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CSUH Theatre and Dance Department performs Michael Bennet's 'A Chorus Line.'
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FREE

Kicking Up Their Heels



Theater: Lana Wolf, Sheba Howerton, Aja Gianola-Bland and Donna Rapa-Olsen rehearse a number from "A Chorus Line," which opens in the University Theatre Friday.

Photo/Chihiro Kago

'Rock 'n' Roll Journalist' Rocks CSUH Audience

By Kristen Daniels
Staff Writer

"For anyone who has ambitions to get into writing about whatever: Learn spelling and grammar - dammit!" Ben Fong-Torres told a Cal State Hayward audience last week.

Fong-Torres, writer and former senior editor for "Rolling Stone" magazine, addressed a standing-room-only crowd composed mostly of communication majors in one of the hilltop campus' smaller lecture rooms.

"Ben is more than 'almost famous,'" said Michael Ackley in his introduction of the distinguished journalist. Ackley, a CSUH journalism instructor and faculty advisor for the campus newspaper, was referring to the portrayal of Fong-Torres in the movie "Almost Famous," which was based on writer/director/producer Cameron Crowe's first big break as a writer.

Fong-Torres hired the then-15-year-old Crowe to write for "Rolling Stone."

An Alameda native raised in Oakland, Fong-Torres has had an illustrious career in print media, radio and television.

"It's . . . interesting I think is the word, being back here in Hayward," said Fong-Torres.

He recalled that when he was a teenager his parents owned a restaurant called the Bamboo Hut, on Hayward's Mission Boulevard. He worked there after school until closing - 10 p.m. on week days, 11 p.m. on weekends.

All family members were expected to work at the restaurant, he said, "until we could escape to a distant college, a marriage or something equally desperate."

"I got two bridges away to San Francisco State University," he said. "That was not nearly far enough away. I would have to return on weekends and most of the summers (to work at the restaurant)."

During slow times at the Bamboo Hut, Fong-Torres would retreat to the Hayward Public Library, just a block away.

Besides radio, which brought me baseball games and rock 'n' roll music, it was the library that provided relief from the boredom that was a young person's life in Hayward in the early '60s," he said. "I thought that I could be a writer some day, or maybe a song writer. I wrote because I read. I got into radio because I like listening to radio."

Fong-Torres said his dreams "were moderated by what I knew to be the realities of the world in the early '60s. There were no Chinese in radio."

But that didn't deter him. After college classes, he worked as a DJ on week-ends for KFOG and KSAN in San Francisco, where he "tried to sound like a tall, white announcer."

"I was told that as much as I loved radio that I shouldn't concentrate only on that industry," he said.

So, he began to write. During his college years at San Francisco State, Fong-Torres wrote for the school newspaper, The Daily Gator, "to gain experience."

He noted, "I found myself being edited and evaluated every day, not only by the editors and instructors, but by the fiercest of all critics - the readers."

"Don't be afraid to be edited," he said. "You will be edited your entire life."

Ultimately, he did escape from Hayward and the Bamboo Hut. In 1968 he was hired to write for the eightieth issue of "Rolling Stone." At the time, it was just a black-and-white newspaper. Later, it evolved into a two-color publication, then full color and finally into a glossy magazine.

"It was fun to be part of the evolutionary process," he said.

Writing for "Rolling Stone" gave him the opportunity to blend his interest in writing with his first love, music.

Was he concerned about missing other media opportunities by committing to the unseasoned "Rolling Stone"? "No," he said. "It was just too much fun. We pretty much ran our own show, broke some rules and had fun doing an alternative version of the straight journalism of the time."

"We knew we were on the right path. As it turned out, it worked out OK."

Fong-Torres later became a senior editor of the magazine, which he left in 1981. Since then, aside from writing for many magazines, he has written several books, including his 1993 autobiography, "The Rice Room."

His most recent book, "Not Fade Away," is currently in production.
See **Writer**, page 5.

Student/Soldier Faces Prospect of War

By Howard Oliver
Contributing Writer

Life for Cal State Hayward student Jason Graves has been placed on indefinite pause by a telephone message: "The unit has been called to standby status."

This is reality for many young men and women enlisted in the U.S. military. Civilians among us can only catch glimpses of these lives through various media - newspaper stories or TV spots that lead with a picture of moms or dads kissing their little ones.

But there is usually a level of detachment between the audience and the subject.

But Graves 21, is a Marine. He is also a CSUH senior. He is an enlisted member of the Concord-based Det. 2 COA, 4th Lsb, fsg., which translates into the following: Detachment 2 - communication alpha - 4th land/air support brigade - fort support group. To civilians like you or me he is a shining example of the slogan "The few- The proud- The Marines."

Graves - "J" as he is affectionately referred to by loved ones and friends - has been a Marine for a little over two years.

"At the time when I joined, I needed to experience something new," he said.

"Even though back in 2000 the world seemed to be at peace, before being allowed to sign anything you are well-informed that there's always a chance of battle. It's really the point of the service. Marines are normally the first ones in and the last ones out."

"It's weird," Graves muses "I got the call and from that point things just move. You are given 72- hours to get all of your affairs in order. It's kind of like: Where do you start?"

He is a quarter shy of becoming a senior in administration of justice and anticipates joining a police force.

He must now pause these actions, for the love of his country.

"It's okay," he said. "School . . . has

to be paused and I have a new job that was going well, and not mention I have a wife now, so that just adds to the situation."

Employers and the school are very understanding. As a soon-to-be-active-

duty marine there are laws that protect Graves's time invested in his job and school.

In addition, he said with a sigh, "It

See **Student**, page 5.

Panel Confronts African American Challenges



Communications forum: Hip hop artist Cognito (from left), Marguerite Hinrichs of Cal State Hayward's Student Life Programs, sociology Professor Terry Jones and CSUH Public Safety Chief Janeith Glenn-Davis discuss the role of communications media and societal problems during a forum at Pioneer Heights.

Photo/Nakysa Cummings

By Nakysa Cummings
Staff Writer

Communications media play a role in the high unemployment, violence and educational stagnation of African Americans, a Cal State Hayward audience heard last week.

Over 60 CSUH students come together to discuss "911: State Of the Community" and the effects of media, violence, music, and perceptions of the black community. The panel was composed of faculty and community members.

Faculty members on the panel were Professor Terry Jones of the Department of Sociology; Chief Janeith Glenn-Davis, CSUH chief of public safety; and Mar-

guerite Hinrichs of Student Life Programs. Hip hop artist Cognito was also present for the discussion.

The purpose of the discussion was to examine problems plaguing the black community.

"In 1950, 72 percent of all black males were in the labor force. In 2000 there are less than 40 percent. In Oakland only 106 black males graduated from all high schools last year," said Jones.

"Black men and women are being incarcerated and/or murdered at an alarming rate all over the nation. In Oakland there were over 100 homicides in 2002," said Davis.

Members of the audience displayed looks of concern. Panelists urged stu-

dents to take an active role in the community, starting with awareness. The question arose as to who or what might

See **Panel**, page 5.

Panelists See US Media as Pro-Bush, Pro-War

By Carol Palinkas
Staff Writer

Current and former Cal State Hayward faculty members labeled U.S. news media "pro-Bush" during a Feb. 18 panel discussion on "Media and War."

Speaking at the forum, sponsored by the Associated Students in collaboration with the Political Science Department, were former mass communication instructor Reese Erlich, author of "Target Iraq: What the News Media Didn't Tell You," communications instructors Larry Bensky and Agah Saeed and Professor David Baggins, chair of the Political Science Department.

In introductory remarks Baggins noted that it had been an extraordinary couple of years in political science, citing as examples the 2000 election debacle, 9-11, and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Bensky, who has worked in the media for 50 years, 32 of those in local radio, spoke at length about commercial media and how impossible it was to get an unbiased view of world events due to the need to make money and build an audience.

He said the commercial media's main goal was to make money and that they would do "absolutely anything" to do so. He cited shock jock Howard Stern as

an example.

Bensky maintained that corporate ownership, advertising influence, official agendas, pressure groups and the public relations industry narrowed the range of debate, particularly in regard to the coverage of Iraq.

"Overwhelmingly," he said, "the people who speak are the people who are in support one way or another of the Bush administration agenda."

Other points Bensky made related to the basic principles of journalism and how they are thwarted in commercial media.

See **Media**, page 6.

Fee Referendum



Polls Open: Voting will conclude tomorrow on The Access Technology Fee referendum.

Photo/Chihiro Kago