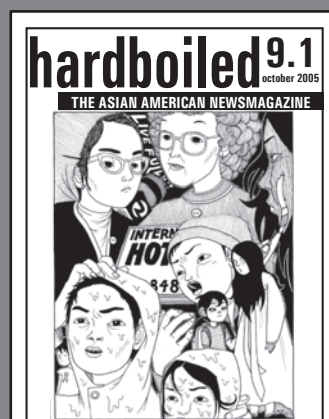
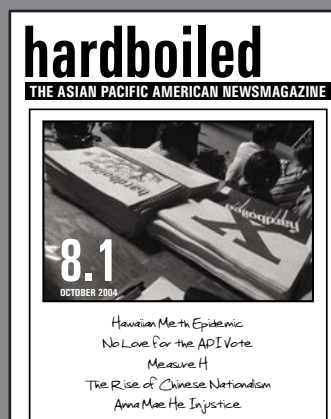
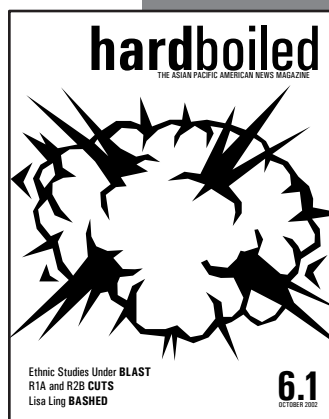
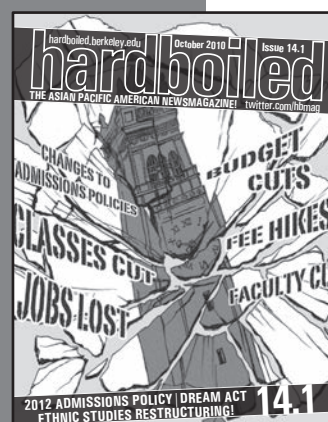
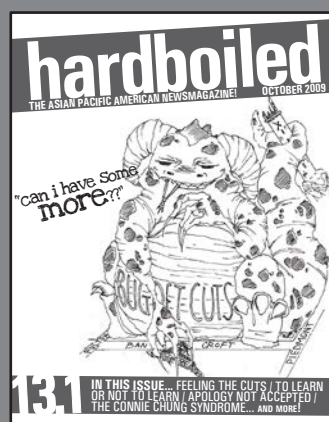
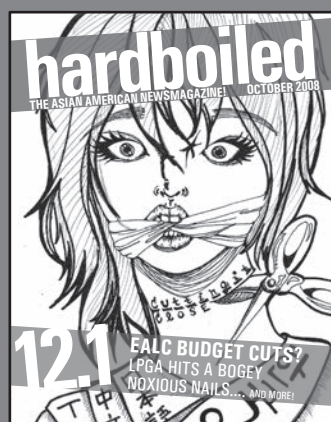
Happy 15th birthday, **hardboiled**.

casey tran
story editor

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

- 03 Our **Bold** Legacy
- 04 The Audacity to Dream by alex lee
- 05 SB 185: What is it? by denise wong
- 06 "Flushing" Linguistic Diversity Down the Drain by denise wong
- 07 The Writing on the Wall by hai minh
- 08 Lusting for Lesbians by eileen tse
- 09 Ripped Trojans by yifan zhang
- 10 The Asian Net: We Takin' Over by nina udomsak
- 11 Kollaboration by steven cong



OUR BOLD LEGACY

“Are you guys like named after an egg? So you’re saying you’re white on the outside, yellow on the inside?”

I get asked this question a lot when I table on Sproul for **hardboiled**. Here’s the definitive answer: No, we are not named after a hard-boiled egg. And no, we’re not trying to say we’re white on the outside and yellow on the inside.

We’re actually named after John Woo’s 1992 Hong Kong action flick, *Hard Boiled*. The film features Chow Yun-fat as an investigative cop trying to take down a gun-smuggling triad...amongst other things. By the end of the film, Chow’s character manages to not only dismantle the triad, but also save a nursery full of newborn babies. Talk about getting things done!

Hard Boiled operates on themes of brotherhood, conscience, redemption, and let’s not forget, tons of violence. And I got to tell you, there is definitely no shortage of gunfire and casualties in this movie.

Sound a little incongruous? What could an APA newsmagazine possibly have in common with a heroic bloodshed movie?

Well, much like how they do so in the film, if you don’t look beyond the surface of *Hard Boiled*, you miss the cold, hard truth. At the core of every case, every issue, every story, there is a lot more to it than is readily apparent.

So, while we don’t try to dive through the air with guns akimbo like the characters in the movie (don’t worry, we’re definitely not packing any heat), we’re not afraid to take risks and really tackle the issues, no matter how ugly they may turn out to be. We’re also not so hard as to not acknowledge that these issues affect real people and true lives. **hardboiled** isn’t afraid to call out the fucked up people, events, and institutions that hurt our communities.

This is our legacy. **hardboiled** doesn’t mean we’re eggs or cops. It means we’re bold.

The Audacity to

by alex lee

Regem is not your typical student. He graduated a year early from high school with a 4.3 GPA and was accepted to all the UCs he applied for, including UC Berkeley, but he chose to attend a community college instead. The reason? As an undocumented student, he was ineligible for any financial aid.

"It sucks to have a dream, but you can't follow it because of money," said Regem.

At the age of six, Regem and his family immigrated to the United States from the Philippines with a traveler's visa. Once in the U.S., the family filed paperwork for citizenship on numerous occasions, but the lawyers repeatedly lost their paperwork, and their visa eventually expired.

This is just one of many stories from the small population of undocumented students in our state. AB 540 students, those who are undocumented yet qualify for in-state tuition, are raised in American culture, speak English fluently and graduate from accredited high schools. With their parents' country of origin just a faint childhood memory, most AB 540 students consider America their real home.

Despite being de facto community members of California, AB 540 students face a serious obstacle on their path to higher education: financing it. With no access to aid, many undocumented students find themselves paying their way entirely through college, and until recently, were paying out-of-state fees, a tuition of \$60,000 for those who mostly come from low-income families.

However, the recent passage of AB 130 and 131 is setting a new precedent in California this year by allowing undocumented students to apply for both private scholarships and public aid to help fund their education. AB 130's effects are unfortunately limited by the scarce amount of private scholarships offered. The more contentious of the two bills, AB 131, allows undocumented students to apply for public aid, such as Cal grants, which would greatly shoulder the burden of costs and offer a much wider scope of aid than AB 130.

And this is where the trouble begins.

Many Californians are revolted by the idea of using taxpayer money to fund "illegal immigrants," feeling these people don't belong in the U.S. in the first place. They feel all available funds should be prioritized towards citizens already struggling to pay for college due to the "fact" that there is simply no money to be given away in these tough economic times. People are also skeptical about educating "illegal immigrants" to compete for the diminishing number of white collar jobs in California they can't legally apply for. The "objectivists" make it seem that this is a bad deal for all citizens.

But is it?

"These people are ignorant of the issues and blame

**Did you know that
40-44% of AB540
students within the
UC system are API
students?**

DREAM

A student's struggle against the system

all these problems on immigrants, when immigrants aren't the reason for the problem in the first place. Do their research. All citizens will get their fair share. AB 540 students will receive aid after everyone else does," said Regem.

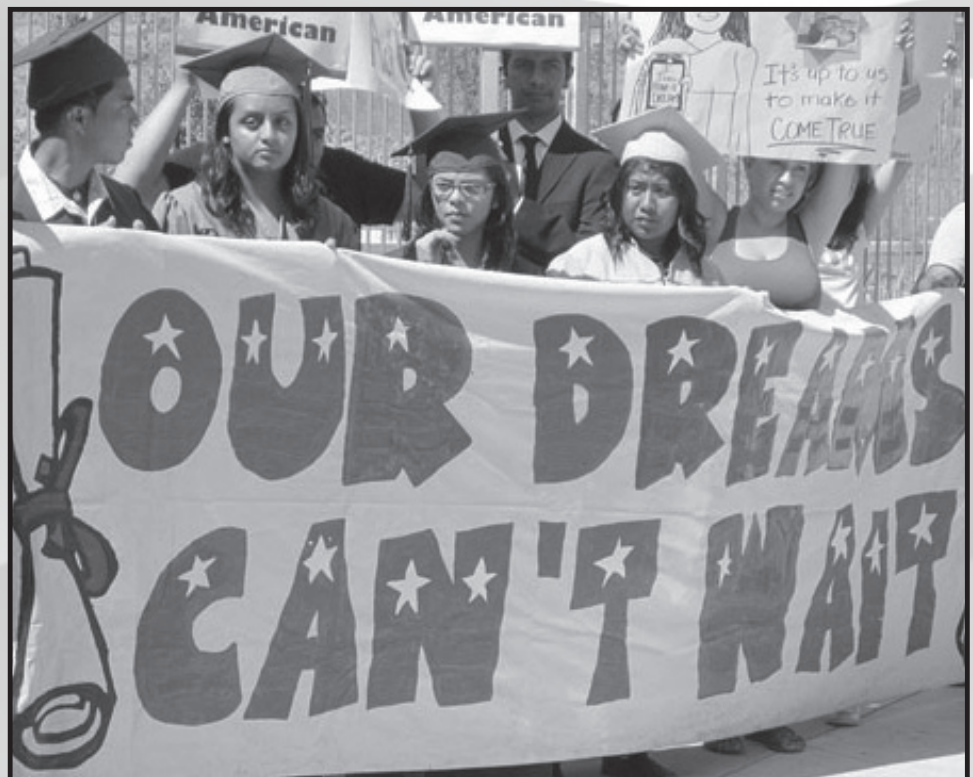
They're not simply given the money. These students pay taxes, work hard in school, and sign affidavits saying they will undergo obtaining legal citizenship. Nonimmigrant aliens (those with active visas) have no such options.

Plus, the UC system has been struggling with budget cuts for several years, compiled with a dysfunctional state continually cutting revenues both for itself and its colleges. If anything, California's inability to raise revenue due to a hostile Republican party is a bigger contributing factor to the decline of higher education than approximately 1,620 undocumented students in the entire UC system.

Yet the criticisms are endless. Many are illustrative of the fear Americans have over their own future and their children's future in a time of growing economic uncertainty. It is understandable that people would be apprehensive about government spending. What is not understandable, however, are the defamatory remarks, thinly-veiled racism and obnoxious distortions made to scare people into dismissing the undocumented students' issues.

We would be idiots to ignore the plight of the undocumented. It would be asinine to not take advantage of a talented group of individuals who are more than capable of solving the problems of today. It would be fiscally irresponsible to think mass deportation would be free, or even remotely inexpensive. But most of all, it would be inhuman of us to treat these people as a symbol to loathe when in fact they are people. Living, breathing, family-caring people in our society that we see everyday as friends and neighbors.

After AB 131 passed on Oct. 8th, I gave Regem a follow-up call. Despite the drama behind Gov. Jerry Brown waiting until the last minute to sign the bill, Regem wasn't



www.dream-act.net

surprised at all that it was eventually approved.

With the bill's passage, Regem's immediate plan is to apply to the UC again and await the hopefully good news to come next spring.

Still, while higher education is now more accessible for undocumented students, AB 130 and 131 remain woefully incomplete without a federal DREAM act which would allow undocumented students with college degrees the opportunity to become citizens. Only then will they finally be able to give back to the country they call home.

In the meantime, deportation remains a legitimate threat for these undocumented students. However, when asked for an alias to maintain his confidentiality, Regem didn't answer right away. He finally said, "Well, I've already come out in some campuses, and personally testified to the State Senate so you might as well just use my real name."

Now that takes courage.

Regem continues to work with other AB 540 students in a support group at his community college. He fights for them because he believes educated youths will lead to an educated workforce, which ultimately keeps them safe and off the streets.

"Let's invest in education and invest in the youth who want to contribute to society. Let's invest in the future because these students are the future."

SB 185: WHAT IS IT?

by denise wong



photos courtesy of may liang

Authored by California Senator Ed Hernandez (D-West Covina), “this bill would authorize the University of California and the California State University to consider race, gender, ethnicity, and national origin, along with other relevant factors, in undergraduate and graduate admissions, to the maximum extent permitted by the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, Section 31 of Article I of the California Constitution, and relevant case law.”

The bill did NOT authorize quotas or preferences (which were outlawed under 1996’s Proposition 209), nor did it require campuses to adopt these considerations into their admissions policies.

Affirmative action itself refers to a set of policies that take “race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin” into account, typically to benefit underrepresented and/or historically disadvantaged groups. Racial consideration, preferences, and quotas all fall under this working definition. However, different legal and informational sources have used various definitions of affirmative action, making the real definition nebulous (and highly politically charged).

The CONSIDERATION of race, gender, ethnicity, etc. involves being more sensitive to the fact that race, gender, etc. may affect the opportunities available to an individual. PREFERENCES and QUOTAS refer to formal methods of granting preferential treatment to certain groups.

The bill passed both the California Assembly and Senate. On Oct. 8th, the bill was vetoed by Gov. Jerry Brown, who stated that, while he agreed with the spirit of the bill, he would rather allow courts to determine the limits of Proposition 209 than pass more confusing legislation.

** The author would like to acknowledge ASUC Senator Sydney Fang and the Asian Pacific American Coalition for their assistance in compiling information for this piece.

STUDENT COMMENTS:

“I feel that it is an imperfect solution to years of systemic discrimination against people of color, but also a necessary step toward ensuring that those who have historically been excluded from higher education can now gain better representation.”

- Carmen Ye, 4th year, Asian American Studies & Social Welfare

“...in an age of deepening austerity measures and global financial catastrophe my sense is that we live in a much different world now than when Proposition 209 was passed in 1996. I think the modest antiracist intent of these diversity mandates have been completely neutralized due to the privatization of public institutions like the UC system. ...My sense is that antiracist politics in the 21st century will have to evolve to confront issues like privatization which aren’t immediately legible as problems of racial justice.”

- Christopher Chen, class of 1995

“To be honest I don’t care much for it, and not in the sense that I necessarily side with either party for or against SB185. Speaking as an engineer, or someone with a technical background, I believe your skills, potential and motivations should be what determines your entrance into college, not any other factor. Involving issues and details like race, gender, ethnicity and national origin just convolute the whole process in my opinion, but this might be a necessary convolution in some cases that are beyond my scope of understanding. If these kids were meant to go to college they will, and if they aren’t then they won’t. I feel as if there are already many resources for people to take advantage of that assist them to get into college if they really wanted to go.”

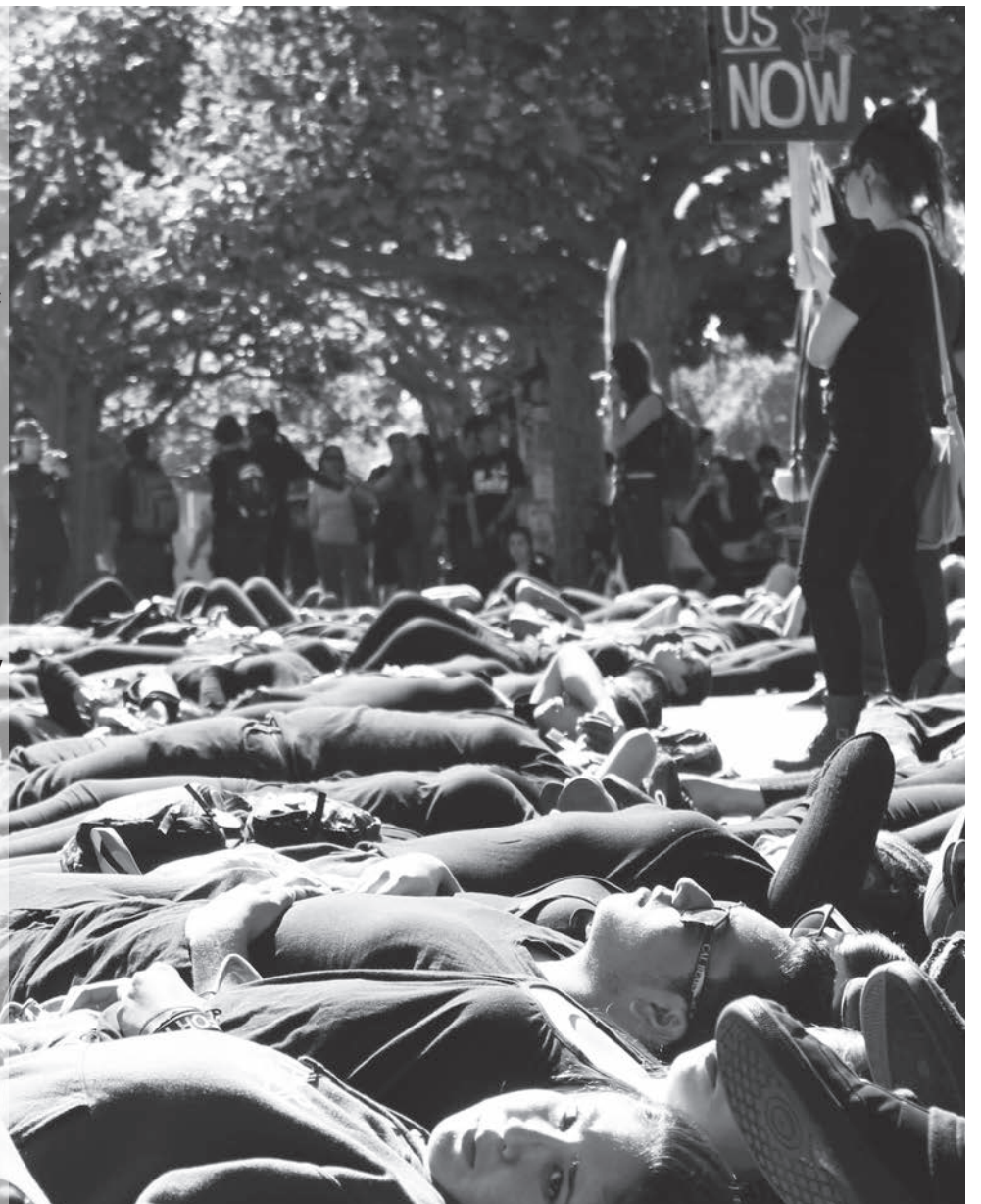
- Justin Borja, alumnus, Mechanical Engineering

“While their satire was in bad taste, I, in principle, agree with the Berkeley Republicans and therefore Gov. Brown’s decision to veto the bill. I don’t think it should matter to public institutions what ethnicity you are, all that should matter is merit. Discrimination is discrimination, no matter where the light is cast.”

- Mauna Dasari, 4th year, Microbial Biology and Anthropology

“It’s not going to solve all the fucked up shit in the education system but it is a start. It is getting a foot in the door in terms of trying to address issues that we face. And I think people are misinformed about the bill and things are misconstrued based on political beliefs and life experience/background. With shit getting heated lately we’re not taking the time to see where folks are coming from and immediately jumping to hate.”

- Jeff Dam, 4th year, Planetary Science





"FLUSHING" LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY DOWN THE DRAIN

Why identity politicking can't be trusted to produce advocates for the API community

by denise wong

In an attempt at fallacious self-preservation, New York City Councilman Peter Koo stated this summer, "This is America, no? If I go to a Polish neighborhood and only see Polish signs, I would not be comfortable."

Published in various local news sources and in the *New York Times* on Aug. 1st, this quote is apparently Koo's effort to justify the enforcement of a xenophobic English-only law under the spurious guise of objectivity. Implying that the Polish community likewise has no right to post Polish signs in their ethnic economy despite their white privilege, Koo argues that immigrant communities of any background should not impose their native languages in their communities and alienate customers.

Of course, Koo also conveniently ignores the fact that English itself is an immigrant language, and its monopolized use would alienate almost a quarter of New Yorkers who are limited English proficient (LEP).

As reported this summer, Koo aims to enforce a 1933 law that requires signs to be at least 60 percent English. Known as the "Mayor of Flushing" due to his influence and history of civic engagement in the largely Asian neighborhood, Koo represents a district that encompasses some of the most heavily concentrated Asian areas in New York.

English-only laws are historical and widely recognizable tactics for the suppression of immigrant communities of color. However, this instance has garnered particular attention because Koo and his supporter, Flushing Assemblywoman Grace Meng, are Asian Americans and insiders to the community in which they plan to enact this law.

But the fact that these are yellow faces pushing this bill changes nothing. Koo's law is a racist piece of legislation, and the fact that he is a "proud Chinese American" (as stated by the *New York Times*) doesn't make it any less racist. In fact, it creates an even more harmful situation since Koo flaunts his identity and heritage to sugarcoat his inherently racist agenda.

The enforcement of this legislation is racist in both theory and practice. The law is fundamentally racist and xenophobic because it forces immigrants of diverse backgrounds to conform to English as a normative cultural standard. It implies that the manner in which this diverse community of color (which includes many Latino, Indian, and European immigrants as well as Chinese and Koreans) has organized themselves and their ethnic economies for essentially the past three decades is wrong.

Of course, this is not a practice endemic to New York. English-only legislation has been historically used to keep down growing communities of Asian Americans with increasing economic or political power and symbolically exclude them. The English-only controversy of the 1980s in Southern California's Monterey Park, for example, was an infamous period of anti-Asian racism during which white policymakers and residents tried to pass a similar bill under the guise of "public safety" (i.e. making sure firemen can identify where to go when they are fighting fires). According to Timothy Fong, author of *The First Suburban Chinatown*, when Mayor Lily Lee Chen tried to compromise, she was met with outrage from white residents, who affirmed that the law was intentionally malicious, existed to keep the community from foreign influences, and grew out of resentment over Chinese Americans "taking over" their city.

In practice, the law is racist in Flushing because the business owners affected will principally be Asian American, who would be forced to gratuitously spend money on new signage. More notably, however, the targeted parties are low-to-middle income Asian American small business owners, who primarily run ethnic-serving enterprises that necessitate Asian language signs.

Interestingly, Koo's own background is in small business. But as the millionaire owner and CEO of the Flushing-based Starside Drugs chain, which directly competes with many of the firms the law targets, it is dubious whether he still identifies with or understands the financial situations lower-income small business owners face. As APA For Progress also points out, Koo's store also "alienates non-Asian residents," considering it displays its Chinese name on its storefront. The main difference, however, is that Koo has the resources to make the necessary renovations.

Though championed as their representative, Koo is NOT an advocate for the API community in Flushing and should not be regarded as such. In all media coverage of this issue as well as in his official City Council profile, Koo pimps out his humble beginnings. As an immigrant himself from Hong Kong, Koo repeatedly emphasizes that he worked his way up from minimum wage fast food jobs, ostensibly to convey that he can identify with his community. Nevertheless, it obfuscates the fact that he as a millionaire businessman no longer has a direct stake in the interests of the API small business constituency, and thus may not advocate for them.

That Koo seems to care more about the needs of community outsiders is similarly suspicious and disconcerting. According to Asian Americans for Equality, 42 percent of Flushing's population is Asian American. Sixty percent of Asian New Yorkers are LEP with 42.5 percent being linguistically isolated, and Flushing has one of the highest rates of linguistic isolation in the city. This illustrates that the community requires signs to be chiefly written in their language. In fact, as many pictures of Flushing businesses indicate, there is English on signs; it's just not the most salient writing because the primary clientele of Asian businesses are Asian immigrants.

The prioritization of community outsiders' needs is thus troubling, as it engenders conditions conducive to gentrification, displacement, and other injurious situations faced by people of color in large urban centers. Of course, given Koo's endorsement by and link to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has notoriously used his office to expedite the displacement of communities of color, such an outcome would be hardly surprising.

As a Chinese American and native New Yorker, I am insulted and offended by Koo's attack on my immigrant city and manipulative use of identity politics to obscure his racist agenda. Just because Koo (and other API politicians, bosses, people in power, etc.) is Asian doesn't mean he's a friend to the API community; in fact, it's even worse because he's API and has turned his back on his own community. API activists in all communities should take this as a lesson to critically examine the leaders we support and ensure their commitment to furthering opportunity and equality for ALL APIs, not just the ones who abuse their influences in their own communities to gain power.



by hải minh

In Feb. 2010, my buddy “5shadows” and I rolled up to the run-down Long Bien neighborhood in Hanoi, Vietnam on his old charcoal-colored Soviet Minsk motorcycle, sputtering and spewing its way along dusty roads filled with kids, occasional chickens, honking horns and mud splatters. After reaching our destination, the scene changed to rap music and youths dressed in punk and hip hop attire—individual styles influenced by western media. Our mission? To participate in a graffiti block party-battle event, which is banned by the government, but also covered by the national media.

Despite the fact that graffiti is illegal, 5shadows’s crew “S5” and seven other graffiti crews knocked on more than 200 doors and negotiated with the local police to put up more than 36 murals commemorating Hanoi’s millennial anniversary. They organized a series of family-oriented block parties in this Long Bien neighborhood that had been condemned for demolition.

One particular piece sparked my interest, for it read: “Graffiti is about letters and street art is about whatever you want to do.” Being able to “do whatever you want

to do” in an authoritarian state lacking free speech is almost non-existent. Permission granted by the local police also surprised me. Perhaps community art may be a form of both youth expression and neighborhood empowerment?

After researching graffiti in Vietnam for more than a year, I found that most graffiti and street artists still did have to deal with police corruption. They shied away from political speech, though they emphasized that graffiti art conveyed “how we view our history and the world.”

This summer, I had the fortune to meet collective organizers from Saigon’s “Station Zero,” a collective that for two weeks painted an entire neighborhood. This one, however, was not slated for the bulldozer. The purpose of their “graffiti in the alley” project, according to its founders, was to liven the community, knowing full well that the artwork would be deleted and redrawn, “thereby emphasizing the ephemeral nature of street art practices... as well as the progress of a public art project which is not (only) based on the aesthetic object, and (still) mainly on the relationship and the openness of dialogue.”

Are these the makings of a Vietnamese generation who, thanks to the internet and the disbursement of knowledge and media, might create a real forum for free speech and democratic participation?

Back in Berkeley, most of my Vietnamese American friends have no knowledge of the “new” Vietnam—a mutating market-driven beast, still branded with the sickle and hammer, though very different from the Vietnam their parents lived in. Most Vietnamese Americans still see their homeland as a conservative bastion of communists whose officials extort bribes at every juncture. While this Vietnam does exist, the country’s 14-year economic boom and young population (half the population is less than 35) signify a future end to the ideological purity and isolation that existed before 1997.

Many young Vietnamese Americans have protested in their communities to demand democracy in Vietnam (while waving undemocratic flags) and recall elections over the name “Saigon.” Are there smarter ways of reclaiming democracy and capitals? With easy internet access and travel options, a young population seeking freedom of

expression in Vietnam represents a chance for Vietnamese Americans to perhaps put aside the bitter memories of their parents and return to and support their homeland.

In recent years, Vietnamese Americans have returned. University study abroad programs, VIET Fellows, Vietnamese Medical Outreach, and even UC Berkeley’s hosting of the Agent Orange and Addressing the Legacy of the War in Vietnam Conference this Oct. 28th-29th are examples of positive reconnecting.

Vietnamese Americans owe it to their community and ancestors to go back and move beyond the family circle. Travel, make local friends, form solidarity with organizations, collectives or crews in Vietnam. Returning to that faraway place is a way to bridge the divide and explore the Vietnamese part of one’s Vietnamese American identity.

To those interested in making Vietnam a freer place, you are not alone. There are other Vietnamese youths out there who also share this dream, even if its testament has to be erased from the walls and redrawn countless times over.



Graffiti in the Alley Project, nam ky khoi nghia Street, Sai Gon



Graffiti artists painting at the Long Bien Battle, Hanoi, Feb 2010

Lusting for Lesbians

A review of *Circumstance* and thoughts on Asian/APA lesbians in film

by eileen tse

Directed by Iranian-American Maryam Keshavarz, *Circumstance* is a 2011 film that focuses on Shireen and Atafeh, two best friends in high school living, loving and partying it up in the Iranian metropolis of Tehran. The selling point of the film is their intimate friendship, which blossoms into a sapphic affair.

The film captures the vibrancy and spirit of contemporary Tehran well. The conservative Islamic state is obviously against all the rebellious things kids do these days, but these repressive social institutions are handled with care, making the film solid sociopolitical commentary without being too heavy-handed. The chemistry between Atafeh and Shireen, played by Iranian-American newcomers Nikohl Boosheri and Sarah Kazemy respectively, is electric due to their expressive looks and sensual physicality. Boosheri and Kazemy are raw, authentic, and versatile; and not to mention, these ladies are stunners.

Yet, while Atafeh and Shireen's relationship is intense and their lesbian romance is definitely the film's centerfold, it's treated rather tangentially in light of how Mehran, Atafeh's rehabilitated junkie brother (played by Rezo Sixo Safai), imposes his newfound fundamentalist values on his otherwise intellectually liberal family with disquieting gravitas.

For the sake of not spoiling the film, I'm just going to say the plot development left much to be desired. Perhaps, viewers are supposed to feel a little wanting because almost every character in *Circumstance* feels they are missing out on something due to the rigid rules of their society.

Regardless of artistic intentions though, the portrayal of Atafeh and Shireen's relationship felt a little problematic. While it is apparent from the beginning that Shireen loves Atafeh, Atafeh seems as if she is just fulfilling her duties as Shireen's emotional pillar.

It is clear that Atafeh deeply cares for Shireen, but it doesn't feel like love even when they are making it. Atafeh, as the more open and adventurous one, just seems to be enthralled by an illicit tryst, in addition to her attachment to Shireen.

"This type of representation makes lesbianism more of a fetish, a 'I kissed a girl and I like it' experience rather than a real, emotional connection," said Justine Tisado, an unaffiliated straight ally.



Sarah Kazemy (right) and Nikohl Boosheri (left) play two young Iranian girls seeking a bit of freedom from the conservative constraints of Tehran.

It also doesn't help that Shireen fantasizes about them as sexualized creatures, looking like something out of a porno with high production values, rather than just being sexual women. Shireen's escapist fantasy includes them being objectified as sexual objects of desire, which undermines the fact that their relationship should be liberating and empowering. I'm no prude, but if you're going to show me tit and ass, even balls for that matter, in a film that is not a porno or a raunchy teen comedy, the scene should give me some sort of narrative insight, rather than just exist for pure titillation.

This is the underlying problem of lesbianism depicted in media, especially those of Asian descent.

"I think that women of color have historically been racialized and gendered in very specific ways—often as aggressive, hypersexual, devoid of sexuality. So, it would be of no surprise

that these elements are rearticulated within lesbian media," said Kimberly Chen, current chair for the Queer & Asian Conference who identifies as a queer API.

It's not difficult to google "Asian lesbians in film" and get porn results on the first page. Lesbianism in film and media often serves as erotic novelty and taboo, and Asian lesbianism appears to be a bonafide fetish. APA women are seen in an orientalist lens, appealingly foreign. There's just not enough APA women in the media spotlight to dispel the myth of Asian women as hypersexual beings; they're just people grappling to find their own subjectivity amidst cultural expectations like everyone else.

It's difficult enough to spot APAs in mainstream media, so spotting APA queers is a precarious mission.

Of course, if you really go looking, you'll find a few gems that explore lesbianism in an Asian/APA context well. And I mean consciously look for them

her dancer girlfriend and her bond with her single mom.

"I definitely really enjoy *Saving Face* on a personal level," said Chen, "because of the humor it takes on the subject and illustrates well the sort of landscape that not-exactly-out queer API women often face."

You don't have to be queer or East Asian to appreciate this film because its romantic comedy plot structure is still pretty conventional despite its "special topic," much like how you don't have to be queer or Persian to appreciate the almost art house complexity of *Circumstance*.

Yet, how many people have seen these films? I say *Saving Face* is quite popular and *Circumstance* is broadening their distribution (oh wow, almost 30 theaters in the USA), but it ain't *The Notebook* or *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Homosexuality is generally niche subject matter found primarily in independent film territory. Very few people have the opportunity to see these films because they're often not widely distributed. It's hard to sell films with queer protagonists when studios don't like to stray too far from the lowest common denominator and think that the heteronormative public won't go see them.

"It's important that we continue to push Asians and APA lesbians to the forefront because their stories may

never be told otherwise...Asian and APA queers have a huge uphill battle," said Tisado.

So, despite some reservations, I still highly recommend *Circumstance*. It's a beautiful, thought-provoking film about youth culture in contemporary Iran and the circumstances of women in love, either with each other or with the future possibilities of a liberated identity.



In *Saving Face*, Michelle Krusiec (right) and Lynn Chen (left) aren't afraid to waltz together in front of the rest of the Chinese American community.

because your chances of randomly stumbling upon quality depictions of queers in film and television are very slim, unless you mooch on the Netflix account of a best friend who happens to be a queer cinephile.

The most popular film about APA lesbians is probably 2004's *Saving Face*, which focuses on a Chinese-American surgeon navigating between her love for



RIPPED TROJANS

by yifan zhang

Recently, Fox Sports ran a piece on their show *The College Experiment* about the University of Utah and the University of Colorado entering the Pac-10, now known as the Pac-12, which is a group of 12 universities that regularly compete athletically with each other. The show's host, Bob Oschack, decided to interview students on the USC campus on their personal reaction to the enlargement of the Pac-12. This segment sounds benign enough, except for the fact that he decided to solely interview Asian international students, testing their obviously limited knowledge of American college football.

Oschack sought to create a humor segment by making fun of their grammar, their accents, and their lack of knowledge about American football. He interviewed a string of Asian international students on the USC campus, prodding them to give Colorado and Utah a "good ol'-fashioned all-American welcome." There are some obvious references to Asians as being "forever foreigners," bumbling Fu Manchu's unable to grasp the sanctimonious ritual that is USC football. I mean, what blue-n-gold bleeding Cal student doesn't know that Utah and Colorado joined the Pac-12 (Wait...Utah and Colorado joined the Pac 10?). The segment demeans Asians and Asian Americans as un-American individuals who do not truly belong to the culture of their respective schools. Much of a school's culture is based on athletics, and from these clips, it doesn't seem like these Asian students are a part of it.

However, the clip raises a few more questions: how did Oschack know which Asian students to target for his interviews? Did he just follow his victims around, listening in on their conversations? The USC student body is 21.6 percent Asian, while 11.2 percent is comprised of international students. Maybe he was just lucky, or he made a deliberate effort to interview a select number of Asian international students on the USC campus. It's either that or the producer deliberately edited the videos to highlight the foreignness of Asian students. Either way, these interviews certainly were not random events.

The good news is that Fox Sports, due to the media backlash, has not only issued an official apology for their segment, but has also decided to pull *The College Experiment*

completely off the air. Do you smell that? That's the smell of optimism!

I always thought that media insults against Asian Americans went without consequences. Where's our Jesse Jackson-led protest march when arguably racist things happen? I had assumed that such an event would go unnoticed by the public, and Fox Sports would just shrug off the controversy. To my surprise, they pulled the plug on *The College Experiment*. With respect to our concerns over images of Asian Americans as uncultured and "un-American," Asian Americans have been gaining significant inroads. It used to be okay to make fun of Asians. Now, insults against Asians have life-altering repercussions.

Remember Alexandra Wallace, the girl who posted that video about Asians talking too loudly in the library? She's not studying at UCLA anymore (and it's not because she graduated). Insults towards Asian Americans now contain the consequence of retribution. I have to admit, the Fox Sports video was not explicitly racist. Never in the video does it say the words "Chinese," "Asians" or even reference specific Asian stereotypes. However, Oschack's implicit commentary that Asians are un-American and foreign was enough to have his show pulled. Pat yourselves on the back; Asians have come a long way since the days of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

At this point in time, it seems that the concerns over Asian American images in the media are beginning to take precedent. TV images of Asians have advanced from David Carradine playing a warrior monk on the show *Kung Fu* and *Fu Manchu* serials to slick douchebags hitting on Zooey Deschanel in *New Girl*, Fox's new sitcom. Even though portrayals of Asians have become less stereotypical, Asian Americans must be constantly vigilant of media portrayals. When Asian Americans become apathetic, we are the most susceptible to public insult.

After the show was cancelled, *The College Experiment* debacle has become a victory in terms of Asian American media representation. I think the future of American media still has room for balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of Asian Americans. I wouldn't mind another Asian douchebag on TV.

"MAKING FUN OF THEIR GRAMMAR, THEIR ACCENTS, AND THEIR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AMERICAN FOOTBALL, HE SOUGHT TO CREATE A HUMOR SEGMENT CONSISTING OF CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS."



The Asian Net: We Takin' Over

by nina udomsak

Like many Asian Americans of my generation, I grew up wondering, "Where the heck are all the Asians on TV and in the movies?"

Like many Americans of my generation, this caused me to assume that Asians weren't good enough to sing, or dance, or act.

Now, I think Americans know better.

If you don't, I suggest you google the likes of NigaHiga, KevJumba, Cathy Nguyen, Wong Fu Productions, Victor Kim, HappySlip, and David Choi. And, once it is released, watch the upcoming documentary, **UPLOADED: The Asian American Movement**.

Rommel Andaya, Kane Diep, Mark Gadia, Farah Moriah, and Julie Zhan envisioned the documentary, which will chronicle and explore the rise of Asian Americans in new media. While the film is currently in production, they have already released a preview on YouTube, entitled "Uploaded: The Asian American Movement (Reel)."

"As of five years ago, the typical American couldn't even name 10 Asian entertainers," said Zhan in the preview. "The ones that they could name all played stereotypical roles such as the nerd or martial artist."

This group of inspired southern Californians jumped on the project not only due to their vision and ideas, but also their privileged access to all the right resources.

"All of us were somehow involved in the entertainment scene for the past couple of years, such as myself for events, and Kane who worked as the creator of the Luminance series at UCSD, where many different Asian American artists had the opportunity to perform," said Moriah. "And there is also all our involvement with the San Diego Asian Film Festival. We realized we were in an opportune capacity to contact these people, which further led us to pursue the making of this documentary."

What the majority of the featured entertainers have in common is their presence on YouTube. In fact, many would agree that YouTube could be credited as the medium that brought many of these people into the spotlight—and kept them there.

"It takes bravery to upload content online because people can write anything they want anonymously, and you just have to believe in yourself and what you're trying to do," said Diep, the director of **UPLOADED**. "The most

successful artists are new media savvy and can navigate the Internet and see how they can get their content out to the most people in the shortest amount of time, and keep people interested for the long run."

In a media world controlled by Hollywood and a few big name corporations, it has been hard for minorities in America to reach their potential in fame and acclaim. YouTube has given many not only a means of showcasing their talent, but to do so independently without the regulations or censorship of mainstream media.

I remember when I first discovered Ryan Higa, one of the most popular comedians on YouTube with over four million subscribers. I followed him from the start, witnessing his rise in popularity and his collaborations with other Asian American entertainers who had also gained their fame through YouTube. I loved how all these individuals had found an outlet, one that almost anyone has access to, to exhibit their talent and creativity.

To this day, many Asian Americans on YouTube are more famous than ever; just a few weeks ago, I attended the International Secret Agents concert that featured Higa, Far East Movement, and

many other YouTube figures. The event was sold out and a success.

As for the next five or 10 years, we wonder what the next generation of Asian Americans and media technologies will bring us. Will YouTube still be just as popular? Will it be just as easy, or even easier, for any common person to grab widespread attention? Will we see more Asians in America's mainstream pop culture?

For now, it is time to look past Hollywood, television, and Top 40, and into the current generation of "mainstream" media. When it comes to the Asian American identity, we need to look beyond who we

see in movies and on TV and realize that the presence of the Asian community in America is just as great.

"Our ultimate goal for **UPLOADED** is to record a very important point in Asian American history. Never before have we had a platform where artists can freely express themselves, with content readily viewable by the world," said Zhan. "We want to break stereotypes, that Asians don't just make good lawyers, doctors, or engineers, but they can make equally good comedians, dancers, singers, rappers, filmmakers."

"The Internet is there, it's leveling the playing field for independent artists like us," said Paul Dateh, a composer and musician, in the documentary preview. "The tools are there and it would be a shame for us not to embrace them."

I had the opportunity to ask the producers and director a few questions about their film. Their vision is concrete and inspiring, their opinions and views shared by many. It's about time that someone called attention to the emerging visibility of Asian Americans not only on the Internet, or in the media...but simply in America as a whole.

cast interview

How did you come up with the idea for **UPLOADED, and what are your goals for it? What do you envision its reception to be like once it is released?**

JZ: The phenomenon of how new media has affected the visibility of Asian Americans in pop culture has been casually discussed on many occasions—amongst friends, heard in panels, read in articles, and seen in brief media segments. However, this information has yet to be compiled into a comprehensive feature-length documentary. When Mark mentioned this, we immediately jumped on the challenge. We want to ignite a passion and excitement in the next generation of Asian Americans to further the movement of bringing equal representation into mainstream media.

Who do you hope to reach out to with this documentary?

FM: Anyone and everyone who will listen. We really do believe that something is changing and we want to make sure that everyone from the big executives to everyday Internet users hear what we have to say because it's not just one person calling the shots, but a collective.

What is your favorite part about making this documentary so far?

KD: Hearing the stories of these artists and seeing how all of their stories come together in the big picture. Many of their stories and interactions tie together. We are also very happy about the support from the Asian American community for our film. People want to see this happen and want our voice to be heard so it's been helpful to have that collective push.

What do you think the status of Asian Americans in the media will be like in five years?

KD: The visibility of Asian Americans in entertainment have improved within new media but has slowly been changing in traditional media. But the change is there and with more support and people leading the way, more and more future generations will go into the arts.

Find out more about **UPLOADED: The Asian American Movement** at

<http://uploadedtaam.com/>

Cast

Music	Michael Carreon	Mariel Martin	Wong Fu Productions
AJ Rafael	Paul J Kim	Keone Madrid	Lee Ann Kim
Cathy Nguyen	Scott Yoshimoto	Film	AngryAsianMan
Clara C	Jane Lui	Ross Ching	Channel APA
David Choi	Paul Dateh	Ryan Higa	Pacific Rim
Feats in Inches	Dance	KevJumba	TheOtherAsians
George Shaw	Aimee Lee Lucas	Eddie Kim	Myx.TV
Jennifer Chung	Jasmine Rafael	HappySlip	
Jesse Barrera	Victor Kim	Robert Ryu	



Top Left (from left to right): Rommel Andaya, Julie Zhan, Mark Gadia, Kane Diep, Farah Moriah. Filmstrip photos: Interviews with Phil Yu (Angry Asian Man), AJ Rafael, and David Choi. Photos courtesy of Farah Moriah.

KOLLABORATION

by **steven cong**

How a two-hour concert captured the progress of a decade

Kollaboration is the largest Asian Pacific American (APA) talent show in the nation. With concerts that stretch from Los Angeles to New York, its San Francisco show could have occurred anywhere in the Bay Area. However, the concert took place this year at UC Berkeley's own Zellerbach Hall on Sept 10th, to the delight of many students. The diversity of ethnicities and talents amongst this year's lineup allowed thousands of audience members to experience Kollaboration's "empowerment through entertainment" first hand.

Just over a decade ago, the idea of APAs as hip-hop dancers would have been unreal for people outside of the APA community. After all, we didn't have a way of assessing America's best dance crew at that time. If people unfamiliar with APAs were to imagine an APA musician seven years prior to this year's show, it most likely would have been William Hung. Furthermore, with the idea of the studious and submissive nerd so firmly ingrained in many people's minds, it is improbable that they would envision an assertive comedian like Kabeazy Singh.

However, seeing so many talented APA musicians, comedians, and dancers on the same stage in the biggest APA talent show in the nation made all these inconceivable ideas a clear reality. I remember learning in my Asian American Studies classes of the media's portrayal of APAs as emasculated yellow perils, obedient model minorities, and all sorts of second-class citizens throughout the centuries. The distorted image it created became a reality for people in regions without many APAs. And for centuries, we did not have the means to counter that image by portraying ourselves.

I don't know how much talent had been sacrificed in the APA community as a result of youths being told they were "meant" to be doctors and not rappers. I also could not account for the youths who never dared to speak out against racist taunts because the people who looked like them on television

simply accepted it. Many times, those people on television did not even look like them, and were in fact white actors playing the role of an Asian with the help of tape over their eyes.

When Kollaboration was founded in 2000, the APA community still had limited access to independent agency and means of self-representation. That would soon change. In 2001, Emcee Jin retired undefeated on Black Entertainment Television's (BET) Freestyle Friday competition. In 2006, Yul Kwon was crowned the winner of a season of the television series Survivor that divided its competitors based on race. In 2008, the television series America's Best Dance Crew aired, and the winners of each of its six seasons thus far included at least one person of Asian descent. In between, numerous APA comedians, musicians, and athletes rose to fame on the website Youtube.com.

Many of these entertainers began their careers on Kollaboration, which originally focused on Korean American talent before extending its scope to include all APAs. The presence of such diverse talent from a diverse set of backgrounds not only attests to the success of the show, but also to the progress of the APA community as a whole. Clara Chung, one of the judges at the event, began her career through Kollaboration and other concerts centered on APA talent. Every leg of her tour had been sold out, and who knows when this year's competitors would also become role models APA youths could reference when they're told to be a doctor instead of a singer?



Winner: ANAK



Competitor Sol 2:7



Guest performer Academy of Villians

"Kollaboration [San Francisco] hopes to impart with our audience that no dream is out of reach," said Executive Director Christine Minji Chang in her Director's Welcome. "Whether your dream is to sing on stage or appear on the big screen... everything begins with courage...and perseverance."

Indeed, courage and perseverance had been cornerstones of the APA story for much of the past one hundred and fifty years. Whether it be fighting exclusion acts or combating stereotypes in the media, the APA community had been constantly progressing. After centuries of misrepresentation by mainstream media, we managed to empower our community through the creation of our own entertainment. Kollaboration San Francisco captured the diversity of this current APA movement in the entertainment industry, and it is a hopeful sign of better things to come.

visit us at **hardboiled**.berkeley.edu

