

CITY CURRENTS



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LGBT students speak through Project VOICE

By Rick Kappra
ESL Instructor

Project VOICE, a grant from the state chancellor's office has been making differences in ESL and Transitional Studies classrooms throughout the district. The underlying principles of the project encourage participating teachers to try out new ways of making their classrooms more participatory, and to connect their classrooms to the community.

On Thursday, May 16, the ESL class at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Center experienced what it meant to be part of Project VOICE. For the very first time, this class opened its doors to the members of the LGBT and CCSF communities when students participated in a community reading – "VOICES from near and far."

A few very brave students read their stories to the packed room of approximately 50 people. Other students had their stories read by allies and supporters of the class, such as Transitional Studies Chair **Gabriella Schultz** and Project VOICE Coordinator **Maria Rosales-Uribe**.

Special invited guests included **Sonja Franeta**, author, activist, scholar and former CCSF ESL instructor who is now teaching ESL at Laney College. Sonja read a story from her recently published chapbook - *Berry - of a mountain bush* - a story about her own coming out when she was working in the former Soviet Union.

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Class of 2002 graduates in style at SF's Davies Symphony Hall



All Graduation Photos by Monica Davey

Board of Trustees President Rodel Rodis (center) shakes hands with one of the graduates at the 2002 Commencement Ceremony held May 24 at Davies Symphony Hall. Chancellor Dr. Philip R. Day, Jr., (left) assisted Rodis, Vice President Johnnie L. Carter, Jr., Board Members Dr. Natalie Berg, Dr. Anita Grier, Milton Marks III, Lawrence Wong, and Student Trustee Toni Hines with the presentation of degrees to nearly 500 graduates.



Wing Yee Li, who emigrated from Hong Kong three years ago, was the student speaker. Yi started at CCSF in 2000, and transferred in Spring 2002 to San Francisco State University (SFSU) where she is studying accounting.



Keynote speaker Jonathan Kozol talked about the importance of listening to the voices of children and including them in all of our activities. His latest book, *Ordinary Resurrections*, tells of children's innocence and their ability to view the world and their place in it without cynicism or despair.

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City Currents welcomes submissions from all members of the City College of San Francisco Community.

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Photo by Monica Davey

International student graduates celebrate

The School of International Education sponsored a get-together for all 2002 City College graduates who are studying in the U.S. on student visas. The event was held May 22 in the Louise and Claude Rosenberg, Jr., Library and Learning Resource Center.

Hotel & Restaurant Foundation awards



Photo by Steve Kech

City College of San Francisco students who were among the winners at the annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon May 24 are pictured with Ed Hamilton (far left), Chair, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Studies Department, and Linda Hirose (second from right), Advisor and Placement Counselor.

The Hotel and Restaurant Scholarship Foundation presented its 2002-2003 scholarship awards May 24 at a luncheon in the San Francisco Marriott Hotel. Receiving the awards were students from City College of San Francisco, Santa Barbara City College, Cabrillo College, San Francisco State University, University of San Francisco and Cal Poly Pomona. Recipients from CCSF were **Sonja Brandjes, Lydia Browda, Jacki Butterfield, Ausrine Buzick, Brenda Crow, Helena Gustavsson, Levi Hunt, Roshan KC, Elmer Knowles, Mika**

Konishi, Alison Landry, Rachael Lobb, Megan Morrison, Naomi Nakai, Lisa Padgett, Michael Prichett, Rebecca Regnart, Ada Robles, Jennifer Sui, Efy Tal, Sharon Taylor, Tania M. Villalonga and Xing-Han Ye. Brenda Crow delivered the thank you address to the Foundation from her fellow CCSF recipients. The keynote Speaker was **Gianni Fassio**, President and CEO of Palio d'Asti and Palio Panioteca. **Robert Wilhelm**, President of the Hotel and Restaurant Foundation, and **Cindy Leong**, Sales Manager, Marriott Hotel, welcomed the guests.

Mission video students explore careers in broadcasting

By Marcia Campos

ABE/GED Instructor,

Transitional Studies Department

Francine Podenski, Chair of the Broadcast Electronic Media Arts (BEMA) Department, welcomed the Cesar Chavez Video team to her department on May 7.

In an hour-and-a-half, the students were given a thorough view of the equipment, facilities, and career options that the BEMA Department can offer them. As they toured around Arts Extension on the Ocean Avenue Campus, they learned about the teleproduction studio, the digital radio station, the hybrid sound recording studio, the digital media production lab. Most importantly, they were given the opportunity to meet and talk to video, radio production and broadcast journalism students.

Language is not an issue

The Cesar Chavez Project video team consists mainly of immigrants who speak English as a Second Language.

Overcoming the language barrier is one of their biggest challenges and fears. For them, it was extremely encouraging to hear Podenski's words about not letting language be a barrier to their goals; that they would improve their English while they acquired new knowledge and skills in the media field. Non-English speakers need to be supported in their transition from being noncredit ESL students to becoming Credit students aspiring for a certificate or degree.



Photo by Marcia Campos

Francine Podenski shows the students the teleproduction studio and explains how the television production equipment works.



Photo by Marcia Campos

Members of the Cesar Chavez Video Team (left to right) Alexis Marquez, Julio Santiago Françoise Broux, Leslie Gonzalez, and Rogelio Ramirez visit the Broadcast Electronic Media Arts Department on the Ocean Avenue Campus.

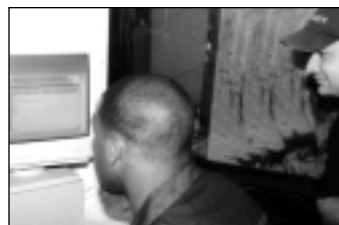


Photo by Marcia Campos

BEMA student shows the video Project team how to edit digitally by using AVID.

The Cesar Chavez Project helped the video project students discover new skills and made them confident that pursuing a career in the field of Media Production at CCSF is perfectly doable, and it is not out of their reach.

Today, workforce requirements, knowledge and skills have changed to fit the technological era. Incorporating PBL and SCANS in our classroom has encouraged the participating students to explore new fields of study, including the Broadcast Media Arts field in the case of the Cesar Chavez Video Project.

It is important that instructors mentor students and help them explore challenging and productive careers. Working in partnership with other departments, ensures CCSF students achieve individual goals and prepares them to join today's challenging workforce.

In their own words

"It was a wonderful experience visiting The Broadcast Electronic Media Arts Department. There, I learned about the digital equipment they have. Also, I learned of the options we have to study broadcasting television. I appreciated the instructor's help in letting me participate in such event. Thank you!"

— **Alexi Marquez**

"I appreciated a lot visiting the Broadcast studios of CCSF. I saw all the materials and spoke with the students about their work. Mrs. Podenski had kind words. She encouraged us to believe in our dreams, our goals regardless of the language barriers (I am an ESL student!). She also insisted that having technical skills is one thing, but we also need a good knowledge of the culture of this country and of world affairs. That is fundamental to have a career in the broadcast world."

— **Françoise Broux**

City Currents summer hiatus

There will be one more issue of *City Currents* for this academic year. It will be published June 10. *City Currents* will resume weekly publication in August during the Flex Days activities which will start August 14.

Project VOICE

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Marta Donayre, public education director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights spoke about her recent problems as a part of a bi-national same-sex couple and her threatened deportation before she was granted political asylum. Donayre spoke for many of the students in the class who were in similar situations – unable to attain legal status like their heterosexual counterparts – unable to speak out for fear of deportation, and looking for ways to keep their relationships together, in spite of numerous obstacles and lack of support. **Amos Lim**, from the Lesbian, Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, spoke along with his U.S. partner, **Mickey Hall**, about their decision to move to Canada, a country which would allow them to immigrate as a same-sex couple, since they could not find any viable means of remaining together in the United States. All of the speakers spoke of the importance of political pressure to ensure passage of the Permanent Partners Immigration Act, so that same-sex bi-national couples may have the same rights as heterosexual couples.

Johnnie Pratt, outreach coordinator for the LGBT Center, and an ardent supporter of the ESL class at the center, opened the program with one of her poems. In addition to being a talented slam poet, Pratt spoke passionately about the importance of offering the ESL class at the center. As evidence of her commitment to the class, Pratt mentions it on every tour of the center that she gives and every community meeting she attends. More than any other efforts at recruitment and outreach, Pratt's devotion to the ESL class has helped to keep a constant flow of students coming to the class.

One of the many highlights of the evening was a reading by special invited guest, columnist for Pacific News Service, NPR commentator and author **Andrew Lam**. Lam, who came to the United States from Vietnam at age 11, read a



Andrew Lam read one of his short stories at the "VOICES from near and far" event held May 16 at the new LGBT Center.

short story from an anthology called *Growing Up Poor*. Funny, magical, insightful and moving at the same time, Lam's story touched on many of the issues that face immigrants, queer and straight. As a speaker of English as a third language, Lam also served as a wonderful role model for students who are struggling to learn English as an additional language as well as for those of us who teach it.

The thread that connected all of these voices together were the voices of the students, who were heard through volunteer readers and in a few cases through their own reading of their work. Student stories included works of fiction, poetry and autobiographical tales. What set many of

these stories apart from usual writings of ESL students, were the stories they told – stories of loves lost and found, stories of their fears, hopes and dreams, and stories about their lives as they really were, with no worries that someone might discover their "secret." In this class, there were very few secrets. Students did not have to pretend to be straight as they do in their other ESL classes. They could freely talk about how they met their partners, share stories of their problems with immigration, share resources such as immigration lawyers who helped them get political asylum, and simply support one another as friends who had many things in common.

While what happened in this class was very special, Project VOICE made it even more special by bringing these voices to the community and bringing voices from the community to these students. In the spirit of Civic Engagement and participatory learning, Project VOICE helped to give voice to those who were formerly afraid to speak. While the grant has been discontinued due to state budget cuts, what Project VOICE has started is a tradition which will likely continue even without funding.

Editor's note: For more information on Project VOICE contact Maria Rosales-Urbe – nicaroses@yahoo.com. For more information on the ESL class at the LGBT Community Center, contact Rick Kappra – kappra@earthlink.net

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT

James Lim plays violin at Carnegie Hall

James Lim, Coordinator for Reference Services at the Louise and Claude Rosenberg, Jr., Library and Learning Resource Center, and his 17-year-old son, **Aaron**, played at Carnegie Hall in New York City on May 28 as part of the Villa Sinfonia Bay Area. "We've been practicing for about a year on this," said James, who plays the violin. The group will play lots of different songs, including classical and American country tunes.

"It's our first time to play in New York," James added, "We have played in Ireland and Germany. Our conductor sent a tape of our previous performances to the Carnegie Hall board, and they invited us to play."

"Villa Sinfonia is a great family- and community-oriented orchestra," James continued. "It's made up of professionals and amateurs. They are always interested in having new players. You are never too old to play or learn. We have musicians from 6-years-old to a 75-year-old priest who is just starting to take lessons."