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Photo Credit: Ryan Schwach
By Quiara Vasquez
Editor-in-Chief

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The constitution and by-laws for the proposed new student government are accessible online at tinyurl.com/bcusgconstitution and tinyurl.com/bcusgbylaws, respectively. For students interested in receiving assistance, email Daniel Frazer at daniel.frazer28@brooklyn.cuny.edu to set up an appointment.

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Dueling Protests as Tensions Rise During “Israeli Apartheid Week”

By Ryan Schwach
Managing Editor

To commemorate the anniversary of the “Great March to Return” one year ago in Gaza where 183 Palestinian protesters were killed by the Israel Defense Forces, the Students for Justice in Palestine, BC Socialists, and the BC Student Union organized events as part of “Israeli Apartheid Week,” which ignited counter-rallies from pro-Israel groups.

“Free Free Palestine!” shouted protesters at the first event last Thursday in front of the library. Maira Tahir, Secretary of Students for Justice in Palestine, read the names of 109 Palestinians shot and killed by Israeli soldiers last year.

“I feel like speaking out against any issue makes me feel empowered,” Tahir told The Kingsman. “A lot of places you can’t do that,” she said.

The reading of names was followed by a collection of chants led by BC Socialist Chris Mejia, whose chant of “long live the intifada” at the vigil for the Christchurch attacks on Tuesday, Mar. 19 sparked outrage and cries of anti-Semitism from the pro-Israel community. Protesters dispute these allegations.

“They use fallacious claims of anti-Semitism to shut down criticism,” pro-Palestinian protester Kellen Gold, who himself is Jewish, told The Kingsman. “They have forgotten the Jewish history of organizing for all oppressed people, “ he said.

Another speaker, Cole Boyd, a member of SIP discussed observing “settlers throwing garbage on them [Palestinians],” and called for boycott and divestment in Israel.

Of course, the Mar. 28 event was just a precursor to the events of Tuesday, Apr. 2, where pro-Palestinian protesters clashed with pro-Israeli protesters on the East Quad side of Bedford Avenue.

At the onset, the groups were separated, the pro-Palestinian group congregating in front of the library with a small crowd and a mock wall, to signify the one that separates Gaza and Israel.

“We’re here to raise awareness and talk to people about what happens in Palestine,” said BC Socialist and activist Yasmine Kamel.

The pro-Israel group was set up with a small table on Bedford Avenue with banners and reading material of their own. Their banner read "Equality in Israel" and made the argument that Israel was the most socially progressive nation in the Middle East on matters like LGBTQ rights.

“I want Brooklyn College students to get both sides,” said Daniel Brooks, an activist who does not attend Brooklyn College and authors a blog entitled The Times of Israel.

Both groups kept their distance, but eventually, the Pro-Palestinian group made its way across East Quad and stood directly across the entrance from the Pro-Israeli groups with students passing in between.

“We wanted to get in touch with people,” said Kamel about the move across campus.

The groups ignored one another, the pro-Palestinian group chanting and the pro-Israeli group did little but watch. As common hours drew to a close, an audience began to form around the East Quad entrance, many using their phones to record. Finally the straw seemingly broke when the Palestinian side began a “long live the intifada” chant, inciting responses from the opposite side.

“Keep cheering for terrorism and anti-Semitism,” shouted Sarah Weber, a pro-Israeli student. “I don’t this particular protest is helpful, if they really want to educate people.”

By this point the chants got louder and the number of onlookers increased, some taking issue with one of the groups and using the open platform to debate, including Mohammad Sarker who debated with Brooks and other pro-Israeli protesters.

“I don’t think peace is happening,” he said.

“I believe that what our cousins on the other side are doing is radical in the sense that the security wall was built to protect Israeli lives and Jewish lives,” said another onlooker Holden Hirsh, a former combat soldier in the Israeli Defense Forces who served on the Gaza Border.

Smaller debates began to bubble up amongst the larger ones, notably an argument between Brooks and pro-Palestinian protester Amanda Ruiz, who at one point took one of Brooks’ papers and tore it up. “I was telling him to address what is happening in Palestine,” she said, “I have no issue with the group. I just have an issue with the way the group is portraying Palestine […] they are the ones that are oppressed.”

Although it seems that the Israeli-Palestinian debate is far from seeing its conclusion, all common hours protests on Brooklyn College campus came to end at 2:15 when the next round of classes begin.

Going forward, the “Israeli Apartheid Week” continues on Thursday, Apr. 4 with a screening of the short documentary “Watched,” which details the NYPD surveillance of Muslim students at Brooklyn College.

Protesters at Thursday's event. / Ryan Schwach

A stare-off on Bedford Avenue. / Ryan Schwach

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Self-Defense Tools for Survival
A Workshop With the Women’s Center

By Alana Vayntraub
Staff Writer

Who hasn’t felt scared or uneasy leaving campus late at night, after that one class that we needed that was only offered in the evening? Well, have no fear, because every year, the Women’s Center and the Women’s History Month Committee, along with instructors from the Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE), organize a self-defense workshop.

On Thursday, Mar. 28, the Women’s History Committee came together, in honor of Women’s History Month, to present the self-defense workshop. This remarkable workshop was led by the Center for Anti-Violence Education. Approaching SUBO lounge where the event was being held, looking through the clear glass doors, it was refreshing to see the diversity of students. They were all eagerly waiting and anticipating what the event was being held, looking through the clear glass doors, it was refreshing to see the diversity of students. They were all eagerly waiting and anticipating what the event was being held for.

“One of the main things that we try to teach is awareness,” said Gabriella Belfiglio, an instructor with CAE. “We approach martial arts and self-defense in a way that’s different than most places. It’s not a simple ‘kick them in the groin,’ it’s more how do you prevent things from happening, how do you make boundaries?”

For example, according to Belfiglio, your voice is extremely prominent in self-defense care as well. Being confident and saying “NO” or “STOP” is one way to prevent any unwanted harm, physically or emotionally.

Some instructors from the CAE have experienced this unwanted harm firsthand. Instructor Angie Pits shared her moving story, about an upbringing full of domestic violence.

“I basically felt that I had enough, and wanted to learn how to defend myself,” Pits said. “At the Safe Horizon I saw a flyer, and I just thought, why not try this. I feel that not having that empowerment of feeling brave enough to be able to speak up, I thought maybe I can learn from this and be able to defend myself.”

She did learn how to defend herself. Angie has been with the organization now for the past four years. “Once I got with the organization I thought, I’m learning this, now I want to give back to the community. I want other women to learn as well,” Pits said. “Now that I have more information and experience, I can help women and tell them what to do in certain situations.”

Students appreciated the insight and tools they were given by the instructors.

“I thought this was an amazing experience as an intro to self-defense,” said Chahat, an accounting major. “You should always be self-aware of your surroundings and how to assert yourself in certain situations, where you might be in danger, so I really loved it.”

Other students, like creative writing major Lordy Belance, appreciated the workshop so much, they came back for a second time.

“Being at this workshop two years ago, it helped me refresh what I learned back then, and helped me learn new things,” Belance said. “I learned how to escape when someone is trying to grab me, with wrist release. This was informational, and gave me confidence to go out, gave me more tools.”

Belfiglio says that repeat attendance is especially strong for the CAE, which believes that the organization now for the past four years.

“Ideally, we can come back, or people can continue this information, because the more you get it in your body the more it will be instinctual,” Belfiglio said. “This was really a wonderful group at Brooklyn College, everyone picked up energy, skills, and new skill set.”

“We believe not only in protecting ourselves. None of us are safe, unless all of us are safe, so we want to support each other as well.”

To do that, the CAE handed out a sheet which listed the rights we’re entitled to, regardless of your sexual preference or gender identity. There’s the right to be treated with respect and as an equal. There’s the right to decide who can touch you, and when you feel comfortable being touched. And there’s the right say who I am and act on my own behalf without being afraid of harmful consequences.

After all is said and done, we need to come together and be united. Being divided won’t help anyone especially in an unwanted and negative situation. Being safe is our number one priority and there is safety in numbers. If you or anyone you know is dealing with any type of violence, don’t hesitate to reach out to friends or loved ones. Call 911 in any situation you feel your life is threatened. On campus, you can express any danger you are feeling and concerns with the public safety officers. If needed, personal counseling services are located in James Hall. You can even reach out to the Center for Anti-Violence Education at CAENY.org. The Women’s Center is another safe space to turn to and will be there with open arms to assist you, and help get you the proper confidential assistance you need. Remember, you are not alone, and have resources to turn to.

Instructors from the Center for Anti-Violence Education and BC students display the move "stop." / Alana Vayntraub
Opinion: BC Should Condemn Calls for Intifada

By Sarah Einav
Secretary of United 4 Israel

Unlike most students at Brooklyn College, I did not grow up in this chaotic city. I grew up in Squirrel Hill, a quiet neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From the age of two until I graduated high school at eighteen, I attended a Jewish school just three blocks away from the synagogue the Tree of Life that suffered a devastating massacre earlier this year. So I know all too well, the personal and communal pain Muslims all over the world feel after being mercilessly attacked in the most sacred space, where they should have felt safest. I know all too well the fear when you step out of your home; it happened where nobody thought it possible - could it happen here too? The bubble of safety you once once floated through, harshly burst. The loneliness as you navigate a world that no longer feels welcoming, the uncomfortable question of whether anybody really cares at all. I know it, because I felt it too. Sometimes, when the world feels heavy, I still do.

This past week on campus has been an uncomfortable one for many, including me. As an individual who holds American, Jewish and Israeli values dear, I unequivocally support our right to defend Black and Brown people from oppression and terror. This is an effort to reach out to the campus community to discuss their movements of resistance and liberation. We believe systems of power that support injustice can be changed by grassroots activism. Israeli Apartheid Week, happening on campus this week, is a part of that tradition of non-violent resistance. This is an effort to reach out to the campus community to discuss the repression, institutionalized discrimination, and systemic abuses of Palestinian rights.

The word ‘intifada,’ a term purposely distorted by its right-wing opponents, denotes non-violent resistance—the “shaking off” of one’s oppressors. It is a beautiful Arabic word that means struggle for liberation.

We reaffirm our commitment and our right to defend Black and Brown people from oppression and terror in all its forms, and our support for their movements of resistance and liberation.

The positioning of Apartheid week and these protests, just days after an unimaginable act of terror is disrespectful and tasteless. To confuse the revenging effects of white supremacy with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is ignorant at best and wildly offensive at its worst. President Michelle Anderson, in a statement said “I object to any conflation of the massacre in New Zealand and with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” However, she continued to write “students disagree about what the chant meant, what the relevant facts are, and whether they can remain civil when discussing geopolitical issues about which they disagree passionately.” To Jewish students walking on campus where members of the socialist center posters slandering students and faculty, restrictions by the previous administration implemented in particular on Students for Justice in Palestine events, and even undercover policing of Muslim students. Jewish students themselves have expressed frustration with their identities being used to carry-out a settler colonial project, which denies Palestinians even the moral right to resist the colonization of their homeland. They feel that equating support for Israel with support for Jews is itself indicative of prejudice and is anti-semitic: Israel does not represent all Jews.

When students chant “long live the intifada!” it is a statement of solidarity that recalls the memory of generations of Palestinian struggle, and honors those brutally murdered in the course of that struggle, including during the heroic resistance taking place today along the border of Gaza.

Opinion: Brooklyn College Socialists Club Addresses Anti-Semitism Allegations

By Daphna Thier & Christopher Mejia
Brooklyn College Socialists Club

On March 26th, 2019 a student publicly accused the BC Socialists of partaking in anti-semitic speech and activism for the use of the term ‘intifada’ in a chant at our recent vigil for the victims of white supremacist terror in New Zealand. We were disheartened by the fallacious claim. Socialists oppose racism in all its forms, including anti-semitism and Islamophobia. This smear comes as part of a larger offensive by Zionists, across campuses and nationwide, in the face of the further popularization of the Palestinian cause. Academics and politicians, such as Ilhan Omar and Dr. Angela Davis, face repression for their positions on Palestine.

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This month marks a year since the start of weekly protests by Palestinians demanding an end to the inhumane siege on Gaza and the enforcement of refugees’ right of return, as recognized by UN resolution 194. The protests, known as the Great March of Return, have been overwhelmingly peaceful and yet are confronted with deadly force by the Israeli military, including the previous administration’s use of “off “ of one’s oppressors. It is a beautiful Arabic word that means struggle for liberation.

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Opinion: A Hare’s Breath From Death: Witnessing a Subway Tragedy

By Noah Daly
Business Manager

On March 24th, at approximately 1:50 a.m., police responded to a man struck and run over by the Flatbush Avenue-bound 2 train. I saw it happen, and it gave me a very real glimpse of the tenuous nature of life and sanity.

I was on the train home from Atlantic Avenue when the train came to an unexpected halt as it entered the Newkirk Avenue station. I was finishing my notes on the piece I wrote this past week about a large man and his cheese on my laptop, when I could see that there was a flash of movement at the front of the train as a man ran in front of the first car.

I am relieved to have seen that as of this moment, the man, an unidentified individual about 30 years old, is not confirmed to have died.

The unfortunate reality is that suicide in New York has increased by nearly 29 percent, according to the Center for Disease Control. The Mar. 16 issue of The Economist featured a brief article in leaders that cited two out of every three people in the West with diagnosed mental illness will go untreated, and that one in every six are afflicted with some sort of mental illness each year.

This is by no means an insinuation that the tragedy that unfolded before my eyes last Sunday morning was indeed caused by mental affliction, but the numbers do not evidence a strong alternative, even if drugs or alcohol had a part to play in that incident.

As New Yorkers, we live in one of the most competitive and hostile environments in the world. With over nine million residents, New Yorkers rank amongst the highest metropolitan populations in the world in loneliness. Chronic isolation, easy access to prescription opiates and illicit narcotics have all exacerbated the resolute truth of city life: the city will consume those who do not find better means of coping with their environment.

On Monday, April 2nd, Dr. Deepak Chopra, a pioneer of New Age thought and holistic medicine, joined local yoga scholar and thought leader Eddie Stern at the Rubin Museum for a talk on the science of Yoga. During the talk, emphasis was put on the powerful bodily response that can be derived from regular practice of yoga and other disciplines. In his new book, One Simple Thing, Stern recalls a study of pre-hypertensive students and young men from the inner city who took part in a series of yoga classes and training sessions. Apart from the benefits to their blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and digestion (details of which can be found in Stern’s book and further writings), many reported improved mood, mental acuity, and even a willingness to engage with their studies in school. In light of the recent tragedy, I asked Mr. Stern and Mr. Chopra about their response to these difficult portents for life in the big city.

“We are beset on all sides by systemic maladies,” Chopra began. “Greed, overindulgence, dependence, addiction, and aggression fueled by fear can be reduced to a single identifying word: inflammation. The modern age and all of the dangerous activities that now jeopardize the human experiment are rooted in this inflammation. If we address the root causes of these behaviors, the symptoms themselves will gradually dissipate.”

As I and my fellow passengers were escorted from the platform, a stream of some thirty firefighters, paramedics, and a few MTA employees flowed into the station. Several had radios tuned to the same frequency, where a voice detailed the situation in a calm but serious tone. I saw “Station Chief” on the patch of one firefighter, and approached to ask him a question regarding the circumstances of the incident. Halfway through my question, he stopped, looked at me, and said all that needed to be said.

“Kid, what is there to find out that you don’t already know? There’s always someone who’s had a worse night than you.”

Talk to us!
Are you a CUNY student or faculty member with something to say? The Kingsman’s Opinions section is accepting submissions. Send your op-ed to kingsmanbc@gmail.com before 11:59 PM Saturday. (The Kingsman only publishes articles written by Brooklyn College students and faculty, related to goings-on at Brooklyn College or CUNY. We reserve the right to reject submissions which are off-topic, obscene, or excessively wordy.)
The Whitney Embraces its Colorful Side in “Spilling Over”

By Jack Coleman  
Staff Writer


On the morning of the show’s opening, the crowds gathered around the Whitney to catch the iconic Andy Warhol show on its closing weekend. Fortunately for those who had seen it (or for those who weren’t interested in the Warhol phantasmagoria), the madness cleared out by the time the elevators reached the eighth floor. All the way up, on the top floor of the Museum, bold and vivid works from eighteen different artists are curated to a tasteful anti-art-historical narrative.

“Spilling Over” pulls work from the Museum’s collection. The majority of the works date from 1959-1972, from established artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, Robert Bowling, Josef Albers, Ellsworth Kelly, and Miriam Schapiro. The show also features newly acquired paintings from Emma Amos and Kay WalkingStick.

Rather than placing each artist within their respective movements, the curator, David Breslin, opted instead to highlight the ways in which these artists used color to capture the political movements of their day. In rejecting a specific art-historical narrative, Breslin seeks to reach the eighth floor. All the way up, on the top floor of the Museum, bold and vivid works from eighteen different artists are curated to a tasteful anti-art-historical narrative. Breslin’s minimalist diptych Blanco y Verde. These works are hung on the opposite wall from Robert Reed’s Plum Nellie, which features a sharply defined, slightly off-center, rectangle of untreated canvas amidst assertive brushstrokes in deep purple. Noland’s enormous scale and clever gradation of color, Herrera’s slightly more soft-spoken triangular exactitude, and Reed’s expressive play on abstraction all utilize acrylic paint and are a succinct glimpse of the gallery to follow.

While walking into the main gallery, a fellow museum-goer remarked to his companion that Frank Stella’s Gran Cairo is “so intense but calming,” and with a nod of the head, carried on to see the rest of the show. It’s true. The gallery space feels like a slow acid trip, with a sober friend guiding you along the way.

Morris Louis’ Gamma Delta, with its mostly bare stained canvas and thinned acrylic streams of red, blue, yellow, and green might be recognizable to some, as her similar Untitled is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Louis’ piece is a perfect foil to the polygonal canvas and highlighter orange-red and pink color palette of Alvin Loving’s Septahedron, as well as Miriam Schapiro’s Igsaw, a clean yet vivacious convergence of graphic squares and rectangles.

Bob Thompson's Triumph of Bacchus, one of four works to feature human representation, is also one of the only works with a direct nod to art history. This piece's inclusion in the show is a clever nod to the rejection of art-historical narrative that Breslin is seeking. Its title is a direct allusion to Renaissance works with the same title, and the work is quite a departure from the naturalistic rendering of the old masters. Though for the jazz-influenced Thompson, color is used as the ultimate delineator; figures are discernable only in their flattened and vibrant treatment. Similar to Kay WalkingStick’s muted background of yellow-green in April Contemplating May, there is no clear rendering of human features, only stark, warm colored forms. Contrasting with WalkingStick and Thompson, Emma Amos’ Baby features a woman who gazes directly at the viewer with large, deep blue eyes against an abstracted composition.

The show’s most naturalistic rendering of the human form is seen in Alex Katz’s Edwin, Blue Series. One of the last works to be seen in the show, the smallest in the gallery, and the most underwhelming, the tiny Katz piece puts a damper on the otherwise steady psychedelic trip. Katz’ The Red Smile (also part of the Whitney’s collection) would have been a more prescient option. Seen from across Sam Gilliam’s enormous and jaw dropping draped canvas in Bow from Construction, Katz’s is swallowed by more audacious and relevant works.

It is surely a contentious time to visit the iconic West Side museum, as its owners are under pressure by the activist group Decolonize This Place to remove chairperson Warren B. Kanders for his involvement in creating tear gas canisters for the Border Patrol. “Spilling Over,” though, is an exciting show from the Whitney’s collection, and as the Warhol show closes, it is heartening to have a reason to return.

The exhibit runs until Summer 2019.
Men’s Volleyball Triumphs Over Lehman

By Maruful Hossain
Sports Editor

The Brooklyn College Men’s Volleyball team wins its third straight on the road after a victory against conference rival, Lehman College 3-1 (25-11, 25-23, 25-11). The prior game against Lehman was a non conference victory. Nonetheless, the Bulldogs improved 10-11 overall and 2-4 in CUNYAC. The Bulldogs will wrap the season up against Baruch College.

The Bulldogs rolled through the first set, dominating 25-11. The second set, however was a competitive one as the Bulldogs only won by 2 points, 25-23. The Bulldogs were behind in the second set and had to rally for four straight scoring with a kill by freshman middle hitter, Omar Rezika. However, Lehman College took that one preventing the Bulldogs from responding and answering the Bulldogs 21-14. Despite getting dominated in the third set, the Bulldogs would go on to dominate next time, winning the fourth set 25-11.

Gabriel Pjatak led the team with 17 kills and 3 blocks. Omar Rezika followed up with 13 kills and two aces. Junior Setter Michael Valentin had 8 kills, one ace and two blocks and senior setter Sayuj Zachariah finished with a season high 34 assists along with 6 kills and four aces. they have shown their ability to deliver.

Men’s Tennis Wins Two Straight

By Hernan Pacas
Staff Writer

The Brooklyn College Men’s tennis team opened up conference play last Wednesday against York College where they defeated and shut out York College, 9-0. The Bulldogs started the match with a 3-0 lead after dominating doubles play where every Bulldog went on to win straight sets. In doubles play, junior Julian Calame-Mars and sophomore Justin Vasquez would go on to win the first match 8-4. In the second doubles match freshman, Christian Pena and junior, Samuel Meyerovich dominated York to 8-0 victory. In the final doubles match junior Amadou Andre and sophomore Lance Hermosissima picked up an 8-1 victory.

The Bulldogs would also win all of their singles matches. Freshman, Christian Pena did not lose a single game all afternoon, in doubles action picking up an 8-0 victory and a (6-0,6-0) victory in singles action as well. Andre would also pick up a singles victory (6-3, 6-1) and a doubles win with teammate and sophomore Lance Hermosissima (8-1). Hermosissima also picked up a singles victory (6-0, 6-1). With the win the Bulldogs moved to 1-4. The Bulldog’s next meet against St.Joseph’s College (9-0) in a non-conference match gave the Bulldog’s back to back shutouts and secured them a two game win streak. In singles play the Bulldogs would go undefeated with freshman Jonathan Lum, Meyerovich, Pena, and freshman RemiLawrence all scoring straight set 6-0 shutouts. In doubles play the Bulldogs would also went undefeated. Sophomore, Rohan Mathur and Calame-Mars would pick up an 8-2 victory in the first doubles match. In the second Lum and Lawrence would shut out St. Joseph with a 8-0 win. In the last doubles match Meyerovich and Andre would pick up an 8-1 victory. With the victory over St.Joseph’s College the Bulldogs are now 2-4 and hope to continue the winning ways against the college of Staten Island on Tuesday, April 2.