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Shanel Spence and Lehman L.I.F.E on first day of the trip before heading to the community of San Jose de Garcia in Nicaragua to volunteer. [Page 14]



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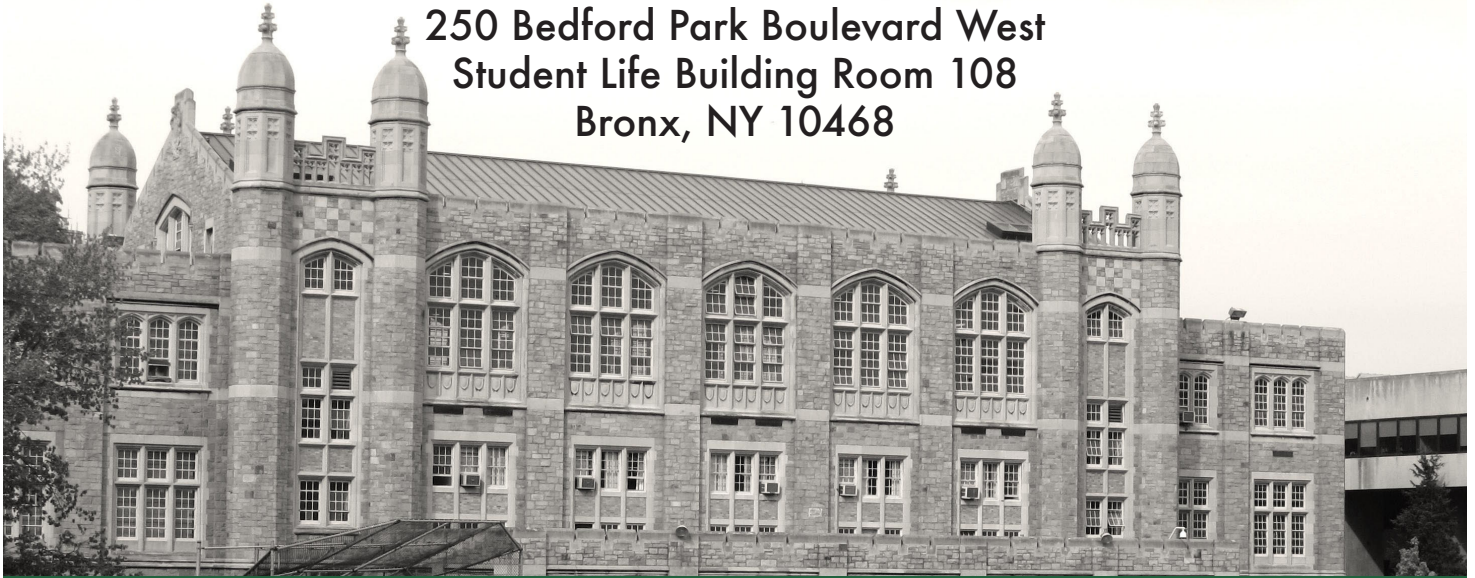
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# Bronx Residents Oppose FCC's Eradication of Net Neutrality

By Jorel Lonesome



New Yorkers oppose the FCC's ruling to eradicate net neutrality. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

Along with politicians, activists and tech companies, many Bronx residents oppose the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) ruling on December 14, 2017 to discard net neutrality, which demands that ISPs treat all web traffic the same. Without net neutrality, internet service providers (ISP) such as BT Broadband or Comcast could influence what we see online and how quickly we can access it.

Bronx residents feel that ending net neutrality further disadvantages them economically. "Net neutrality has an important place in this economy," said Carlos Diaz, Jr., 33, Bronx resident and part-time Teaching Assistant at Tiegerman School for Language in Woodside Queens. "Shopping, banking, and online trading on the internet will charge extra fees. It will just be too costly," he added.

Without net neutrality, "There will be a domino effect. Small businesses on the internet will go out of business and

people will lose jobs," agreed Jamila Magoro, 30, Bronx resident and Tax Preparer at Liberty Tax Service on East Fordham Road in the Bronx.

Businesses, she added, "can't get any traffic on their websites without paying ISP fees to get traffic from people who visit their sites. Many customers that buy products online will cancel their services because they can no longer afford to pay for additional fees to access certain sites."

Until net neutrality was rescinded, data from big and small companies alike traveled on the same frequency at the same speed, thus the ISPs could not favor one company over another. Under net neutrality laws, larger companies can't overtake their competitors. Even to watch videos on YouTube, browse Facebook, or read the news, an ISP is required.

Without net neutrality, companies will have to pay ISPs more money, favoring bigger companies that can afford to pay

for better service. This could also lead to higher prices for customers. ISPs would charge customers premium prices to watch videos online or listen to music at times when websites are busy.

However, ISPs argue that if there was less regulation and they were able to charge a premium for faster service, they could reinvest the money in a better infrastructure that could include improved access for people in remote and rural areas.

According to Harper Neidig in an April 3 article, in TheHill.com, "most Republicans want to replace the net neutrality rules with legislation..." which they hold, "...will end the regulatory uncertainty that the telecom industry faces with the prospect that the rules will change every time the White House switches parties."

Attorneys general across 20 different states are suing the FCC for axing net neutrality rules the Obama



Network Neutrality logo. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

administration enacted in 2015. States such as Washington began to take initiative to counter congressional action by signing their own net neutrality bill, followed by legislatures in New York, Maryland, Montana and California. Courts are now opening more avenues for companies to file lawsuits against the FCC's net neutrality changes. Kickstarter, Etsy and Foursquare were among some of the companies taking legal action against congress. They contend that net neutrality creates a level playing field which spurs innovation by giving small startups a fighting chance to grow and even surpass their big rivals.

As the net neutrality debate continues, ISPs wait for the FCC's repeal of internet regulations to take effect. Major broadband providers such as AT&T and Comcast agree with the FCC's move toward giving gatekeepers more power

over the people. They believe open markets on the web and breakthroughs of online products are hindered by too much internet regulation.

Aside from the debates regarding the fate of net neutrality, Bronx residents also disapprove of the FCC's repeal of net neutrality. People also feel axing net neutrality regulations is unlawful and won't allow the autonomy for internet users to search information they want to see.

Bronx resident and real estate business owner Sharai Pérez, 40, said, "It should be illegal. It's totally unconstitutional. There shouldn't be any type of rule on the internet that companies and government powers can control. Net neutrality represents freedom unless the content is harmful or inappropriate."

# Target's Self-Checkout System Frustrates Workers and Customers

By Perla Tolentino



A wide-angle view of the self-checkout station, showing that no team members were helping customers at the moment. Photo by Perla Tolentino.

The Marble Hill Target on 225<sup>th</sup> street in the Bronx recently introduced new self-checkout registers to improve customers' shopping experience, but the changeover

has disappointed many workers and local shoppers. Their experiences suggest that customers and staff may end up paying a steep price for the move.

Rhadames de la Cruz, a former Target employee, suggested that these innovative point of sale machines are meant to benefit customers by increasing efficiency.



Three Target team members at the store who did not want to be named agreed that the new registers have shortened lines at the registers.

Other employees, however, argue that the self-checkout system brings the threat of layoffs. One team member, Dulce, who asked not to give her last name, explained “They hired around 100 seasonal employees last year. They were all let go after they started the self-service, especially in the night shift there are not so many employees sometimes.” Dulce told the Meridian that most companies hire seasonal employees to avoid paying taxes and the expense of annual wage increases. She thinks the self-checkout registers may bring higher sales, but added, “I don’t think they will hire new employees any soon.”

Research supports her view. According to a study cited in a Guardian article from Aug. 2016, 7.5m retail jobs in the US “are at ‘high risk of computerization,’ with the 3.5m cashiers likely to be particularly hard hit.” The article also quoted a Target employee in Wisconsin, Caleb Kulick, who summarized the impact of the new self-checkout system: “Suddenly, a job which used to require four employees now only requires one.”

Many regular customers at the 225<sup>th</sup> location also think the registers have worsened, not improved, their shopping experience. Scarlett Nuñez, who was shopping in her work uniform, said she shops in Target almost every day. “The self-checkout registers are constantly damaged or not working, I’d rather just go to the cashiers.” Another customer who also shops regularly at the store agreed.

Rosy Morel, a 25-year-old Lehman College graduate, also expressed her frustration with the new machines. “Sometimes they don’t work, and when they do, they still require a cashier, like when I’m buying fruits and vegetables, they have to come and put a code,” she said. Rosy noticed that the new registers were taking over the jobs of Target associates.

Bronx residents are dissatisfied with the self-checkout registers because they feel that the registers still require assistance from target associates — which is now often slower to arrive. Jasmille Peralta, a Bronx resident who shops at both 225<sup>th</sup> and the 161<sup>st</sup> street locations said that the wait is the same when you are using the self-checkout. “Some functions of the self-checkout require a team member, but they are never around so I have to wait for a long time for one of them to come. One time, I waited for almost an hour,” she said.

Lesia Willis, Vice President of the Career Services Department & Alumni Affairs of ASA College in Manhattan, is also frustrated. She said the system “is just not as efficient, you still need a team member for some of the transactions made.” Willis said she prefers the old cashier registers since she uses coupons and these usually have to be supervised by team members.

An additional downside of the automated system is an apparent increase in theft. Madeline Espinosa, a Bronx resident and regular shopper at the 225<sup>th</sup> location pointed out that self-checkout machines often see a rise in shoplifting. Espinosa was employed in the Target store in Temple, PA in 2013 where the self-checkout registers were launched first. She said the

loss prevention team at the time in her PA store noticed that many of the items missing weren’t stolen on the floor, but at the self-checkout lanes. “At that store we had secret shoppers and two security guards at all time and very rarely they found people shop lifting, but they were short when inventory was done. So they realized that the gap had increased since they added the self-checkout registers,” she said.

A taxi driver who operates outside of the 225<sup>th</sup> Target store, Roger Oseda better known as “Tito” also believes that the new system has driven up theft. He pointed to circumstantial evidence of this. “There is always someone stealing something in there. They always have to call the police.” His observations are confirmed by data. According to Atlantic Magazine, a 2015 study of one million self-checkout transactions in the UK showed that almost \$850,000 worth of items “left the store without being scanned and paid for.”

Ultimately, Target’s new investment may lead them to lose more than was projected. According to an April article in Forbes, Target’s new implementation has not been profitable, causing a decrease in their earnings growth in the last year.



Target Department Store at 225<sup>th</sup> in the Bronx. At 7:05PM the lights of almost all Self-Checkout registers appear to be lit indicating the register is open. Behind them the lights of only 4 out of 29 available manual registers that require team members are lit. Photo by Perla Tolentino.

# Nixon for Governor? Lehman Students Are on the Fence

By Shaiann Frazier

"The only words in my head are not again," said Jason Nieves, 27, a Lehman business major. He explained, "it's not because she is a female, it's because she is a celebrity. Nixon can have all the qualifications, but it's the celebrity part that's going to affect the voting."

Nieves was reacting to Cynthia Nixon's candidacy for governor of New York, which Lehman students have met with a mix of doubt and guarded optimism. The Emmy-award-winning actress and activist best known for her portrayal of the lawyer Miranda in the HBO series "Sex and the City," announced on March 19 that she will run against incumbent Andrew Cuomo in the upcoming Democratic primary, which will take place on Sept. 13.

So far, Nixon has won support and praise from many of her colleagues, such as Sarah Jessica Parker, who acted alongside Nixon in *Sex and the City*, and Rosie O'Donnell, a comedian and television personality. She has also gained support from Black and Latino communities because of her recent ideas to decrease mass incarceration, as well as from the LGBT community, of which Nixon is a prominent member.

Lissy Dominguez, 22, a Lehman student and media and communications major said, "I loved her character in *Sex in the City* and it's interesting that she's running for governor years later. I don't see it as shocking, considering who our president is." She added, "I think that maybe she will be a good change for New York."

Many wonder whether she is capable of serving as the governor of New York. Benaiah Warr, 19, a film major said,



Cynthia Nixon, actress and activist, who plans to run for governor of New York. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

"I just feel like a person who doesn't have that much experience in that field shouldn't run. We need a leader to be there, that will be able to do the necessary things to make the right decisions for the greater good of the city."

Many also question her run for governor because of both her sexual orientation and her gender. America witnessed what it is was like for a female politician in the spotlight when Hillary Clinton ran against Donald Trump in 2016. Clinton was ostracized and relentlessly ridiculed through the media because she was a woman.

Currently, data provided by the Center for American Women and Politics shows that of the 535 members of Congress, women hold 105 seats, 21% serving in the United States Senate. While a quarter of state legislator seats are held by women, a mere 12 of these are governorships. According to a 2015 study by the Pew Research Center, 31% of men and 41% of women believed that Americans are not ready to elect a woman into higher office.

However, some argue that the relative scarcity of women proves that more of them should be in government. Franklin Taveras, 21, a Lehman student and film

and television major said, "I feel that it's a good thing that a woman is running for the governor of New York ... Because woman have been misrepresented in numbers in our government, and it's overwhelmingly disproportionate."

According to a 2017 study done by Politico, American University, and Loyola University, President Trump's election has led to an increase in political action by women who are Democrats. The study also found that women in both the Republican and Democratic parties have been discouraged to run for office because of President Trump's win.

Nixon has many plans if she gets elected into office. One is to legalize the use of marijuana which she believes can raise revenues in New York, if it is taxed. She also wants to address mass incarceration of Blacks and Latinos in New York, as well as fix income inequality as she believes New York has become "the most unequal state in the country with both incredible wealth and extreme poverty."

Vennela Perikala, 21, Lehman student and film and pre-med major, said "I look at her and I think of *Sex in the City*, but it doesn't take away from her. I support [her run] and I would go vote for her."

# Governor Hopeful Cynthia Nixon Tackles NYCHA

By Andrea Nieves

Along with calling for functional healthcare, justice and transit systems, New York gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon is taking on the city's housing authority. For Lehman students who have endured harsh conditions in public housing, change couldn't come fast enough.

"This winter we didn't have heat in our apartments," said Lehman sophomore Danielle Serrano. "It took them forever to acknowledge our complaints and take action but even then, the heat didn't last long. It would be on during the day but off in the night."

Nixon, 52, visited the Albany Houses in Crown Heights with Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams to see the harsh living conditions that NYCHA tenants have been complaining about. Nixon and Adams met a few of the tenants and after seeing the conditions in which they live, Nixon said to PIX11 News, "It is definitely in a state of emergency."

Among the many repair issues addressed, lead-based paint was found in many if not all NYCHA buildings across the five boroughs.

Nixon said lead paint was the main concern, and that it's dangerous to NYCHA tenants. This has led to a large-scale lawsuit brought against NYCHA. Nixon told PIX11, "I am very troubled that the chair knew about the lead paint and did not inform families. I can't understand why she did that; That's going to be a very hard thing to overcome."

Lehman students find it hard to trust the housing authority after their recent controversy. Lehman senior Mitali Sarkar



Housing apartments on Rosedale Ave. in Bronx, New York. Photo by Andrea Nieves.

said, "They can get away with not telling tenants because most people aren't aware of lead in the paint. Most people are distracted by school or work so they don't look for these things. I live in an apartment as well so to hear about people getting lead poisoning from this is very alarming."

According to The Daily News, NYCHA tenants filed a lawsuit against the city demanding retesting of apartments because they claim Housing Authority managers are lying to tenants about the status or lack of presence of lead in their units.

Since then, there has been "a political crisis" regarding NYCHA and their need for more money in the budget. Among the controversy, NYCHA chairwoman Shola Olatoye has resigned but denies her resignation was forced by recent scandals.

On March 12, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. held a press conference in the Jackson Houses, along with Governor Cuomo to speak on the issues. Diaz said, "We know that the NYCHA residents day in and day out are living in unacceptable conditions." Problems stem from molding, walls that are crumbling, roaches, lack of heat and hot water, and lead paint

in the apartments. Governor Cuomo questioned what was being done by the Housing department to address these issues. "It's not about blaming or shifting responsibility. Let's just improve the lives of the people. That's what government is about and that's what we're going to do" Cuomo says.

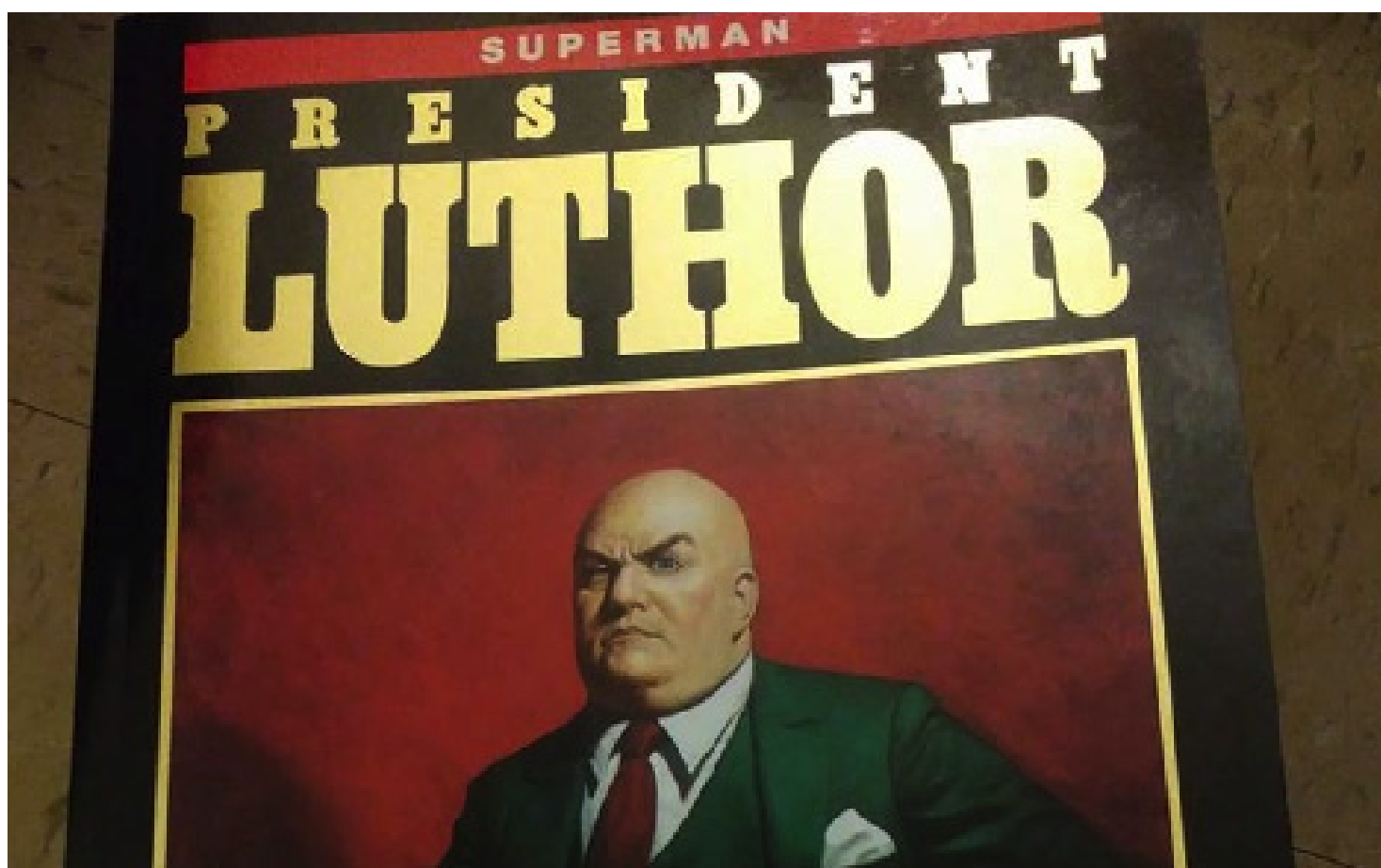
Nixon, who faces opposition to her run from the Democratic party, has also challenged Governor Cuomo over his sudden interest in reversing the longstanding deterioration of public housing. During a press conference reported by Charlotte Brehaut, Nixon rips into Governor Cuomo by saying, "We've all seen it. Andrew the bully. But worst of all his budgets bully our children and our families by shortchanging them, by boxing them in, by denying them the opportunities they are owed...And I am here to tell you that I am one woman who has the experience to say that the people of New York are sick of being bullied."

The 2018 New York gubernatorial election will take place on November 6, 2018. Nixon is running against Randy Credico as well as incumbent Governor Cuomo. If successful, Nixon will be the first female governor of New York.



# ‘President Luthor’ Provides an Entertaining Look Into Today’s Political State

By Juan Vasquez



A copy of *President Luthor*. Photo by Juan Vasquez

Comic books have always been inherently political forms of media. The X-Men were originally used as an allegory for the Civil Rights movement, with Dr. Charles Xavier representing Dr. Martin Luther King and Magneto representing Malcolm X. In the Green Lantern and Green Arrow comics, Green Lantern is forced to recognize and reconcile with his prejudice towards African-Americans. And lastly, the critically acclaimed

graphic novel “Watchmen” gave us a politically charged superhero story set in an alternative political timeline not much different from the time in which it took place. Fittingly, the “President Luthor” saga does the same as its predecessors.

Of the many stories published in the 2018 omnibus, “President Luthor” strikes true to today — considering the current political climate and the 2016 Election

still reeling in the minds of many. The book starts with Luthor’s prologue, where he decides to run for President after seeing Superman’s influence in Metropolis. From here I was expecting a political drama akin to *Watchman*. But right after he announces his candidacy, he is arrested by Aquaman, King of Atlantis, and a giant sea monster starts attacking Metropolis. I admit that I was taken aback by the sudden shift in tone, but then found it quite enjoyable.



What I really liked about “President Luthor” was the writing. Despite being written over a span of sixteen years, each part feels fresh and uniform to the entire story. The omnibus itself is divided up into three parts: “Campaign,” “Election Night,” and “Inauguration.” While the art styles are vastly different (in both

style and quality), the story manages to maintain a cohesive narrative. Once you reach “Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography,” however, you see the change back into a dark, political thriller.

This omnibus adds a refreshing take on politics in comic books. It is not as grim or dark as its predecessors, but it

is a delightful read. It will please long-time Superman fans as well as inviting readers to revisit to an old storyline that, if one were to look closely, echoes our own real life political state. Lex Luthor is a vile comic book character, similar to the comic and cartoon characters in our government.

# ‘Fullmetal Alchemist’ Fails to Live up to Hype

By Juan Vasquez

Live action films based on anime have, more often than not, turned out to be awful. The American remakes of “Fist of the North Star,” “Dragon Ball: Evolution,” and “Ghost in the Shell” are all notoriously bad. The most recent addition to that list of shame is “Fullmetal Alchemist,” widely considered to be one of the most influential anime and manga series of all time. So naturally, as with the anime that came before it, studios had to go and ruin it with a live action film.

Because this manga-to-movie fiasco seems to be one of Hollywood’s more vicious cycles, it is crucial to understand why this movie adaption, released in January 2018, was truly horrible. “Fullmetal Alchemist” the manga was released in “Monthly Shonen Gangan,” a Japanese manga anthology, in August of 2001 and ended its run in June of 2010. Since then it has released two anime adaptations: “Fullmetal Alchemist” and “Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood.”

This film attempts clumsily and hastily to stitch these three related but different pieces of media into one cohesive narrative. In the beginning, we see brothers Edward (Ryosuke

Yamada) and Alphonse chasing down a man named Father Cornello (Kenjiro Ishimaru), because they believe he has a Philosopher’s Stone. The Philosopher’s Stone is a powerful magical item that provides its user with almost god-like alchemical powers. The director tries to condense the mangas’192-page first volume into a ten minute scene. However, it can never be done convincingly to create a narrative that makes sense.

Most of the cast was terrible, save for Maes Hughes (Ryuta Sato) and Roy Mustang (Dean Fujioka). Both even look like the characters if you squint hard enough. The others just look like passable cosplayers. Gluttony (Shinji Uchiyama) was the worst of these offenders. He’s supposed to look terrifying, not goofy. Another disappointment was that this was the fifth time the fan favorite Maes Hughes died on screen, with fans left heartbroken yet again.

The only plus in this film is the setting. The background of Volterra, Italy really made the setting seem so believable. Some effort was put into making this world seem authentic. Also, the CGI for Alphonse was so pristine, there were times I forgot I was looking at a CGI suit

of armor. So, the film is not all bad, just mostly bad.

This film is not recommended for even the most diehard of Fullmetal Alchemist fans, let alone someone new to the franchise. Its poor character design and poorer attempt to condense twenty-seven manga volumes into a two-hour abomination of a film ends up, not surprisingly, blowing up in viewers’ faces. As with almost all anime adaptations, this one has proven to be a dud.



The promotional poster for the film. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

# Long Way Down Tops Reading List

By Leonel Henriquez

“Long Way Down,” a novel that examines life in urban areas from the perspective of William, a black teenage male, has soared to the top of the Young Adult Reader’s list. Released in October 2017, the novel is National Book Award Finalist and John Newbery Medal winner Jason Reynolds’ eighth book, and his fifth in the last three years.

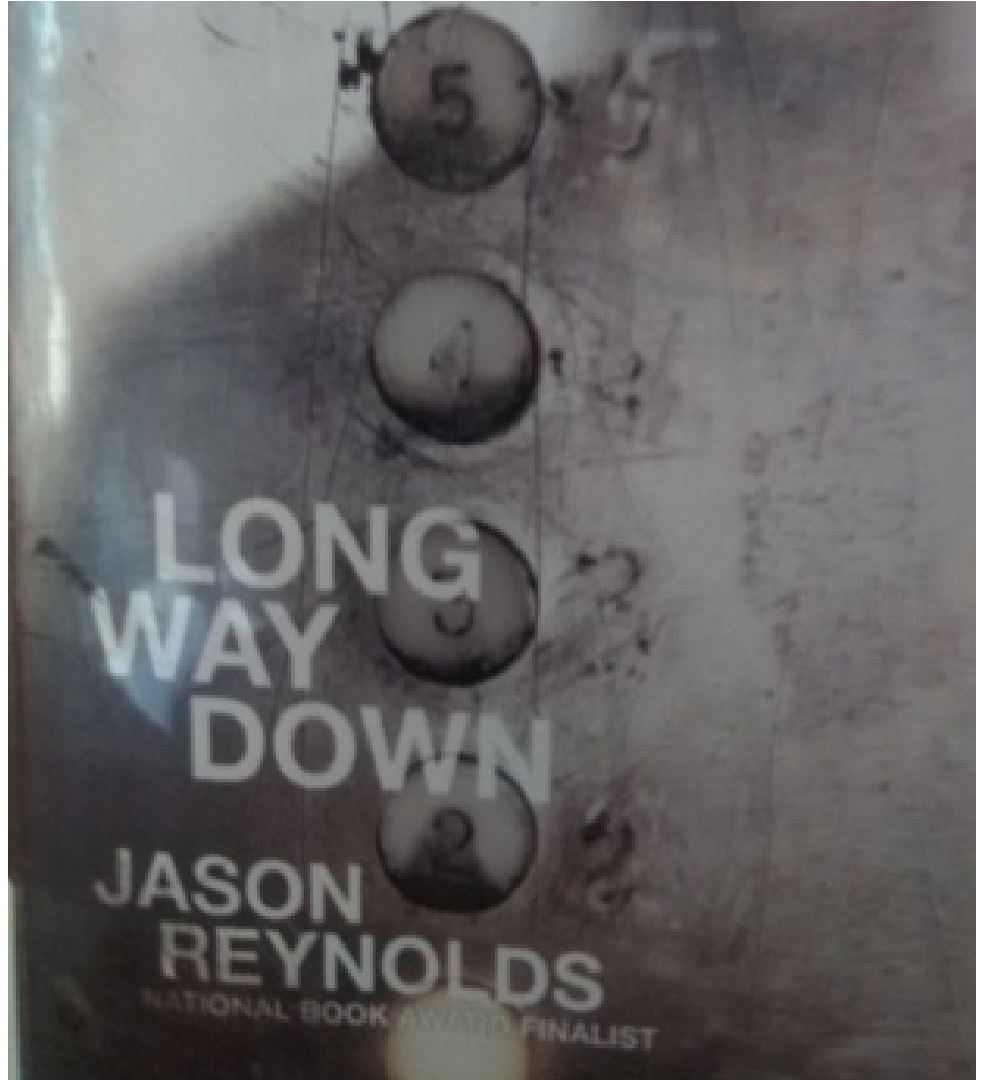
It chronicles a day in the life of 15-year-old William the day after his older brother Shawn is shot and killed. William’s life is actually an allegory, representing lives broken in part by the ongoing cycle of a drug-driven neighborhood economy, gang affiliation, and gun violence that plagues many of the youth and minority communities in large urban centers like Newark, Philadelphia, New York City, and Detroit.

Several things make the novel unique. It is written entirely in verse as a lyrical tale similar to Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” The author also engages the reader by using anagrams and words to create shapes, at one point covering a page with a question mark.

The author’s uncomplicated language and its creative presentation illuminate how the parameters of the character’s world are detailed by the rules of the disenfranchised drug- and violence-riddled neighborhood. For example:

1. Crying. Don’t. No matter what. Don’t.
2. Snitching. Don’t. No matter what, Don’t.
3. Revenge. If someone you love gets killed, find the person who killed them and kill them.

The heart of the story is how William encounters the ghosts of others in his life that were also shot to death, including



Long Way Down, by Jason Reynolds. Photo by Leonel Henriquez

three family members, his father, his uncle Buck, and his brother, along with William’s friend Dani.

One thing the book emphasizes most is how the rules of life depend on the environment in which people live. William faces a choice between living by the rules or recognizing that he could do his small part in breaking the cycle of gun violence that engulfs the neighborhood and its residents. The ambiguous ending leaves the reader wondering what happens next, and which would be the

correct course of action if they were in his shoes.

This book is more than just about the rules. It also explores the variables that allow the continuum of violence from generation to generation. Beyond that it is about the heart and soul of a brother-to-brother relationship, the agony shared by their family and community as a result of violence and the questions of what to do next in the face of pain and adversity. Overall this novel should be considered a must read for readers of all ages.

# Show Asks Whether Time Is Running Out

By Mohammad T. Khan



A photo from A Collaboration with Time-Deterioration series, by Robert Farber. Photo courtesy of Hexton Gallery.

The exhibition “Tick Tock: Time in Contemporary Arts”, which opened at the Lehman College Art Gallery on Feb. 20, 2018, shows time from the perspective of different artists within multiple genres from the mid-nineteenth century to today. The exhibition presents a range of media, including oil-on-canvas, sculpture, photography, video, mixed construction and installations. The artists’ representations of the importance of time in our daily lives and even in our dreams provide the exhibition’s overarching theme. The show’s quality is inconsistent, especially because some of the work is controversial or experimental. Some of the pieces, such as “Sunday Afternoon,” by John Carlin and “blow up 273 -the long goodbye” by Kysa Johnson, were evocative, but many were unstimulating, such as Laurie Simmons, “Walking Pocket Watch II.”

Two artists from the nineteenth century show how the experience of time changes

as a person grows older. In “Boy with a Clock,” oil on panel, Carl Haag shows how a child experiences time. A little boy plays with a clock undisturbed by time constraints. In “Sunday Afternoon,” using oil on canvas, John Carlin depicts how the passage of time differs for three individuals. Through a scene from a rustic family’s everyday life, the picture shows how time progresses for people in different life stages. The young boy playing outside seems to be enjoying his time. For him time is going by slowly. The viewer gets an impression that for the woman in the house time in the moment is precious, because she is lost in a book. The old man in the home looks like his time went by too quickly. He is looking away from his family, perhaps reflecting on his past and his body language shows that he is not engaged in the present. Both artists have used an accessible representational style of painting typical of its time to show how time is experienced in our lives.

The artist Robert Farber’s work shows that a person’s beauty fades over time. His “A Collaboration with Time-Deterioration Series” are two deteriorated archived fashion photographs of models from 1980 and 1981. The two photos smudged very badly as the photos deteriorated naturally over time. At one time, the pictures probably looked nice. The picture in 1981 looks more attractive than the one in 1980. It looks very bright. The picture in 1980 looks hideous because, due to the photo’s deterioration, the woman’s face looks like a monster from a horror movie. This photo also looks darker than the one in 1981. Both, however, show that glamour and beauty, like the medium Farber used, are defenseless against time.

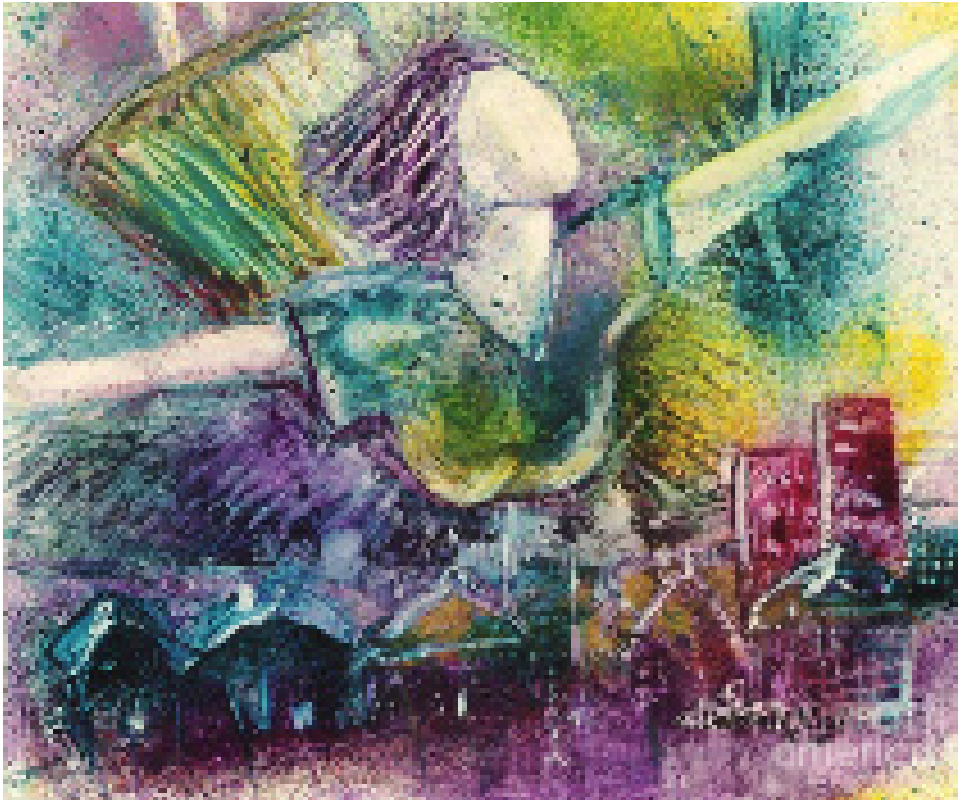
Other artists explore the idea that time should not be wasted. Mary Engel has made a sculpture of a dog composed of watches, wire, mesh, and fabric in “Sleeping Watch Dog.” The dog seems to be relaxing, wasting its time by not doing its guard duty. Alexandra Forsyth Martinez has formed an open hand-blown hourglass out of white sand in the “First Instance (The Beginning).” The sand at the bottom of the hourglass demonstrates that time has run out. Its two companion pieces show an unexpected progression. In “Second Instance (The Middle)” and “Third Instance (The End).” Martinez adds black sand — using ashes — inviting us to reflect about time running out. The three hourglasses lead us to contemplate time itself differently and whether everything should be done before the deadline, considering we all become ashes in the end. Steven Spazuk’s “Ticking Bomb,” and “Stopping Time,” are made of soot on paper mounted on panel. “Stopping Time” shows an object sitting on the clock’s hands that causes time to stand still. “Ticking Bomb” conveys how important time is when a bomb is set to blow up, but also serves as a metaphor for time running out. This art is all highly conceptual. Their representations of time are confusing but thought provoking.

Each piece has its own unique way of commenting on time, and attempting to capture how each of us has a meaningful relationship to time. However, the exhibition did not address some concepts of time, such as prioritizing time management. Despite a few unimpressive pieces, this exhibition is likely to please most patrons, who are sure to enjoy the diversity of the art and the representations of time.



# Lehman Women See Their Dreams Through

By Kimberlee Mendez



**Dream Come True painting by Deborah Nell.**

Since she was five, Lehman senior Jennifer Ramirez's dream has been "to have a career in music. It's always been something that I hold close to my heart and soul, because I love it so much. It's when I can put out all my hurt, pain, anger and happiness altogether and just let flow." To get there, she is getting "an education that will lead me to where I need to go."

According to The Lehman Value 2016, women make up 67 percent of the student body. 40.3 percent of them are the first person in their family to go to college. 55 percent are from the Bronx, where only 16.2 percent of residents have a college degree, according

to [statisticalatlas.com](http://statisticalatlas.com). However, numerous students told the Meridian that they are letting nothing stop them from achieving their goals.

Astrid Lorenzo, a Lehman senior, said she is not letting the hardships of being a Latina woman get in the way of what is important to her. She is meeting her goals, she explained, "by never limiting myself and pushing myself beyond my comfort zone. How to make a dream a reality has everything to do with the right frame of mind, how clear the goal is."

Her dream, she added, "is to become an entertainer, writer and a girl boss." She added, "I'm always keeping

myself involved in all areas of arts and entertainment which includes modeling, music, acting, dancing, photography and even fashion design."

Other Lehman women found that networking and community outreach are keys to their success. To reach her dream of her career at a nonprofit, "that works to midget the effect of climate change and other social justices," Lehman sophomore Nira Rahman is studying environmental science and interning at a nonprofit organization. "It's giving me a lot of background on how a non-profit operates," she said. "What I like best about it is that it brings me closer to the community and also closer to politicians."

Likewise, Lehman senior and journalism major Natalia Quinones has been interning with Bronxnet and applying for internships outside of school. "My plan," she says, "is to find a job and apply everything I've learned in school and from the internships that have led me to a position I see myself doing long term."

Having a role model in her family has also pushed her to achieve. Quinones is following in her mother's footsteps by attending college. Her mother earned her associate degree in the Dominican Republic and was a teacher for eight years.

"I'm scared honestly about what's going to happen after college," Quinones said, "but I'm searching for jobs and internships. I just know I'll find something. Just having a positive attitude and knowing that the American Dream is possible through hard work and dedication."

Other students have had to take a different path than the one their families envisioned for them. Shaine Perea, a junior at Lehman College, is the first of two children going to college and her family wanted her to be nurse since many of her family members are nurses. However, Perea found nursing wasn't for her, and she fell in love with Recreational Therapy. When she told her parents about what she really wanted, they didn't agree to

it at first, but as time passed they knew they couldn't force her to like a career she didn't have a passion for.

Perea says, "I plan on earning my bachelor's in Therapeutic Recreation, and then take my CTRS exam to become certified, and also working in long term care facilities helping those in need, maintain and improve their physical, emotional and social well-being." She also intends to go back to

school to be a certified as a Doctor of Physical Therapy.

"There are a lot of hardships in my path," Lorenzo acknowledged. "Being a female, a minority while at the same time trying to get an education, handling a personal life, work, a social life, mental health and staying determined with the ever-changing times can be very difficult. But never impossible."

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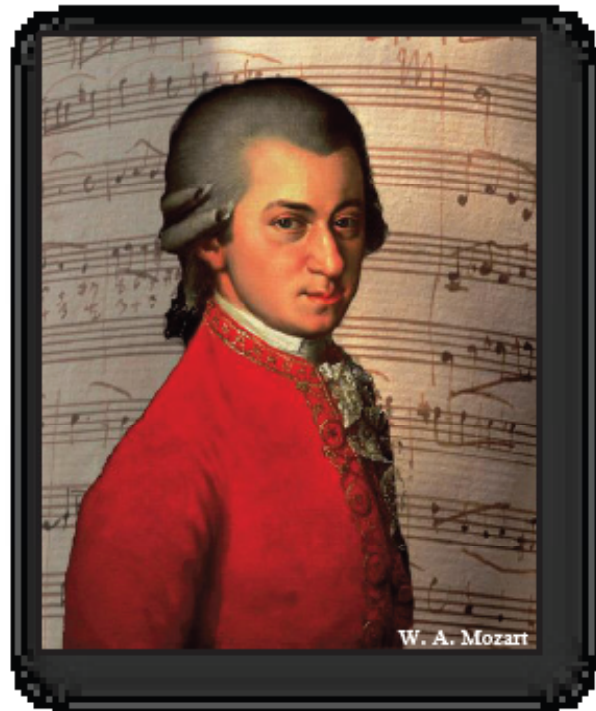
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*Procession of the Nobles*



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# Spring Break Service Trip Broadens Student's Horizons

By Shaiann Frazier



Spence with three doctors, Lucelia Quiroz (right), Dr. Karelia Torrez (middle) and pharmacist Carmen Pineda (far left) on the last day of volunteering in the community Santa Teresa in Nicaragua. All photos courtesy of Shanel Spence.

"I'm more appreciative of the small things I took for granted. This experience humbled me," reflected Shanel Spence, 22, a biology major and Lehman senior on her seven-day trip to Nicaragua. Born and raised in the Bronx by parents originally from Jamaica, Spence interns at Cavalry and Mount Sinai Hospitals with hopes of becoming a pediatrician. She also mentors incoming freshmen through Lehman's SEEK Program which provides assistance to college students in need of academic and financial support.

On Apr. 2, Spence boarded a plane to

Nicaragua with 25 peers on another aid mission, this time to help people without access to adequate medical care. The trip happened in collaboration with an organization known as Global Brigades, an international non-profit organization that uses holistic models to meet communities' health and economic goals.

Spence's spring break trip to Nicaragua happened through a stroke of luck. "I actually planned to go to Florida," she said. However, through Lehman Life, an organization that provides service opportunities to Lehman students, she

was able to attend the trip. To afford the journey she had to raise roughly 2,000 dollars to cover her expenses. "I didn't have difficulty in raising the money," she said, "because I had a lot of support and people who wanted to donate."

Spence and her team volunteered in San Jose de Garcia and Santa Teresa, two communities in Nicaragua. There her day began at six in the morning, with breakfast by seven and a bus that left at eight for the "compounds," which she first found overwhelming. "I was nervous, I didn't know how to feel because it was a new experience for me."



Spence was not used to the lack of basic services she found in that part of Nicaragua. There was little to no water or access to sufficiently sanitary bathrooms. “When I got there, it was a whole cultural shock for me. We had to use hand sanitizer every time we went to the bathroom. And at one point there was just a brick and wooden stall outside.”

Spence quickly learned how to appreciate how easy her life was compared to what locals were enduring. “It was a tough situation to adjust to, because where I come from I’m used to having hot and running water.”

At the compounds, she worked with a team of eight doctors to assist roughly 400 patients. The compounds were divided into six sections: the GYN, physical therapy, the pharmacy, triage, consultation, and the dental area. “My favorite part was the triage because that’s where the most interactions with people happened,” said Spence.

Her patients were a variety of ages with numerous ailments, the most common of which were UTI’s, meningitis, and hypertension. “Observing the GYN doctor changed my mind about what path I wanted to pursue in the medical field,” she explained.

Spence also developed an unexpected friendship with a 7-year-old girl who arrived at the compound for dental issues. “She was so mature for her age. I wondered to myself how does a little girl have such a good mindset. And then I realized that they’re raised differently,” said Spence.

Spence’s day ended at five with dinner at the hotel, where she and her peers reflected on their day. Spence made two close friends on the trip, “Binto and Alimata. We always checked on each other, [and] all of us who went on the trip together got a chance to learn about each other.”

When it was time to go back home, Spence said, “I was actually sad about leaving.” The trip made Spence



Shanel Spence on day three of volunteering before arriving to the community of Santa Teresa, in Nicaragua, for the first time.



Spence learning how to detect a UTI in female patients while shadowing one of the doctors, named Dr. Ramos.

want to revisit the compounds in the summer. She is also thinking about pursuing a career as a doctor serving similar communities. The youngest of two children, Spence will be the first college graduate in her family. After graduation, Spence plans to take a gap year to study for the MCATS and apply for medical school.

"I appreciate what I have more than did I before," she said. "These people don't have much, but they still appreciate the life they have and they live. And I feel like we take that for granted every day."



Spence with a young girl in the triage, who wanted to know how the sphygmomanometer works. And Spence allowing the young girl to test the instrument on her.

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