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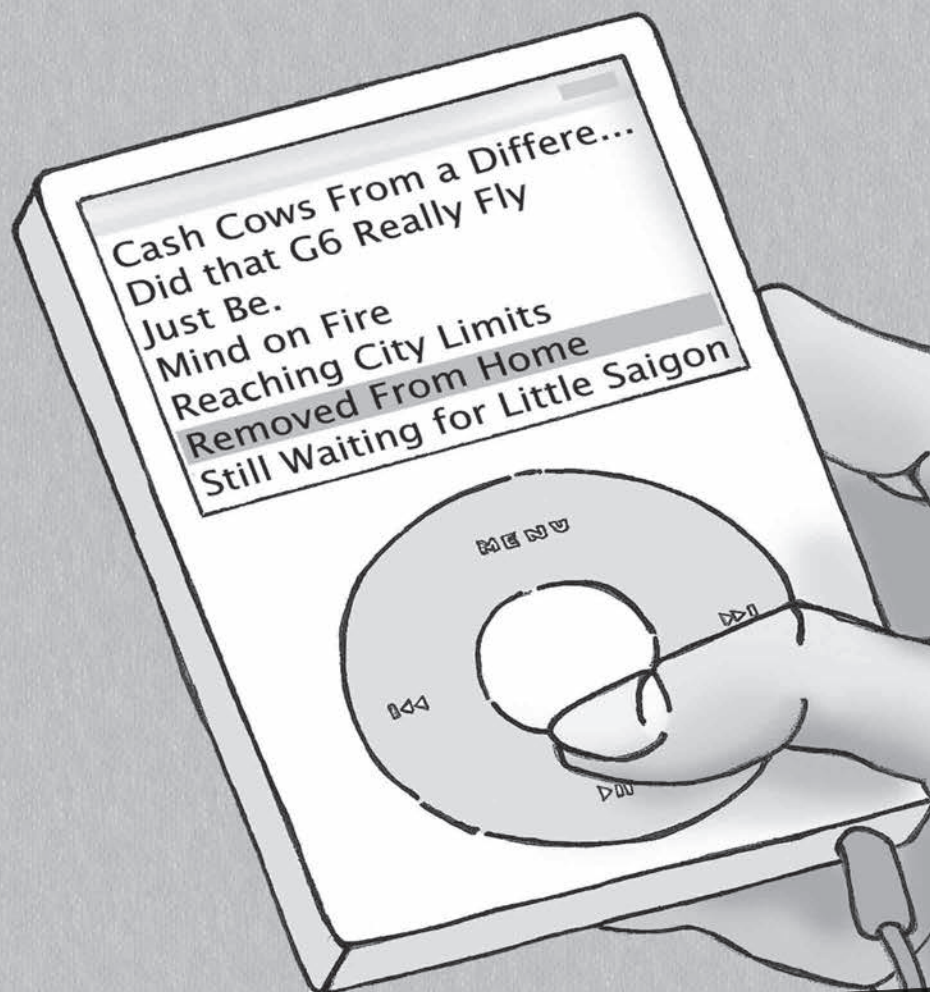
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Tuning in to...



THE END OF AN OUTREACH ERA |
STEVE LI | FAR EAST MOVEMENT!

14.2

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ABOUT THIS COVER

With a number of music articles this issue, hardboiled thought it was fitting to represent these stories on the cover, and showcase the ways in which we and the readers can tune in and listen to what kind of issues the APA community has to deal with at this time of year.

editor's note

I like people. What particularly fascinated me about people are the thoughts that are generated. The creativity, passion, and insight involved in translating the jumbled up activity that goes on in our heads to something articulated is invaluable. It incites the power to share and a potential to change. That's one of the main reasons why I'm in **hardboiled**. To be frank, I did not originally join **hardboiled** for the sake of learning about Asian American issue, but to be part of a community where people are not afraid to voice their opinions and views. But over time, these two components melded together. I enjoy being in an open environment where discussion is encouraged and radical views are heard. Our weekly decal meetings have created this unique space and our issues have articulated what we want to share. In the current financial state of our education, this voicing is needed more than ever. What goes unsaid goes undone. And so, we write OUT LOUD. And in perusing this issue, I hope you will too.

by **tawny tsang**
tech 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** 2012 The End of an Outreach Era by john domingo | layout by kim tran
- 04** Removed from Home by jessica chin | layout by jasmine hui
- Still Waiting for Little Saigon by chi tran | layout by jasmine hui
- 05** Van Tran by yifan zhang | layout by jennifer ng
- 06** Cash Cows from a Different Shore by denise wong | layout by julian fong
- 07** Police Brutality by maitria moua | layout by jing xiong
- 08** Fellowship by kristy kim | layout by margie choa
- Reaching City Limits by cecilia tran | layout by andrew jackson
- 09** Mind on Fire by calvin vu | layout by wilson chan
- 10** Transcending Musical Borders by camille medina | layout by jasmine hui
- 11** Just Be by austin houlgate | layout by eric soohoo
- 12** Did That G6 Really Fly? by steven cong | layout by crystal sitt

THE END OF AN ERA OUTREACH



Pilipin@ community outside of Doe Library on October 7th Day of Action

The most ambitious revisioning of higher education since the 1960 Master Plan and the most threatening scheme since Prop 209: the 2012 Eligibility Policy is underway to entitling application review for a more diverse group of students yet it insidiously works to undermine the recruitment and retention centers' outreach efforts to the disadvantaged communities we come from.

Imagine the year 2012: University of California admissions will be boasting their most diverse group of applicants yet with nearly 30,000 more eligible students having the chance to join this opportunistic pool of hopefuls.

Meanwhile, the UC will have to conceal its true campus demographics when the numbers reveal that there are going to be 42 percent fewer Chicanos/Latinos, 50 percent fewer African Americans, 18 percent fewer Native Americans, 36 percent fewer Asian Americans, 39 percent fewer Pacific Islanders and 41 percent fewer Pilipinos.

The 2012 Eligibility Policy's purported intent is to encourage more students to prepare themselves for college and apply to the UC. By accelerating the A-G requirements, the policy introduces an inherent expectation for students to start thinking about college earlier. By "eliminating" the SAT Subject Tests but still accepting optional test scores, the policy has an unarticulated expectation for students to shift their behavior so that they start thinking "optional" or "recommended" really means "competitive" in the eyes of the UC.

When viewed in the context of educational inequities, however, it is more than apparent that these are unrealistic expectations. Students coming from under-resourced and underprivileged backgrounds will not be prepared to change their attitudes about higher education especially when no one is there to prepare or empower them. The 2012 Policy expects students to adopt a mentality that is reserved for the privileged; a student cannot simply know that an exam will make them more competitive when it seems inconvenient for them (costs extra money to take) and it's branded as "not

required" anyway.

Further coupled with systematic factors like the budget cuts to education and the university's new determination to double its out-of-state students, the 2012 policy actually becomes highly detrimental to diversity.

The outreach, whose work revolves around informing and empowering disadvantaged students to pursue higher education, now faces a predicament: what new tools for empowering students are needed now that the admissions policies have changed again (since Prop 209)? It becomes evident that this end is only marking the start of another struggle.

In 1996, Proposition 209 eliminated affirmative action in all public institutions, thus altering higher education admissions policies. Recruitment and retention centers (RRCs, which include REACH! Asian/Pacific Islander Recruitment and Retention Center and Pilipino Academic Student Services), some of which had been outreaching since the 70s, united to form the bridges Multicultural Resource Center in a strategic move that would allow each autonomous body to continue outreaching to their specific communities without their work being considered a form of affirmative action.

It was then when the old outreach era began; RRCs were faced with a detrimental admissions policy and they needed new tools for empowerment. Over time, RRCs came to adopt styles of outreach that greatly emphasize comprehensive review, an admissions policy that promises applicants they are more than just their GPAs and test scores.

Comprehensive review is arguably one of the outreachers' most powerful means of demystifying our campus's admissions standards so that prospective applicants from communities that have historically and systematically been disempowered are less hesitant to apply to the UC, particularly Berkeley. This category of the UC application includes such factors as leadership ability, overcoming hardship, and most importantly, the personal

statement. Essentially, it encompasses most of the "optional" parts of the application. Moreover, comprehensive review is a "black box category" that doesn't require admissions officers to disclose which criterion they admit students by.

Since the 2012 Policy makes the SAT II's optional, there is a growing concern that this test score will make its way into comprehensive review, thereby undermining what this portion of the UC application is trying to achieve.

There is an expected 30,000 applicant increase as effected by the new policy. The budget crisis is already downsizing admissions offices. With an understaffed pool of reviewers processing twice as many applicants than ever before, some will be looking for the easiest way out – and what is easier than the convenient test score category in comprehensive review? And how much easier can it get when no one will ever know which category in that black box was chosen to make the final decision?

Applicants will be stripped down to a GPA, a SAT score, and a comprehensive review category. If this third portion is taken to be a SAT II score, the UC application in its entirety manifests the fear that students already face about higher education: they are mere numbers in the eyes of the UC.

This marks the end of an era. When recruitment centers once rallied together in 1996 to combat the removal of affirmative action from the admissions policy, outreachers now face an all too similar task. Where the previous era found comprehensive review to be their primary instrument of empowerment, this generation is called to take action and find new tools for outreach.

This is just the beginning. How do you plan on starting this new era of outreach?

This piece presents the 2012 Admissions Policy from the perspective of an outreachers. The 2012 Admissions goes beyond just a problematic SAT Subject Tests policy. Learn more at passadvocacy.wordpress.com.

REMOVED FROM HOME:

Steve Li's pending deportation

by jessica chin

Steve Li went to high school in my neighborhood. I visited his middle school for sports matches. He attended the City College of San Francisco with my best friends. We share a few mutual friends on Facebook and have probably met at some point in our lives.

Back in September I could say I had a lot in common with Steve. He, like me, was a college student.

He was studying nursing and wanted to contribute to his community. Now, however, Steve is being held in an Arizona detention center under the threat of deportation to Peru, where he was originally born. Steve may have been born in Peru, but he grew up in the U.S. and considers himself an American. Although his deportation has recently been delayed, his deportation has only been indefinitely pushed back, not canceled.

Steve's story hit me harder than anything else in the news. As terrible as it sounds, current events I hear on the news always seemed so distant to me and about things that happened to other people, people I didn't know. But Steve is someone I can genuinely relate to. This feeling is the same reason that so many other young Asian Americans are being spurred into action, and why more of us need to respond to this event. He is one of us, and we should help him.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department raided the Li family's apartment two months ago and took his family into custody. The Li family came to the U.S. from Peru in 2002 on a traveler's visa. When their visas expired though, Steve's family was denied asylum. Their undocumented and extended stay in the U.S. sparked the immigration raid. Steve never even knew about any of this.

Because Steve's parents are Chinese citizens, they're awaiting deportation to China. Meanwhile, they are forced to wear ankle braces allowing the government to track them, according to Roger Le, Steve's former classmate from San Francisco City College. Steve's situation is different because he was born in Peru, a country which has already received over a thousand deportees in the last year alone.

Steve's original deportation date was Nov. 15th, but due to widespread support,



courtesy of weareamericastories.org

rallies, and media attention, it was delayed by California Senator Dianne Feinstein. She argued that Steve was a perfect example of the individuals that would be affected by the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented immigrant youths citizenship if they entered the country under the age of 15 and were attending college. Feinstein believes that it would be unfair to deport Steve

before the DREAM Act has been voted upon and plans to write a private bill to extend his stay in the country. However, the chances that this bill will be passed by Congress are slim.

Even though deportation cases occur daily, Steve has a huge support base. His Facebook page has over 7000 members. Students across the country are organizing, including the Asian Pacific American organizations on our own campus who have also written a letter of support for Steve. He also has the unanimous support of American Federation of Teachers, Local 2121 and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. You may be wondering, "Why is Steve's case making such an impact?"

The answer is simple. As Sharon Lee, a senior at UC Davis and member of Steve's church puts it, "it's surreal because he's just another guy, another friend. It hit home for a lot of people because he's just a normal person."

He is just like us. He sounds like anyone you might know. He could even sound a lot like YOU.

So, what are you going to do about it? Sign the petition. Call a politician. Spread the news. We, as Steve's peers, are going to make an impact in bringing him home.

Here is what you can do:

Facebook page:

<<http://www.facebook.com/#/event.php?eid=161378543883661>>

Petition:

<http://org2.democracy.inaction.org/o/5826/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=4543>

APAC's Letter of Solidarity:

<http://hardboiled.berkeley.edu/2010/11/13/statement-of-solidarity-with-steve-li/>

Still Waiting for LITTLE SAIGON

Madison Nguyen's re-election is hopefully not another disappointment

by chi tran



courtesy of www.vietopia.com

In 2005, the Vietnamese community in San Jose, California were more united and stronger than ever, as they supported Madison Nguyen for District 7 councilmember on the San Jose City Council. Thirty percent of the population in District 7 is of Vietnamese descent. Nguyen would be the first Vietnamese American to sit on the City Council. Vietnamese individuals, regardless of their district affiliation, cheered Nguyen on during her campaign. The idea that someone who identifies as Vietnamese, who shares their history, and who understands their culture was going to be an elected official signaled a big step for the Vietnamese community for better representation in the U.S. government.

Nguyen truly won the hearts of the Vietnamese people in San Jose. They looked at Nguyen and thought she represented the Vietnamese people well – coming to the United States as a refugee with her parents, getting an education and working hard, becoming a successful politician – she was truly a proud product of their community. During her 2005 campaign, one of the promises she made to the Vietnamese community, which ignited significant controversy, was to build a special business area for the community. To the Vietnamese in San Jose, one of the most crucial aspects of this business area was that it be called "Little Saigon." However, in 2007, she repeatedly tried to override this name, despite survey results that favored the name "Little Saigon." In 2008, Nguyen told Joshua Molina, a reporter from San Jose Mercury News, that she objected to "Little Saigon" because the name was anti-communist. Did she not remember that the Vietnamese people lost their freedom to communism, and therefore might actually be against it?

Now, it would not be fair to neglect all of the positive impacts Nguyen has made on the city of San Jose since becoming the councilmember for District 7. During her term, one of her projects was the construction of a shopping center, "The Plant," which helped employ many people. She has also made progress on the city's plan to build affordable housing units in District 7, enabling countless struggling families to have places to call their own. These are only a few of Nguyen's accomplishments so far. She is no doubt an intelligent woman who has proven herself capable of making immense changes for the community. She has lived up to the expectations of most of her supporters, which is why she was just re-elected in the 2010 to continue representing San Jose's District 7.

This time around, though, Nguyen's opponent was another Vietnamese American, Minh Duong, who grew up in District 7. He is a UC Berkeley graduate who was involved in student government. Currently a successful businessman owning a few furniture stores, he really appealed to the many different sectors of the community. Many in the community could relate to the financial struggles he goes through as a businessman in the current economy, which

is why many feel Duong is

empathetic to their hardships. His platform promoted business expansion, which really swayed the business community and earned him the endorsement of the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee. In addition, Duong was unhappy with the city council leadership of the last few years, which compelled him to run for this position.

Nguyen may have had the fortune of another term as councilmember for District 7, but for sure this time around, she received less support from the Vietnamese community. They still want their "Little Saigon." To this day, the business area still has not been given an official title.

To some, "Little Saigon" is just a name and nothing more. But the Vietnamese community, especially those who lived through the Vietnam War, know that Little Saigon is significantly symbolic. It represents a history, a journey, a struggle, and a hopeful future. It represents culture, customs, and an invisible rope binding Vietnamese people everywhere in the world. The moment that Nguyen knocked this name down, she brought back the cruelty and oppression that the Vietnamese ran away from not so long ago. During her campaign, the people thought she knew how they cherished the Vietnamese identity and their specific political beliefs. But from her actions it seems she took advantage of the Vietnamese identity. She identified as Vietnamese because she knew it would appeal to the people and would gain her support during the 2005 elections. But as time progressed, it became clear that she prioritizes political self-advancement over the concerns of her community. Of course, Nguyen is trying to represent everyone in District 7, not just the Vietnamese population, but that should not result in the Vietnamese voice being disrespected.

It is inevitable that "Little Saigon" issue be brought up again during Nguyen's re-election. It is entangled in the reasons why Vietnamese all over the city of San Jose supported Nguyen in the first place, and is the reason why many are disappointed in her. Her re-election stirs up the Vietnamese community as they still have not forgotten the injustice that she, as a Vietnamese American who should be more sympathetic to her own community, imposed upon them. This issue provokes much anger, especially among the older generation, who rallied and protested with the most passion. Only they can truly understand and feel the power of this name, that has been engraved into their souls, that runs through their veins, that beats in harmony with the tempo of their hearts. It is not just a name. The Vietnamese community may not be happy to see Nguyen back. But this time hopefully, she will readdress the issue of "Little Saigon," so that the Vietnamese community does not stay unheard.

Van Tran

What his candidacy means for the future of API politics



courtesy of www.joinvantran.com

by yifan zhang

During the past midterm election, many Asian American politicians ran for local, state and federal offices. Under the national spotlight this year was the race between Republican Van Tran and Democrat Loretta Sanchez down in Orange County. Sanchez has been sweeping elections since her initial victory against Republican Bob Dornan. Her

victory is often attributed to the influx of Latino voters into her district. Sanchez's incumbency, however, has been challenged by a recent influx of Vietnamese voters. Even though she still won, her Republican opponent Tran invoked issues within the API community that are generally not addressed in mainstream campaigns. In this case, we can see that progress within the Asian American community does not exclusively stem from the Left.

Vietnamese immigrants have been coming into Southern California since the mid-1970s, around the time of the Fall of Saigon. The enfranchisement of the Vietnamese American community followed approximately a decade or so afterwards.

Formerly, Vietnamese Republican candidate Tan Nguyen ran for the same congressional seat against Sanchez in 2006 but lost. Some of our readers may be wondering: "Why is an API running as a Republican? Why is hardboiled covering this?" My first answer would be that many APIs are staunch conservatives, whether fiscal, social or otherwise. They believe in laissez-fair capitalism and small government as much as any post-Reagan Republican. The more significant answer may be the fact that, within the Asian American community, Vietnamese Americans are known to vote Republican. I'm not saying that all Vietnamese Americans vote Republican, but the case is often that older generations of Vietnamese refugees vote towards the right.

The reason members of the Vietnamese community tend to vote for the right may be due

to their experiences during the Vietnam War. Communist repression often creates deeper distaste for Marxism. Many Vietnamese refugees came from South Vietnam in order to escape the advance of the Communist government. Others left afterwards as "boat

people." When they came to the United States, they sided with the political party that denounced the Communists, who drove them from their homeland. Since Reagan's fervent anti-Communist stance during the 1980s, the Vietnamese community have had regular Republican voters.

This narrative often extends to other immigrant communities that were driven from their homelands by Communism. The Cuban American community votes rightward because of their own experiences under Fidel Castro's Communist regime.

Due to voting Republican and relatively high voter turnout, rightwing Vietnamese Americans have made their mark on the American political landscape. Anh Cao, a native of South Vietnam, was voted into Congress as a representative for Louisiana, while Tran is currently finishing his term as a

California Assemblyman.

Sanchez hoped that she could increase the turnout among Democratic Latino voters. The problem is that both Democrats and Latinos have relatively lower turnout rates compared to Republicans and Vietnamese Americans, respectively.

Sanchez often campaigns on a platform of immigration reform. She has been somewhat coddled by Spanish speaking media outlets in Orange County for her views supporting amnesty for immigrants.

Tran, on the other hand, has ignored the immigration issue rather than challenge them. Tran has not been on record speaking for amnesty, but this is probably due to the fact that he needs to tout party lines. Even though the community is comprised of immigrants, for Tran and Vietnamese voters, the more important issue is their stance against the current Vietnamese government. Tran's campaign used pictures of Sanchez with Castro's older brother and claimed that her position on the economic stimulus and health care bill represented socialism.

Even incumbent Sanchez took advantage of the sentiment surrounding Vietnam. During a debate between the two candidates, Sanchez wore the red-striped flag pin of the South Vietnamese government, a symbol of the Vietnamese community in exile. She also exclaimed proudly during the debate that she got kicked out of Vietnam for talking to supposed dissidents. Some Vietnamese Americans bought the story, stating that

Sanchez, not Tran, had actively stood up against the Communist Vietnamese government in Congress.

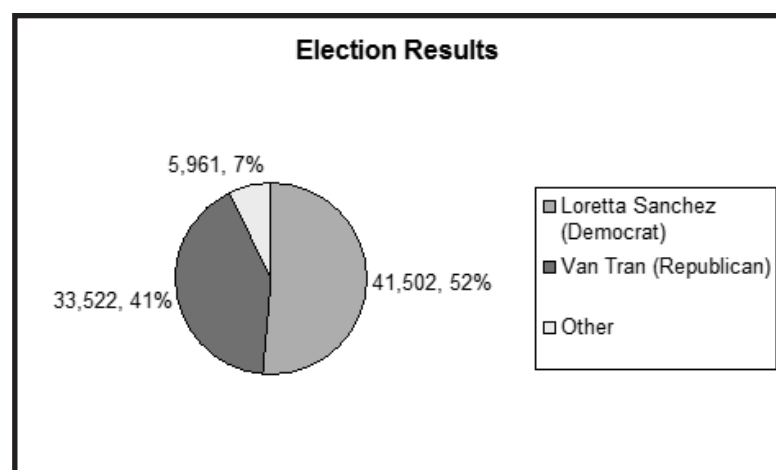
With every highlighted campaign, there has been some controversy. Sanchez once said on Univision that the "Vietnamese and Republicans" were trying "to take this seat from us . . . and give it to this Van Tran who is very anti-immigrant and very anti-Hispanic." Accusing an immigrant of being anti-immigrant is quite a stretch. She later apologized...sort of. She explained that the statement was only directed at the Vietnamese and Republicans against her political campaign, not Vietnamese and Republicans in general.

In hindsight, why did Tran lose to Sanchez? It is difficult to defeat an incumbent Congresswoman. However, other factors may include the facts that minorities don't always vote for their own minorities and younger Vietnamese Americans vote Democratic, as well as the significant number of Latino Democrats in the district.

Unlike Michael Steele, Clarence Thomas or Michelle Malkin, most Vietnamese Republicans do not conspicuously assimilate into mainstream culture or "sell-out" in order to become successful politicians. Vietnamese Republican candidates fairly represent both their respective constituencies and ethnic communities. Their viewpoints,

however moderate, are still conservative. Most align themselves with fiscal and social conservatism. On the other hand, they are not the firebrand Republicans we are familiar with today, often voting for bipartisan legislation (and even some liberal ones).

The political viewpoints within the growing Asian American community are not homogenous. Distinct communities have distinct views on politics, and the assumption that all Asian Americans have the same political viewpoints is misleading. When we talk about progress within the API community, we often assume that progress only comes from the Democrats. When an API politician comes into the foreground, we often think that this is a victory for "progressivism." I personally voted for Democrat Mike Honda of California's 15th Congressional District. However, progress for Asian Americans can come from different directions so long as the direction does not disturb the goals of the greater API community.



Cash Cows

from a different shore

How Orientalism, foreign students, and exploitation can('t) fix public education

by denise wong

A farcically patronizing New York Times article published on Oct. 26th detailed a rather creative way in which an East Coast high school is ameliorating its budget deficit: aggressively recruit middle-class Chinese students to pay an exorbitant tuition for substandard resources, using a for-profit educational model.

The high school, Stearns High in Millinocket, Maine, expects students from China to pay \$27,000 a year to attend. From the article's description, Stearns High appears a textbook example of the underfunding and under-prioritization of public secondary education: the school only has one Advanced Placement course and its most recent world maps feature the Soviet Union.

Its primary attractive quality, besides the dubious claim that its "performing arts department is one of the best anywhere," is the fact that Millinocket is an English-immersive environment. The ability to speak conversational English is esteemed by China's growing middle class, who is more than financially equipped to pay for their children's educational needs due to the nation's one-child policy. Even more enshrined is the prospect of getting their children into an American university; according to Suzanne Fox, founder of Fox Intercultural Consulting Services and a working member of this project, 90 percent of students who sit for China's annual college entrance exam fail, which translates into a fervent desire to study overseas. This is a process that Millinocket Superintendent Kenneth Smith claims his program will facilitate.

Convinced of its success, the school has invested

considerably in the execution of this program: Smith has recently toured major cities in China looking to recruit interested students, lobbied state officials to amend a law that restricts the time foreign students can attend public schools to one year, and hired a consultant to help establish connections in China.

Meanwhile, officials have begun preparing the predominantly white school district to become "Chinese-ready." These efforts include employing a consulting firm to teach community leaders about Chinese culture, displaying traditional Chinese costumes and instruments in the school library, and making "a great lo mein" out of the cafeteria's consistently stocked commodity pasta.

Proponents of this program have lauded it as an opportunity for savvy Chinese students. These supporters have also alleged that the need to expand cultural diversity and foster a cosmopolitan learning environment largely motivates its implementation. Admittedly, in spite of the existence of other avenues for learning English (including at least thirty better-resourced American boarding schools with less expensive or comparable tuition, according to Boarding School Review), the program may very well work in favor of students who choose to study in Millinocket. In spite of this, however, the Stearns High program is ultimately a method of exploiting Chinese families under the silly pretext of promoting cultural diversity.

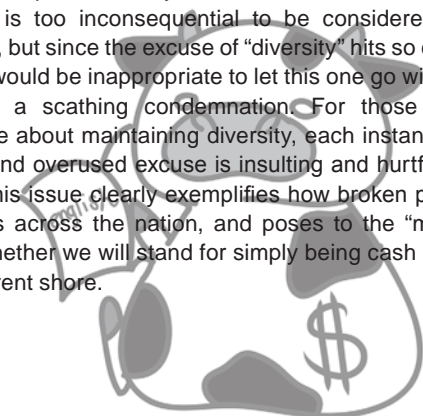
Previously, Smith was quoted in The Portland Press Herald as saying, "We try to educate our kids to be world-wise. What better way to do that than to bring students from other countries here?" Since he has commendably clarified in other news articles that his plan is all about generating more revenue, that he would even think to use the "cultural diversity" excuse is patronizing and laughable. If the school district really wanted to showcase the beauty of Chinese instruments and lo mein to their student body, why did they not initiate such a program before the budget deficit?

Moreover, given the suspiciously Orientalist manner in which the school is opening their arms to Chinese students, the amount of discussion devoted to ensuring an optimal campus climate for foreign students

is questionable. The NY Times article's conclusion alludes to some of the apprehensions of the school's otherwise enthusiastic students, including the fear that "academically driven" Chinese students would skew class rankings. These preconceptions are understandable, given the lack of diversity in the tiny New England town. Nonetheless, what begs clarification is whether the cultural training given to the residents of Millinocket addressed these stereotypes, a vital component of maximizing cultural understanding.

But the real question is – how can we support this exploitative project, which treats Chinese students as cash cows under the casuistic defense of promoting cultural diversity, when the same bullshit is occurring in our own backyard here at Berkeley? Facing a pressing budget crisis, the University of California has decided to double its out-of-state students, an unmistakable ploy to cash in on the significantly higher student fees that non-resident students pay. While also marketed as a measure to increase diversity within the UC (ostensibly geographic diversity), it is a similar attempt to milk students' pocketbooks for all their worth, with likely little to no thought given to the diversity they bring to the table; after all, it will not be low-income, out-of-state students of color, whose public school systems are generally not as good, who will be flocking in droves to Berkeley next year.

Perhaps this analysis is oversensitive and the issue itself is too inconsequential to be considered for **hardboiled**, but since the excuse of "diversity" hits so close to home, it would be inappropriate to let this one go without providing it a scathing condemnation. For those who actually care about maintaining diversity, each instance of this flimsy and overused excuse is insulting and hurtful. In any case, this issue clearly exemplifies how broken public education is across the nation, and poses to the "model minority" whether we will stand for simply being cash cows from a different shore.



POLICE BRUTALITY:

DIDN'T WE SAY NEVER AGAIN?

by maitria moua

Four years have passed since the unjust murder of Fong Lee, but how many of us even know who Fong Lee is? How about the Justice For Fong Lee rallies?

Not enough of us, that's for sure.

On July 22, 2006, Fong Lee, a 19-year-old Hmong male, was bicycling with a group of friends near the North Minneapolis Cityview Elementary School when he was approached and chased down by city police officer Jason Andersen. The chase ended when Officer Andersen shot Lee eight times: the first three times in his back and side, and the last five times into his chest as he lay on the ground. Excessive force? Not at all, says Officer Andersen and the all-white jury of the case. The jury agreed with Andersen's plead of innocence on the grounds that, because Lee was supposedly pointing a gun at Andersen, the eight shots were a measure of self-defense. You may be wondering, "Why exactly did Andersen approach Lee in the first place?" Good question. Apparently, Andersen felt that it was suspicious for a Asian youth to be loitering there.

Soon after, Officer Andersen was cleared by the Minneapolis Police Department's internal investigation. Although there were eyewitness accounts that contradicted Andersen's story, none of the eyewitnesses were interviewed. Additionally, soon after Lee's death, school camera footage surfaced showed an unarmed Lee, suggesting the gun claimed by Officer Andersen to be Lee's found at the scene had been planted there by the police. It was later found that the gun lacked any DNA, fingerprints, or fiber traces that could lead to Lee. Upon the verdict of innocence, Andersen was awarded a Medal of Valor by the MPD for his "courageous" behavior in connection to the case.

Many that come across this case instantly think of the more widely publicized murder of African American youth Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit officer Johannes Mehserle in 2009. Grant got into a fight and allegedly "resisted arrest," ultimately resulting in Officer Mehserle firing shots into his back as Grant lay face down on the BART station floor. On July 28, 2010, the jury found Mehserle guilty of involuntary manslaughter. Another similar case is the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, in which Chin was gruesomely beat to death with a baseball bat by Ronald Benz. These three aforementioned cases have two (if not more) things in common: (1) they were all hate crimes whether it was publicly and legally acknowledged or not; and (2) in each of these cases the community of color that was affected screamed that must never happen again. Unfortunately, after Chin, there have been numerous other cases, Lee and Grant's included.

Unlike the Grant case, however, Lee's case was not widely publicized at all. Although well-known stations such as ABC and Asian American Press reported on the shooting, very few followed up or investigated the court proceedings. Another explicitly differing factor between the Lee case and the Grant case, is that in the Grant case, no matter how menial Mehserle's sentence, he was nonetheless found guilty.

So what is being done now in order to serve justice in the Lee case? After the verdict in the 2009 suit which stated that Officer Andersen was innocent and after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit reaffirmed the verdict, Lee's family and members of the Hmong community in Minnesota gathered for several rallies to garner support for their next long fight as they plan to appeal the suit to the Supreme Court.

The gruesome death that Fong Lee was subjected to, the underrepresentation of the case in the media, and the unsupportive reaction of the public makes me realize how sad it is that I, a Hmong American female from an area with a sizable group of Hmong folks, did not even know about the murder of Fong Lee until four years after the fact. Does the underrepresentation of the Hmong community in the media suggest the marginalization of the entire Hmong community in America? Or perhaps, the marginalization of the Hmong community within the Asian American community? I think it's safe to say yes to both questions.

The lack of solidarity within the Hmong community and between the Hmong community and other ethnic groups make individuals like Fong Lee easy targets for racial profiling and police brutality. Today we face the consequences of division, as Lee's family and the Hmong community in Minneapolis are still grieving while their brothers and sisters in California don't have a clue. It doesn't take much to realize that the Hmong community needs to strengthen its bonds in order to successfully win this case, and to avoid such tragedies from happening again. What we can do now is educate ourselves about race, hate crimes/crimes of passion, the lack of political representation, the role of municipal governance, the corruption of the legal system, and many other factors that contribute to tragedies such as this one. And most of all, we should support Lee's family as best we can.

If you would like to learn more and/or to contribute to helping Lee's family fight for justice, please contact the Justice for Fong Lee Committee at (612) 424-1166 or via email at justiceforfonglee@gmail.com. I encourage you all to do further research on this issue.

Chinese citizens **CAGED IN** by Liu's Nobel Peace Prize

by margaret zhou and casey tran

This year's Nobel Peace Prize award may do more to obstruct harmonious relations and the administration of justice than actually encourage "peace." On Oct. 8th, Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese dissident, received the prize. Liu became a prominent human rights and free speech proponent during the Tiananmen Square demonstrations and massacre in 1989. Since then, he has actively protested against government censorship through the internet and has published works abroad condemning China's human rights abuses. His activism has led to many arrests in the past, but his latest work on Charter 08, a call for democratic governance in China, resulted in an 11-year prison sentence given in December 2009.

In response to Liu's 11-year prison sentence, the Norwegian Nobel Committee decided that Liu was the right man for the Peace Prize. During Liu's period of nomination, China's Deputy Foreign Minister claimed that awarding Liu with the prize would be "an unfriendly action that would have negative consequences for the relationship between Norway and China." Both international and Chinese human rights activists applauded the award, but the decision to award Liu with the Nobel Peace Prize is complicated by half-hearted politics.

The award draws attention to China's less-than-perfect human rights record, but fails to bring specific incidents of China's human rights abuses to light. The Chinese occupation of Tibet is one example of China's human rights violations. The Chinese government formally seized control of Tibet in 1951, and since then, they have denied Tibetans the right to self-determination, freedom of speech, assembly, and travel. While the Nobel Peace Prize does bring attention to China's human rights violations, specific violations are not brought to the public's attention. The award vilifies China as a country with atrocious human rights violations without properly acknowledging and informing what these specific violations are.

Furthermore, awarding Liu as a method of putting pressure on the Chinese government to stop its human rights abuses is nothing short of hypocritical. Until the West can clean up its own human rights act abroad, it has no right to condemn developing countries for their domestic actions. The occupation of Palestine, funded by the U.S. government, parallels the occupation of Tibet by China, and there have been no accounts of China's political prisoners ever having to face such painful humiliation and torture as the likes of those in Abu Gharib.

The decision to award Liu the Nobel Peace Prize seems to be a political move to undermine the Chinese government rather than a sincere attempt to change the human rights situation in China. If the Norwegian Nobel Committee and the international community wanted to sincerely change China's human rights policy, they would do more than just hand out an award that doesn't necessarily do anything for the people living in China. Instead, they might consider using economic measures (as the U.S. did against South Africa as a form of protesting the system of apartheid) to pressure China into recognizing basic human rights. The award, although a nice gesture, does not change the fact that Liu is still serving his 11-year prison sentence. It does not change the fact that there are still many netizens and activists within China struggling for their freedom of speech and other rights.

Although the award was given to Liu in recognition of his human rights advocacy, it has created a situation that makes it even harder for political and human rights activists in China to continue fighting. According to The New York Times, the Chinese government has increased their efforts to suppress activists in the wake of Liu's award. There have

been at least three cases where the government has tightened their surveillance on political and human rights activists. Yu Jie, a dissident, and Pu Zhiqiang, a human rights lawyer, both told the NY Times that the government has placed security cameras and personnel outside of their homes, and put them under house arrest.

Although China has always placed dissidents on political lockdown, these incidents are related directly to Liu's award. Jie was one of Liu's close friends and he believes that he was placed under lockdown to prevent him from leaving the country to attend the December Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway. Other less well-known dissidents have disappeared, supposedly swept up by the government. As seen from these cases, the Nobel Peace Prize does not solve the human rights issue in China, it actually makes it more difficult for activists to continue their advocacy.

It's true that many people in China, ranging from Liu's fellow dissidents to those who consider themselves moderates, applauded Liu's award. Indeed, the desire for freedom of speech and the disgust with the intense levels of state censorship in China are and have been present in the mainstream for decades. China's youth especially are making efforts to undermine the system. A whole new form of slang has developed in China's cyber world, in which homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings) are used to refer to censored topics. Censored topics include the Tiananmen Square Massacre (anything with the date June 4, 1989 or that combination of numbers is not allowed to be printed or posted in Chinese media), government corruption, the occupation of Tibet, and democratic rule in China.

Several young bloggers, such as Han Han – a high school dropout, professional rally-racer, and arguably the most read blogger on the internet (his blog on current affairs attracts over 20 million subscribers) – are speaking out for human rights in their own creative ways that are not only entertaining but also engaging to the rest of China's youth. This is the type of activism that should be gaining attention on the Western radar.

To the average Chinese citizen, protesting, getting harassed by police, and being jailed for a decade or two just isn't a practical or realistic way to realize change. So, while most Chinese appreciate Liu's efforts, very few are inspired to follow in his footsteps. In a sense, Liu's radicalism and celebrity has turned him into

a tool for the Western movement to force "democracy" and "human rights" upon China, and he no longer stands as an inspiration or mobilizer for mainstream Chinese citizens.

Although awarding Liu with the Nobel Peace Prize brings attention to China's human rights violations in regards to freedom of speech, this action fails to instigate any real change in China. The award has caused adverse effects, creating tensions between China and the international community. If considerable change is to take place, it must be motivated by the Chinese people themselves, in their own creative and constructive ways. In this vein, the role of Western institutions should be primarily to stand in solidarity with the people, and not to act as if they themselves could be the main catalysts of change.





Fellowship: A Catalyst For Racial Harmony

by kristy soyeon kim

Here at Berkeley, I am sure there is no one who has been able to completely avoid being approached by one of the many fellowship group fliers on campus with their cheerful smiles that say, "Come and visit us, we welcome everyone regardless of your religion." When you hear the "Christian fellowship group," what comes to mind? People may think about group activities, such as singing a hymn, dancing or bible study. In my mind, however, being a part of a fellowship group implies much more than that. People join fellowship groups, not only for their religious passion, but also for meeting new people.

I am Catholic. When I was in South Korea, I never thought about joining a fellowship group. For me, fellowship meetings seemed to be a very artificial situation, and it often made me feel awkward. I thought, "Why do I have to play childish games with strangers and make efforts to get to know each other? I already have many good friends who love me. Also, I have more important things to do." Most of my close Christian friends in Korea, however, were really into being a part of a fellowship group and persuaded me to go to my first fellowship meeting. For them, the Christian fellowship is where another life began, away from school and work.

At the beginning of the fall semester, my friends and I decided to check out the fellowships tabling on Sproul. I was quite surprised by Berkeley's diversity of fellowships. Especially when it came to Korean fellowship groups, as they could easily be classified as either mainly comprising of Korean American or Korean students. After visiting several

tables, I thought, "Oh my god, are all Koreans at Berkeley Christian?"

On my way back to my dormitory, I met some classmates and we began talking about my newly found realizations about the Koreans on campus. Jenny, who is white and agnostic, said, "Koreans stick to each other and are somewhat exclusive from others. It seems they love to make small Korean groups. Think about the Chinese and Japanese, they are not that bunched together like Koreans." Another girl added, "I know why Koreans easily stick together, isn't it because of the strong friendships based in fellowship groups?"

I recalled the memory of an American television drama I used to watch several years ago in Korea called "Gilmore Girls" that depicted Korean fellowship groups as a very strict and exclusive ethnic gathering. While watching that show, I would think to myself, "Where do these images of the exclusive Korean come from?" Seeing what was going on here at the Berkeley campus, however, has told me that these images were not as unfounded as I once thought.

On campus, there are about four fellowship organizations that are mainly dominated by Korean: Fellowship in Christ, Berkeley (FiCB), Korea Campus Crusade for Christ (KCCC), Evangel Bible Church of Berkeley (EBCB), and Living Water. There are also the so-called "Asian church" fellowships known as Koinonia and Kairos, which have many Chinese and Korean students. Some recent Korean Berkeley students prefer going to a Korean church in Oakland for mass because they feel more

comfortable attending a church based in a strong Korean community.

A month ago, I joined the Korean American fellowship group, Chunjinam, at Newman Hall, a Catholic church community in Berkeley. The most impressive event that I have ever experienced at Newman is the "cultural mass." For this semester, there has already been a Korean mass and a Latino mass (next will be the Filipino mass. In detail, the Korean mass was led by a Korean priest who came to Berkeley for a research project. He explained the spread of Korean Catholic history. Also, people were able to learn Korean hymns with traditional musical instruments such as the jang-gu, an hourglass-shaped drum. For those who may have never heard of Korean Catholicism before, it was a great chance to familiarize and understand it. Also, at the Latino mass, I was able to learn about ethnic dance and music.

These events remind me that, although people are in different groups (many Koreans belong to Chunjinam, but Latinos dominate Rosary Club) with different cultural backgrounds, the fact that all of us believe in God and share the faith is unanimous. Religion can offer the gateway to erase cultural unfamiliarity between races and raise solidarity in the name of God. Korean fellowship groups are easily labeled as "exclusive ethnic groups," and it is somewhat true. However, do not be blindsided by the predominance of any one particular race in a fellowship because regardless of the racial makeup, fellowship groups bring people together and can be a catalyst for racial harmony.

Reaching City Limits

*A critique of Paul
Romer's "charter cities,"
a neocolonial approach to
Third World poverty*

by cecilia tran

Economist Paul Romer has the solution to Third World poverty: bypass the existing governments and replace them with First World leaders who know how to get things done right. The rationale for this is that these impoverished areas are rich with resources and possess an eager labor force. However, because of corrupt and inefficient governments, resources are mismanaged and poverty remains an issue. Using this logic, Romer decides that Third World countries ought to give developed nations the opportunity to obtain 99 year long leases on Third World territory and create cities with business-friendly laws and institutions. The grand result? More foreign investors, more jobs and more capitalism. While I prefer to call this economic imperialism, Paul Romer has developed a much catchier name: charter cities.

The appeal of the charter city model is its deceptively simple logic. According to Romer, "All it takes to grow a charter city is an unoccupied piece of land and a charter. The human, material, and financial resources needed to build a new city will follow, attracted by the chance to work together under the good rules that the charter specifies." Dang, that sounds easier than growing a chia pet – Who wouldn't want stronger institutions or better rules?

Yet, these "good rules" that he alludes to are in no way objective or neutral. In some ways, the theory represents an insidious post-colonial version of the White Man's Burden. The theory is heavily focused on the idea that Third World countries simply don't know how to run themselves. The reason that a country like Sri Lanka is underdeveloped is because the government is greedy and prefers to use violence rather than democracy to solve their issues. Its instability has nothing to do with Portuguese colonialism when corporations desecrated the land for resource extraction. And of course, the current political instability has nothing to do with how the Portuguese colonists fueled ethnic tension by empowering the Tamil ethnic minority to maintain control over the Sinhalese majority. Romer blatantly ignores these unappealing parts of history and says that these countries are simply too unstable to be trusted by foreign investors. Thus, the only way to build legitimacy is for a more trustworthy country like Canada to govern charter cities.

When he doesn't completely ignore colonial contexts,

he finds ways to praise it. It is incredibly telling that Romer's favorite talking point to defend his charter cities is the example of Hong Kong's relationship with Britain. He says that due to its British colonial influence, Hong Kong was able to modernize and raise its standard of living because it had all the institutions and policies of a Western nation. "In a sense, Britain inadvertently, through its actions in Hong Kong, did more to reduce world poverty than all the aid programs that we've undertaken in the last century." And there you have it: British colonial influence saved a city that would be otherwise doomed.

This theory delegitimizes and disempowers Third World governments while benefiting corporations. Romer believes that development can only occur if multinational corporations come and bring their superior management skills and capital. He advocates for deregulation and trade liberalization so that the tenant country and its corporations can conduct business without any interference from the leasing country's government. Ironically, the landlord in this global renting scheme has no power and just passively accepts rent.

When responding to critics' concerns that these jobs, generated by foreign companies, would primarily be low wage manufacturing jobs in poor conditions Romer simply replied, "Those jobs don't look attractive to you and me, but to poor people struggling to make a living in rural areas, things look different." What goes unsaid is exactly how attractive cheap labor and scarce labor regulations look to multinational corporations.

The charter city theory is not a solution; it is an opportunistic scheme to capitalize on the instability and strife in Third World countries created by histories of colonialism. Written between the lines is the idea that the Third World is stuck in a self-created mess that can only be salvaged by the West. It carries the same flaws of other modernization theories: growth without attention to equity or historical context. It is not a plan based on partnerships but rather on the First World corporations' desire for cheap, exploitable labor and resource extraction. Issues rooted in colonialism cannot be, and will never be, solvable by further colonial means.

Mind on Fire

by calvin vu

An Asian American Perspective on Mental Illness and the College Environment

The tremendous emotional energy that it takes me to write this paragraph makes it unequivocally the most difficult thing that I have ever written. Nine years ago, a doctor diagnosed me with bipolar disorder after I gained notoriety as a case study of the disastrous consequences of giving antidepressants to youths. My most vivid memories of that summer originate from when I would retreat from home to a nearby hillside to sleep under a moonlit sky. I often prayed or sobbed to myself during those times of confusion and despair. At other times, I would turn presidential – spouting lofty but nonsensical monologues under the diffuse glow of my extraterrestrial spotlight, eagerly anticipating the enthusiastic clapping of branches after finishing the performance of a lifetime. These hills served at once my stage, my lonely sanctuary, and the accidental foreground of my own inescapable nightmare.

The illness is genetic but requires an environmental “trigger” to activate it. In my case, relentless bullying and racism – often the case at that age and especially common in an environment with few minorities – coupled with family problems activated the proverbial “rollercoaster” of emotions that I experienced from day to day. I felt bitter for years after my diagnosis and loathed the fact that I had to take medicine in order to feel normal. Was my character weaker than most people? I questioned whether I would make it to age twenty-five. Since then I have come to terms with the fact that for better or for worse, life seldom conforms to expectations. Now 24, I am healthy, optimistic, manage my condition cautiously day to day, and most importantly I am not afraid to confront it.

This is the third occasion that I have used a public forum to offer a small glimpse into a dangerous and as yet inadequately understood illness that came to define my existence during a very specific, very dark period of my mid-late adolescence. The first time took a great deal of courage. In fact, I regretted my decision for years because I feared my status would repel potential employers, admissions committees, and friends. Admittedly, that fear continues to subsist to some degree.

The goals for the remainder of this article are threefold. Firstly, I want to briefly enhance public understanding of the unique familial and societal pressures that make Asian Americans vulnerable to mental health issues. The second goal is a call to action to promote inclusiveness on college campuses and to eliminate from them stigma of all persuasions. Lastly, I wish to call to attention one special student organization, Active Minds at Berkeley, which endeavors to accomplish these goals by facilitating open dialogue about mental health issues.

The confluence of several preventable environmental factors makes mental illness among Asian Americans particularly lamentable. Second generation Asian Americans tend to suffer higher incidences of mental illness than their immigrant parents. No doubt this has to do with racial discrimination and social exclusion: Asian Americans commonly experience high rates of both, and ethnic identity tends to mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological well-being over time. A school environment in which Asian Americans lack the social network

to overcome bullying and discrimination damages psychological health in the long run.

Unfortunately, social exclusion sometimes leaks into the home environment. Differences in language proficiency and philosophy often lead to confused and tense relationships between Asian Americans and their immigrant parents. To make matters worse, unacculturated Asian and Asian American adults tend not to recognize the need for psychological services, whether for themselves or for their children. The social exclusion that often accompanies minority status – whether due to race, sexuality, religion, or health related issues – often exacerbates or triggers mental illness. For this reason, we must orient ourselves not just towards our individual communities but towards an integrative “human” community as well.

Only healthy interaction within a positive environment does healing truly begin to take place. Not until recently did I find out the identities of those people in the sky for whom I would trek up hills in the middle of those moonlit summer nights nine years ago just to talk. Today I call these people collectively my best friends and family, and these same people continue to empower me to live a happy and otherwise normal life. For bipolar individuals, medicine begets emotional stability but sometimes also mind-numbing stasis. I attribute the control I have over my life today to the support system that I found and retained during my college years.

For this reason I want to express my admiration for a small but wonderful organization called Active Minds on Campus. Senior Daniel Bessonov, who along with Eric Kim heads the newly-resurrected UC Berkeley chapter, states that the organization aims to address the “prevalence of mental illness at Berkeley by helping students with mental illnesses realize that they are not alone and that there is help.” Reducing stigma advances the noble cause of forging a more complete human understanding of people who suffer from mental health related issues.

Yet to reduce the organization’s goals to simply mental health awareness is to fail to recognize its importance to the campus environment. The college environment is a collective vision, a microcosm of the future society that the current generation of students endeavors to build for itself. Many cultural observers rightly notice that the college environment is much more inclusive than the “real” world. Indeed, finding a comfortable niche within this nurturing environment reinvigorated, and perhaps saved, my life.

Active Minds at Berkeley knows that achieving this goal does not necessarily prioritize charging into the noisy world of picket lines and stump speeches. Bessonov emphasizes that the organization wants to “create a positive campus environment for all students.” Only at the individual level can we even begin to create a hospitable environment that grants us the agency to define our own identities and to avoid the hideous gaze of the fixed labels – “fag,” “gook,” “manic-depressant,” and so forth – that shame us for our natural differences rather than for our faults. More than anything, this is the goal of this incredible organization.

transcending MUSICAL borders



courtesy of www.dfsb.kr

courtesy of www.yg-2ne1.com

K-pop and America by camille medina

South Korean popular music, or K-pop, has been gaining massive global attention. With American audiences becoming more exposed to K-pop artists, there have been a lot of comments going around about their heavy reliance on repetitive lyrics and auto-tune, as well as their similarity to American artists due to strong rap, hip hop, pop, R&B, dance, and techno influences. When Korean hip hop group 2NE1's "It Hurts" music video debuted through Youtube on Oct. 31st, the number of comments on the group's stylistic similarities to Lady Gaga or how these Korean girls were trying too hard to be "American" were endless.

But what is "American" music but a melting pot of musical elements from different cultures? Are we not a country built on immigrants, bringing together so many different cultures, and ultimately different music styles? How can we really define what "American music" is? We would not have today's music if not for the influence of African American jazz, blues, and rock and roll. You hear hints of Indian bhangra music in today's dance tunes, and the distinct sound of Spanish guitar in a rock and roll or country song. Especially in this Youtubing, filesharing, tweeting age, new songs and videos travel across the globe in a matter of seconds. Ideas, styles and concepts are exchanged so quickly, making it difficult to attribute any given item to a specific culture.

What can be claimed as "American" or "Korean" music, and can anyone really claim 100 percent original artistic material? Though some Youtube commenters may feel a distinct line can be drawn between "American" and "Korean," American and Korean music share a lot of similarities if one takes a historical perspective, making it not so easy to delineate the two.

Though K-pop seems to be a recent phenomenon, it has actually been around since the 60s, and perhaps even earlier. Japanese Enka influence on Korean pop music can be seen as early as World War II due to the occupation of Korea by Japan. American influence on Korean popular music first came in the 60s with acoustic guitar singer-songwriters, which created Bob Dylan-like Korean singer-songwriters. This evolved into a more rock sound in the 70s, as well as the development of Trot, which is considered the oldest and most traditional form of Korean popular music. Trot shows its international influences, incorporating both American and Enka musical influences, as its name is derived from the ballroom dance style "foxtrot."

Trot declined in the 90s with the emergence of boy bands and girl groups that would set the stage for today's popular idol groups. By the mid-90s, dance-oriented teen idol groups rose to national fame, including what longtime K-pop fans call "old school K-pop" groups like H.O.T., Shinhwa, and Fin.K.L. The current K-pop trend reflects the concept of American boy and girl bands of the late 90s, as well as Japanese pop music influences. J-pop female idols who rose to popularity in the 70s and J-pop idol boy and girl bands helped to popularize the cute image concept of many K-pop groups seen today. You have everything from bubblegum pop with Girls' Generation, the powerful R&B voices of (now disbanded) TVXQ, to hip hop influenced groups like Big Bang and Epik High.

K-pop came with the hallyu wave or "Korean wave" which refers to the rise of popularity of South Korean culture in the world. It was a term first coined by Beijing journalists who noted the popularity of the boy band H.O.T in China.

K-pop has gathered a significant following of American listeners, both Korean and non-Korean speakers, even speakers who are not Asian. It is amazing to meet the number of K-pop fans who are not native speakers of Korean (myself included), but do not mind listening to the music without understanding the lyrics. For a good number of listeners, the language barrier is not a problem; the catchiness of the songs (often a mix of Korean and English language), the good-looking members, and eye-catching dance moves and videos are enough. K-pop has gathered such an extensive American following that the annual Korean Music Festival at the Hollywood Bowl was established in 2003, attracting thousands of Korean and non-Korean fans alike from Southern California and beyond.

With an American audience becoming increasingly aware of Korean artists, perhaps there may be a future for Asian and Asian American music artists. K-pop has been flowing into the U.S. thanks to the proliferation of the internet, and perhaps we are already beginning to see the effects of its rising popularity. Though I have talked a lot about American influence on K-pop, an instance of K-pop influence on an American artist can be seen in Black Eyed Peas member will.i.am's "Check It Out" music video. "Check it Out" opens with a Korean host introducing will.i.am. Korean lyrics also pop up in the background throughout the whole video.

Though K-pop has found its niche of followers here in the U.S., perhaps with the help of big name artists like

will.i.am who can promote them to a wider English-speaking audience, Korean and other Asian artists can finally make their big break in the American music industry. will.i.am has already shown interest in both Asian and Asian American artists: He invited 2NE1 to work with him in his home studio, and he showed his support for Kero One, a San Francisco based Korean American hip hop artist through a video that can be viewed on the front page of Kero One's official website.

Historically, Asian American entertainment artists have struggled for their identity, battling both the stereotype of the "exotic other" and the model minority myth. American musicians struggle with this double standard of being an "exotic other" and part of a "model minority" — that as Asians, it is expected of them to have a stable, well-paying job like a lawyer or doctor, but not pursue a career as an artist or musician. With the "exotic other" stereotype, they are expected to have some kind of distinct "Asian" sound. Take for instance Rin', a Japanese group that plays pop music using traditional Japanese instruments like the koto and shamisen. Terms like "fusion music" are thrown around, but in the end, they are labeled as "world music," as they straddle both their culture's traditional style of music and modern pop music, and are unable to be placed into a single category.

African American jazz artists, though suppressed for years by white-owned labels, eventually gained their voice. Late in the 90s, we saw an explosion of Latin and Latin American artists like Jennifer Lopez rise to fame. There may be a language barrier for Asian and Asian American artists, but in the past we have seen Spanish-speaking artists like Tito Puente and Selena gain mass popularity in the U.S.

In the past year, K-pop girl group Wonder Girls held a series of successful concerts in the U.S. A few K-pop groups have made their debut on the U.S. iTunes charts: Big Bang member Taeyang's international version of his "Solar" album ranked #5 in the R&B category in June, and 2NE1's "To Anyone" album hit #2 in the hip hop category this September, ranked just below Eminem's "Recovery" album. The recent success of Far East Movement's "Like a G6" has increased interest in Asian American artists. Maybe the time has come for these artists to finally make their mark on the American music industry for producing music that can be enjoyed by any audience, regardless of whether they are of Asian descent or not.

JUST BE

Asian Americans, Punk Culture, Honest Expression

by austin houlgate

"I don't want to have to explain my existence." ("Hapa Girl," Tribe 8)

"Ultimately, martial arts means honestly expressing yourself . . . But, to express oneself honestly, not lying to oneself, and to express myself honestly – now that, my friend, is very hard to do."

-Bruce Lee

"There are Asian Americans in punk bands?" My neighbor was completely bewildered by the research project I was doing on people of color in the punk scene. The image of Asian Pacific Americans playing punk music wasn't just something he hadn't seen before, it was an idea that was completely incongruous with his expectations. So why does it seem so strange to think about APAs engaged in underground music culture? One problem lies in how APA artistic and cultural expression is scripted by selective media representations and racial and ethnic stereotypes.

Why is the diversity of our communities constricted in popular understanding? What potential does alternative

media have in creating an expanded and diverse representation of APA communities? In "Critical Visions: The Representation and Resistance of Asian Women," Lynn Lu writes: "In media-driven U.S. culture, representations of Asian Pacific women play a significant role in both reflecting and shaping our status, our self-image, and our potential." Lu's framework suggests that APA women's – and men's – identities are shaped in part by their representation in media, art and cultural productions. Alternative sites of artistic and cultural expression have that immense potential in challenging and rupturing these scripted identities.

For me, punk exists as an alternative medium in which distorted representations of APAs can be defied through self-representation. The do-it-yourself nature of punk artists and record labels allows a space for personal self-expression to thrive and develop. Punk has the potential to exist as a space where anybody can define themselves as they see fit, according to their specific heritage and experience and a disregard for the expectations constructed around their identity by mass media.

Punk music and culture plays a different role in the lives of different fans and participants. Punk is vital to me because it opens up a space for honest expression and dialogue. In many cases, the messages and activities of punk bands are not motivated by a desire for wealth, mainstream popularity, or the expectations of popular society and consumer culture. This is not music that is promoted, defined or controlled by a corporate music industry. The music, performance, energy

and activity generated by punk artists are organic to their collective and individual experience. APA punk kids write and perform their own music, controlling their message and content is an act of self-determination and accurate self-representation.

The idea of APAs in punk rock should not be such an unfathomable idea, since APAs have played a critical role in the Bay Area punk scene for a long time and continue to do so today. The bands and artists that are profiled here represent people that have done significant work in engaging punk music as a medium for social change, through representation or direct political action. Punk is a label that encompasses a heterogeneous subculture based around many different subgenres of music. What all these artists have in common is that their work expands understandings of the punk culture and the APA identity. Additionally, these are all bands that I have listened to for years and have given me insight into my own identity and politics through their music and performance.

I want to stress that this article is not a claim that any of these bands are superior just because they feature APAs. I simply believe that it is vital to make visible the presence of APAs in the punk music scene. It is a significant step in understanding the diversity of passions, experiences and modes of expression that our communities has to offer.

MIKE PARK

(Favorite songs: "Blue Marble," "As

Mike Park is a singer-songwriter who has worked with a variety of styles, including the crucial ska-punk bands Skankin' Lee Band. Park's solo releases, "For Falling," are driven by acoustic guitar and are earnest explorations of the personal. "Prodigy," Park sings: "I don't want I need to share / Can you treat me like a person. / There are things I need to share." This always resonated with me, since my family put a lot of pressure on me to enter the "right" profession. Park's music allowed me to reach a huge revelation about how I wanted to live my life and how many paths were open to me. Much of Park's music deals with racism and all manners of social injustice and prejudice, especially those faced by the Asian American community. Describing his record label, Asian Man Records, Park writes, "I do this for the love of music, not for capitalist gain or status recognition. I only work with bands that are ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-SEXIST, ANTI-PREJUDICE." In addition to running a completely DIY record label out of a garage, Park started the Plea for Peace Foundation, which works to donate money to local and international relief and progressive efforts. Recently, Park also helped found the Plea for Peace Youth Center in Stockton, a community music and arts center. Park's work in his record label and foundations demonstrates the solid work that can be done through punk on behalf of progressive and radical politics.



mikeparkmusic.com

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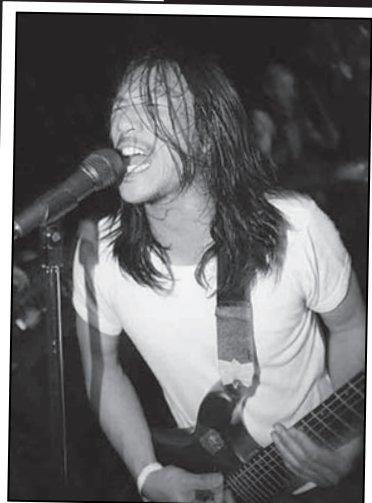
(Favorite Songs: "Hapa Girl," "Prison Blues," "Rise Above")

Tribe 8 was a phenomenal all-women, all-queer hardcore punk band from San Francisco. Regrettably, this is the only band that I haven't seen live, especially since Tribe 8's performances are legendary. The band may have disbanded in 2005, but Tribe 8's legacy lives on. The documentary "Rise Above"

showcases the band's intense, thought-provoking performances combined with insightful commentary from the band members. While many of Tribe 8's songs are satirical and sarcastic – following the legacy of the best punk bands – Tribe 8's performances and lyrics dealt with issues of sex, gender, violence, redemption and being outside the mainstream. Leslie Mah, one of Tribe 8's guitarists, is outspoken about being a queer woman of mixed race and her life experiences, as well as her work in punk. Mah wrote the lyrics for "Hapa Girl," a song that means a lot to me. It challenges all the boundaries of expression. It challenges the assumption of male power. Members of the band are not afraid of being objectified. They would accept the strength and rage of surviving. Tribe 8 is a wild band that deserves the utmost respect for its music and performances.



riseabovethetribe8documentary.com



flickr.com by Donofthedeat

ath's "Yellow Tape," "This is Our Time" – Nev

two crucial Bay Area bands: Say Bok Gwai. Say Bok Gwai for Death has a membership that literally includes members from Japan and a guitarist in Australia, while in San Francisco and most of the members are from the Bay Area. Say Bok Gwai shows are consistently the most fun I've ever been to. A member of the band brings an over-the-top energy to every song at furious tempos and spending hours of time on stage. Yeung's other band, Say Bok Gwai, is a Cantonese and English. I am not the biggest fan of Say Bok Gwai, but I love the band singing in Cantonese is a first and a great addition to playing guitar, Yeung runs Monkey King Records with creative control over his own music, as well as his own label. Monkey King Records produces the Asian American Punk compilation which highlights local Asian American bands and



myspace.com/Eskapo

"Kalayaan," "Rep that V")

Vallejo (with Filipino expatriates) that they speak both Spanish and English. I first saw Eskapo play at the University of California Indigenous University that had been founded by the University. I still remember how uncompromising and how outspoken Eskapo was about its politics. It took the space for granted as just a place to perform. The political messages of the songs with their lyrics. This is immensely helpful, since it helps me to understand the vocals in many punk songs. But it makes sense, given vocalist Rupert Estanislao's intense spoken word work and record of social activism. In fact, Eskapo has played countless benefit shows in its lifetime, and members have worked with organizations such as the Campaign for Human Rights in the Philippines. I absolutely love this band. Their record "Kalayaan" is a classic with songs that touch everything from subjects such as colonization, imperialism, immigration to just being from Vallejo. Eskapo uses punk as a space to channel their members' own politics, energy and language to speak for the liberation of their people. For that, they are amazing and an incomparable force in the Bay Area punk scene.

DID THAT G6 REALLY FLY?

HOW FAR EAST MOVEMENT'S SUCCESS ON THE BILLBOARD HOT 100 WAS MONUMENTAL FOR ASIAN AMERICAN ENTERTAINERS

by **steven cong**

Far East Movement is the first Asian American hip hop group to reach number one on the Billboards Hot 100 with their song, "Like A G6." While that was a momentous occasion for the Asian American community, many are skeptical about the impact of their success, and whether their chart-topper is indicative of the public's acceptance of Asian Americans in pop culture.

I was definitely taken aback by that response. How often do you see an Asian American on MTV in a role that is not reserved for someone with either broken English or a bowl cut? Rarely. So when I heard that Far East Movement had finally broken through into the mainstream pop culture, I was ecstatic. Someone had finally cracked the bamboo ceiling at a time when countless Asian American artists are waiting to grasp the spotlight. I took it as a milestone.

Yet when I shared my excitement with others, not everybody was as inspired. And, to be sure, some of them had very legitimate reasons for being lukewarm. I visited my Asian American Studies 20A GSI during his office hours with a classmate, and we discussed the historical exclusion of Asian Americans in the United States. The conversation eventually went to the exclusion of Asian Americans in the media, and my friend was relatively pessimistic about the chances of Asian Americans breaking through. When I brought up Far East Movement, her opinion did not change.

So, in a nutshell, this is her argument for why this breakthrough on Billboards is not as significant as it seems. Apparently, her opinion is shared by many others. For one thing, "Like A G6" features the Cataracs, which is a white band, and the chorus was sung by a white female as well. It's as if the presence of these white artists legitimized the track for those who still can't accept Asian American artists in mainstream pop culture.

Moreover, hip hop is a culture that originated from the Bronx, and has no roots whatsoever in Asia. People who disagree with the notion that Far East Movement's success represents new opportunities for Asian American entertainers claim that it instead reflects the fact that these entertainers must strip themselves of their culture to find acceptance. In short, you can't really stay "Asian" if you want to be successful in America.

These are powerful assertions, but assertions do not always translate into fact. "Like A G6" was not an isolated magnum opus that would leave Far East Movement as an one-hit wonder. As early as 2006, their song "Round and Round" was featured in the movie "Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift." Later songs from the album "Animal," such as

"Lowridin'" and "Girls on the Dancefloor," would top charts all over California, leading to a performance at a concert that featured Jay Z, and eventually the song "Like A G6" itself. In short, this track was only the latest example of Far East Movement's ascension, and its success should not be attributed to the featured white musicians.

The second concern is more difficult to address. I don't believe any true hip hop enthusiast would argue against the fact that hip hop materialized out of New York, and became mainstream only after the efforts of numerous African American musicians and activists who helped define it as the epitome of "cool." Nevertheless, Asian Americans have still been prominent in hip hop in ways other than grabbing

didn't spray paint more dragons into her works, she replied it was almost offensive to imply that these symbols of Chinese culture were necessary to justify her presence in the hip hop culture. She said that she just enjoyed painting graffiti as it is, and wondered why her works needed to be different from what she enjoyed. One of the rappers in the documentary claimed that it's the Chinese ideals and lifestyles that define its culture, and that these are the traits they wish to underscore through hip hop, as opposed to the more superficial characteristics of their heritage.

One final complaint I remembered was that Far East Movement, despite the fact that they are successful, do not sound Asian. I was almost speechless. What does it mean to want an Asian American to "sound" Asian when the language they are trying to speak is English? According to members of the website Aznraps, which essentially launched the careers of many Asian American artists such as Far East Movement, sounding Asian was just an euphemism for saying Asians can't rap because they may have a particular accent. We should celebrate Far East Movement's ability to not abide by conventional stereotypes that present Asians as perpetual foreigners.

We also must not forget that the term Asian American contains the word American. It is indeed important for Far East Movement to represent their people in American pop culture. I believe this is what critics meant to say when they argue that Far East Movement does not sound Asian. However, the group has chosen to represent their background numerous times. Aside from their name, which is a blatant declaration of their racial identity, they have also collaborated with Wong Fu Productions to host the International Secret Agents concerts, which showcased Asian American entertainers. Moreover, they have given specific recognition to the Asian American community for their success when Far East Movement was featured on Youtube's front page. Contrary to the critiques of some, Far East Movement truly embraces their duty to the Asian American community.

It is important to recognize what Far East Movement has achieved with their chart-topping song, and also its value to the Asian American community. They have not forgotten their roots in becoming hip hop artists, nor in striving for success. If anything, their success provides inspiration for countless young Asian Americans across the country, encouraging the belief that their experiences are not separate from this very essential piece of American culture. It is a well-earned success, and one that can only open the door for more Asian American entertainers to cut away that bamboo ceiling.



Members of Los Angeles based Far East Movement topped charts and broke norms

a microphone. DJ Qbert is one of the most accomplished disc jockeys in America, while Jeff Chang's book "Can't Stop, Won't Stop" is studied by hip hop historians across the nation.

But it is still the rappers who are in the limelight, and not the DJs or historians. In that respect, Asian Americans have not made as much of an impact in the genre. When they do indulge in rap, however, it is not because they want to distance themselves from their culture. Many pursue the art because they view it as a way to express the deeper contexts of their cultural roots.

In a recent documentary by director Duncan Jepson called "Follow Your Heart," which traced the lives of several hip hop artists in China, the musicians themselves held a different idea of what it meant to infuse their ethnic culture with hip hop. When one graffiti artist was asked why she

