



Over a Century of Service

The Campus

to CCNY and the Harlem Community

INSIDE:

CU NY

2 Tuition Hike



5 Gothic Psyche

by Ishtiaq Alam

After weeks of anticipation and foreboding, the fated day came. It marked the end of an era. An era which held the laws of lethargy while frowning upon acts of work and study. A time when leisurely activities ran wild and the intellectual mind hibernated in the deep caverns of the cranium.

The conclusion of one era spawns another. And this one seemingly exemplifies the ideas of life, activity, and labor; a period of progress pursued by the vigor and virtue. In essence, it is the antithesis of its precursor.

As I walked towards the North Academic Center, an ominous, prison-like building, on the morning of 26 January, 2009, I felt a chill running down my spine. Mind you it was very cold that day and I was shivering from freezing winds. But I suspect a metaphoric chill was occurring simultaneously with its physical counterpart as I glanced at the NAC. So began spring semester

Welcome Back!



Photo ©2004-08 John Hill. Some rights reserved.

The City College of New York as seen on Graduation Day 2007

2009.

However, all my dread and despair coincided with feelings of nostalgia, as certain things about the beginning of the new semester remain the same. They played a welcoming rôle, assisting students get accustomed to the new semester. For example the display in the book store is particularly entertaining.

Every student has made at least one trip to the book store at the start of the new semester. The sight of the long line at the bag check outside the book store has many turning on their heels. I say, "At least wait until you see line inside before leaving." The registry line in the book store stretches from the

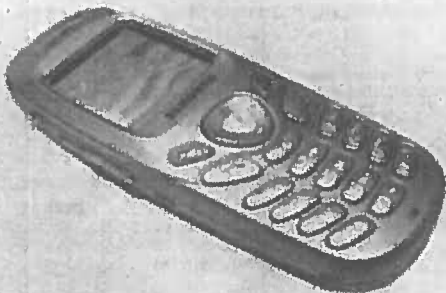
(Continued on page 6)

Real Deal With Cells

Recent Studies Link Heavy Cell Phone Usage to Brain Tumor Development

by Stephanie Tardieu

I remember a time when cell phones were a rare sight and could only be glimpsed at in the movies or on a music video in the limo of some millionaire rapper... Well, this is no longer that time. Over the past 10 years, it's become the most popular personal item used nationwide on college campuses and in the



Source: Wikimedia Commons

modern developed world. In the year 2000, it was estimated that 92 million people used cell phones in the U.S. (a number that keeps growing by one million every month). By 2003, the number of users worldwide surpassed 700 million! Though the cell phone was invented as a means to facilitate communication, the inventor himself could

not possibly imagine the enormous impact this small and practical device would have today.

Cell phones not only connect us to our loved ones, but to our work, the internet, and the world at large all while fitting in the confines of a pocket. Its users include women and men of (literally) all ages. Recently I overheard my niece request a cell phone for Christmas from her parents at the mere age of 7!

Cell phones have evolved into a necessity and for some of us, a lifeline we simply cannot do without. I must admit I could not do without my Sidekick II which allows me to maintain my schedule, look up the weather, download my favorite tunes, play Tetris, chat with my girls online, text my boyfriend and of

(Continued on page 7)

Obama: Afterthoughts on the Election and Inauguration

by Alina Gavrilă

The bus ride to Washington DC on January 19 was full of New Yorkers and several foreign tourists eager to witness history in the making with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. I expected a plethora of enthusiastic US citizenry, but I was pleasantly surprised to see so many foreign visitors both on the bus and in DC. However, after more careful consideration, it should not be surprising; after all, US laws and decisions impact so many countries. In fact, one friend from the Netherlands expressed exasperation with the international media attention on our election by remarking, "Sure, the [US] elections are important and I'm glad Obama won, but we don't follow our own elections so closely." Other friends abroad told me that because Europe is 6-7 hours ahead they stayed up early into the morning to follow the results on CNN International because this was an important election for the world, in their view.

I spent Election Day in New York (in both Brooklyn and Harlem), and the inauguration day in Wash-

ington DC. In DC, the mood on the inauguration day felt like a continuation and culmination of the enthusiasm on Election Day. In both instances and places there were similar sentiments and reactions: countless people waving US flags, crowds gathering together, and strangers smiling to each other and emanating with their face and eyes the Obama tag-line, "Yes we can, Yes we did." There was an overwhelming feeling of community on election day as on the inauguration day that I, as a New Yorker, have felt in large cities only on rare occasions, such as on New Year's, when strangers congratulate each other, and we feel a closer bond to each other.

Throughout the inauguration there were also loud cheers for Obama and Biden and others, such as General Colin Powell, who is a CCNY alumnus. But there were repeated and loud boos when former President Bush and Dick Cheney were mentioned and when their faces were shown on the screens at the inauguration, as well as loud cheers when Bush's helicopter departed. I should stress that the boos were not meek

(Continued on page 2)

WWW.CCNYCAMPUS.COM

CITY COLLEGE IS NY

Real Deal with Cells*(Continued from page 1)*

course talk to my mom all at once. A cell phone has simply become a vital essentiality in our lives. Or is it really vital?

In recent years, the widespread use of cell phones has led to increased concerns about its possible health hazards and long term effects, namely brain cancer. In 1993, a Florida man pressed charges against a cell phone company claiming that his wife's brain tumor was caused by radiation emitted from her cell phone. The lawsuit was dismissed at the time due to a lack of scientific and medical evidence to prove that claim. However, the question still remains: Are cell phones really dangerous?

Cell phones operate with basic electromagnetic energy located between FM radio waves and the waves used in microwaves on the electromagnetic spectrum. This energy is called radio frequency (RF). The amount of RF someone is exposed to through cell phones depends on 2 factors: the distance from the cell phone to the head, and the length and frequency during which the cell phone is used. According to Dr. Glen Kowach, Ph.D., professor of chemistry at The City College of New York, "If you've got some of the newer cell phones, they operate at 2.4 GHz and that happens to be very close to the frequency of your microwave oven. Your microwave oven uses electromagnetic radiation, a wave length of light that you can't see. However, these radio frequencies are attuned to the absorption of water. So if you have a cell phone that is tuned to that frequency then the water in your skin and your brain could be heated by it (your cell phone)." Scientists have established that the heating of brain tissues is a prime cause of malignant tumors.

Over the past few years researchers at the Swedish National Institute for Working Life (SNIWL) have extensively investigated the long term health effects of heavy cell phone usage. Heavy cell phone usage is defined as 2,000 hours or more of cell phone usage. The researchers found alarming and overwhelming evidence linking heavy cell phone usage to the development of malignant brain tumors. The study monitored the cell phone habits of 2,200 brain cancer patients in comparison to the same number of healthy control subjects. Of the 2,200 cancer subjects, 905 reported extensive use of their cell phones. The malignant tumors were most often found on the side of the brain where the subject most often used the cell phone. In addition, studies on lab rats with RF have lead to similar and even more dramatic results. Unfortunately since cell phones are relatively new on the scope of technology, scientists simply do not have the means to follow-up on the full spectrum long term effects of their radiation emissions on our health...yet. But the wheels have already been set in motion.

According to Telephia, a major cell phone digital company, young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 are the heaviest consumers of cell phone minutes. The average consumer in that age group uses an average of 1,300 minutes per month and therefore 260 hours per year. At that rate, members of that age group (including myself) would reach the 2,000 hours criteria of heavy cell phone usage in less than 8 years.

Gustavo Hernandez, a 19 year old sophomore student at The City College of New York surveyed the number of hours he used his cell phone in a month: "I found that I use my cell phone on an average 70 minutes per day so that's 2170 minutes per month". When I told Gustavo the rate at which it would take for

him to reach the heavy cell phone usage rate he said: "I only use it to talk to my friends, my job, and my family in DR. I didn't realize how much time I was actually spending on it... So it would take me about 5 years to get to that point...Wow."

According to SNIWL, the cell phone industry denies any claim of their product being harmful. But this new evidence clearly shows that RF radiation is related to malignant brain tumors. Of course only time will tell the fate for the rest of us real life guinea pigs subject to the cell phone pandemic. But why sit around 8 years and wait for a brain tumor to show up on your CAT scan or MRI? You can start to modify your cell phone behavior today. Scientists working with the SNIWL advise that:

You can reduce your exposure to RF energy from cell phones by reducing the amount of time spent on your phone per day.

If you must have extended conversations on your cell phone every day, you should place more distance between your body and your phone. This can either be done thru making use of your speaker phone feature or a head set piece.

It's funny how history repeats itself, for instance in the 70s the tobacco companies refused to admit to the overwhelming evidence of cigarette linkage to lung cancer. Well today we all know that's just bogus. Today it's no surprise that the worldwide billion-dollar cell phone industries have chosen the same route.

So as a fellow cell phone user it looks like yet again we're going to have to think ahead and progressively before we end up like the first generations of cigarette smokers: unsuspecting ill-fated lab rats.

Stephanie Tardieu
City College of New York
The Campus

The Future Void of Plastic

By: Shannon Ayala

Why does it look like there might be an end of plastic in the future? Plastic was invented 157 years ago and has been in major use for about sixty years. Discoveries of the dangers of plastic are fairly recent but aversion to the material has occurred naturally. As an easily molded substance it is almost infinite in shape, but is it time to limit our use of it?

The heating of plastic is the most dangerous. If not recycled, plastic often turns up incinerated, which pollutes the air with dioxins (TCDD), an airborne toxin that is alien to the human immune system. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes "dioxins as a serious public health threat." This is avoidable by the recycling of plastic bottles and bags at supermarkets. TCDD has been linked to cancer since 1997. The Environmental Health Perspectives journal (EHP) reported in 2002 a significant connection of TCDD exposure and breast cancer. Since the reports stating heated plastic produces a hormone that complicates puberty and causes other genital and menstrual defects have come out, there is major version in Asia to plastic.

Metafacts, a research firm in San Diego surveyed in 2004 that 8.6% of Americans trash their computers and 30 million cell phones are tossed in the garbage annually. These plastics,

when put in landfills, contaminate water and soil with lead and mercury. The chemicals can cause birth defects such as brain damage et cetera.

"A plastic cup takes 50 to 80 years to decompose [and] plastic bags and other plastic garbage kill up to 1 million sea creatures every year," says GreenDiary.com.

Plastic is mostly used in packaging. Another question is whether we will transport things for a great distance anyway, since local produce is becoming more popular. When food becomes mostly local, plastic can arguably be eliminated with the rest of shipped merchandise. China, Devon, and San Francisco have banned plastic bag use in stores. Many other cities have been debating on the usage of plastic bags. It leads to the argument of wasting trees, but the option of independently re-using your own bags exists as well.

Some supermarkets collect plastic bags for recycling and most take bottles as well, which is possibly the easiest item to recycle. Students at the City College NYPIRG will be lobbying for the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, which if passed this year, New York will refund non-carbonated drinks as well as carbonated. The Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health will be discussing chemical byproducts of plastic that harm children's health at a conference in March. Perhaps there will be no plastic in 100 years. After all, it is disappearing as we speak.

Obama: Afterthoughts*(Continued from page 2)*

The reaction on the streets during the election and inauguration reminded me of two critical events that I experienced outside of the US. I saw firsthand local reactions during two major regime changes, the 1989 overthrow of the dictator Ceausescu in Romania and the ousting of Milosevic in Serbia in 2000. Without exaggerating, the mood in the US during the Obama victory and inauguration emulated the reactions I saw on the streets in both Romania and Serbia when they deposed of their former dictators: numerous cars stopping to honk (not as isolated incidents, but as a collective phenomenon), a renewed pride in one's national identity and the spontaneous need to wave the flag, people opening the windows of their cars to yell to pedestrians and other drivers "Obama" or "We did it" and complete strangers stopping to congratulate each other and sometimes even hug. This was true in my neighborhood in Harlem but it was equally true in the predominantly white neighborhood in Brooklyn where I spent most of Election Day at an election party. In fact, when I walked to the subway in Brooklyn after the Obama

victory, I saw several people lighting fireworks, and many more coming out of their homes to express joy by yelling "Obama." Two times I was stopped by complete strangers where, in a spirit of spontaneous camaraderie, we congratulated each other on Obama's victory. They were both white and I am white, a fact which I mention only because it portrays the overwhelming sentiment of unity which transcended race. We had a glimpse of what is possible.

I remember hearing years ago how inspired people were during the presidency of John F. Kennedy. It was as if people felt a personal connection to the President, but it was a sentiment that seemed alien to me and exaggerated. I simply didn't take politics so personally, nor had I seen others do so. But now I see. Political concern and passion is not something that can be intellectually understood, it can only be experienced, and when this happens it is not willed but happens involuntarily. Indeed, although the austere economic realities left by the past administration are a sobering reality, this is still an exciting time to be an American.