Celebrating heritage

Many aspects of culture were presented at this year’s Multicultural Festival including music, food, native dances, and even costumes at Broward College’s North Campus. Countries like Germany, Colombia, Japan, and Israel were just some of the many countries that were represented at the gathering where different clubs and cultural groups displayed their history and pride.

(Top) Drummer from the Bahamian Junkanoo Band plays inside of the festival.
(Top right) Indian belly dancer in multicultural performance.
(Bottom right) Students, Sandra Moreno, and Luz Villa at the Colombian table.
(Bottom left) Bahamian Junkanoo Band marches into event.

Photos by Crystal Vander Weit
Information Courtesy of Chris Solar
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Rights to read
North Campus students challenge banned books

BY ALEXANDRA LAVERDE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Since its creation, the extent of the First Amendment has been questioned. The absence of that right does not only affect those who wish to speak, but it also hurts those who wish to learn.

National Banned Books Week is one of many battles in the fight for the right to listen. All over the country, hundreds of books, that we all know and love, are being either banned or challenged each year. This year, Broward College’s North Campus took part in the celebration by raising awareness about censorship in hopes to stop the ignorance.

The American Library Association (ALA) holds a record of 10,676 books being banned, or challenged since 1995. Some well-known examples include “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee, the “Twilight” series by Stephanie Meyer, and “Gather in the Rye” by J.D. Salinger.

The ALA’s statistics also show that the main initiators are parents and schools. The main reason for banning is because of sexually explicit content followed by other political, moral, and religious reasons.

While there are those who wish to remain silent, there are also those who become inspired to speak even louder against that opposition.

Libraries, schools, and communities came together to challenge the bannings this year during Banned Books Week from Sept. 25 to Oct. 2. North Campus took part by setting up events about banned and challenged books from the board to the library.

Assistant Professor of English Donna M. Samet, lead the project with help from Professor Adriana Bianchi, the advisor for the Sigma Gamma chapter of the Sigma Kappa Delta (SKD) English Honors Society. Other professors included Dr. Jeanette Madea and Karen Parker.

Their united efforts eventually expanded to the North Regional Library where Rosa Garkins, a librarian, agreed to set up an informational display all week long on the second floor of the library. She also reserved the movie “Fahrenheit 51” to be played in the library’s auditorium. Members of the college and the community were able to view the film and participate in the open discussion lead by Samet.

Stephanie A. Neubert, SKD treasurer, led members in the creation and execution of their display and read aloud in the breezeway during the event.

“Many students and staff who stopped by the display were appalled by the fact that such literary classics would be banned or challenged,” said Neubert.

“They actually asked questions about the protest. Some students were even upset about the matter and suggested we should do more to raise peoples’ awareness of the subject,” she continued.

Madea’s helix ethics class participated by reading excerpts from banned books through the ages and explained the censorship category. They also discussed how and why they became banned. Afterwards, Professor

Published professors inspire college students

BY SKYLAR SIEGEL
CENTRAL BUREAU CHIEF

Have you ever wondered what your professors do other than teach? If you have, then the Literary Feast on Central Campus was the place to be.

This year’s second annual Literary Feast was held on Oct. 20 and several professors gathered to show what they do outside their classrooms, displaying everything from their paintings to their books.

Hosted by the Central Campus library staff, the literary feast was an event to remember. “We created this event to create an opportunity to engage students with faculty on a whole other level; it allows them to have a different view of what faculty do outside the classroom,” said Miguel Menendez, the dean of the University College Library.

Although the literary feast was held on Central Campus, all of Broward College’s (BC) campuses as well as FDAU commuter students participated. A Beacon TV assisted with the event, filming the entire event on behalf of the College Academy at BC. “It is such a unique and interesting experience to recognize all the diverse expertise of these professors. I really didn’t expect this to be such an enlightening experience,” said Christian Chung, a full-time student at Broward College’s College Academy.

Dr. Kyra Belan, Gesualda Cavanaugh, Karen Estreves, Lourdes Rodriguez-Florido, Angie Schick- Matthews and many more were just a few of the professors displaying their literature at the feast. Belan, a professor at South Campus, wrote her own math book. “I wanted to create a book that actually showed math just how I teach it, making it easier for students to understand,” said Schick-Matthews.

Many students walked around the event in disbelief of the many things these professors took the time to create. Many professors wrote their own novels, fictions, poems, dramas, and more.

“I came to this event because I love to read; it’s so amazing to see such good books by our professors. I am so happily surprised,” said Liaa Georgievic, a sophomore at BC.

Karen Parker’s honors ENGL101 presented their debate on the banning of the “Harry Potter” series by J.K. Rowling.

In both cases, the students were avidly involved, voicing their opinions just as it is their right to. The students truly celebrated what banned books week is all about while spreading awareness.

“I think we reached a few hundred students, generally raising awareness about our 1st amendment rights and the hazards of censorship,” said Bianchi.

With the consensus being that the first Banned Books Week at North Campus was a success, Neubert adequately summarized the feel from the events with, “I believe it is extremely important to make people aware of Banned Books Week and [it] should be a new tradition here at Broward North Campus.”

For information on the banning of books please visit www.ala.org
Student publications take home major awards at competition

BY JILLIAN GOLTMAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Thirty-three plaques and certificates traveled home from Ocala with 11 proud students among the winners of the student publications at Broward College. The two-year colleges of Florida gathered in Tampa to attend workshops and take home awards regarding their dedication and ability to their student publication.

The event, the 51st annual Florida Community College Press Association convention was held Oct. 21-23 in Ocala, with well-established guest speakers including keynote speaker and University of Florida professor, Mindy McAdams.

First Place:
Best Cover- Whitney Johnston, and Dan Duarte
Best Table of Contents- Whitney Johnston
Best Photo- Whitney Johnston
Best In-depth Reporting- Whitney Johnston
Best General Column- Caroline Hopton
Best Sports Writing- Igor Mello
Best Editorial- Observer staff
Second Place:
Best Sports Photo- Alex Crawford
Best Ad Design- Melissa Correa
Best Feature Story- Sheri Weiseman
Best Design- Observer Staff
Best Artwork (group)- Emma Matamoros, Nery Mejicano III, and Carla Mulieri. "I'm extremely proud of the hard work the Observer staff put in to every story and every issue. Some people may not realize all the hard work and dedication the Observer students put forth all while practicing accurate, strong journalism. They truly deserve this wonderful recognition," said student publications coordinator and Observer advisor, Jennifer Shapiro.

Second Place:
Best Sports Column- Igor Mello
Best Editorial- Observer staff
Best Photos- Whitney Johnston
Best Illustration with Text (individual)- Paul Louise-Julie
Best Illustration with Text (group)- Javier Chavarro and Carla Mulieri
Best Design- Observer Staff
Best Photo- Whitney Johnston and Dan Duarte

Third Place:
Best Editorial Commentary- Whitney Johnston
Best Illustration with Text (individual)- Carla Mulieri
Best Illustration with Text (group)- Leonardo Dionisi, Mejicano III, and Carla Mulieri
Best News Story- Whitney Johnston and Kelly Rivera
Best In-depth Reporting- Whitney Johnston
Best Opinion Column- Whitney Johnston
Best Sports Column- Igor Mello
Best Editorial- Observer staff
Best Feature Story- Sheri Weiseman
Best Design- Observer Staff
Best Photo- Whitney Johnston and Dan Duarte
Best Ad Design- Melissa Correa
Best Artwork (individual)- Paul Louise-Julie
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As an award-winning news anchor for 610 WIOD-AM, Nathalie Rodriguez speaks to thousands of South Floridians each morning. She credits BARRY UNIVERSITY'S communication program with opening her eyes to the various avenues available in the field. “You can’t beat BARRY’S one-on-one attention and top-of-the-line education. BARRY is a part of me forever.”

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Central Bureau Chief

Over three million students graduate from a U.S. high school each year. The majority of students are given the opportunity to test their aspirations and live their American dreams. There is another group of high school students, however, who do not get the opportunity to actualize their goals.

Approximately 65,000 graduating high school students do not get a chance to pursue their dreams. They are labeled with an inherited title, an illegal immigrant. These young adults have lived in the United States for most of their lives and want nothing more than to be recognized for what they are, Americans.

The Dream Act is a bipartisan legislation that can help solve this obscene injustice in our society. “The dream act is a piece of legislation to that will allow outstanding undocumented students the chance to earn a college degree or the ability to join the military,” said Raymond Moya, the lead speaker for the Dream Act here in South Florida, as well as a current freshman at Broward College.

Raymond Moya, himself, is originally from Venezuela, which is what really drives him to stand up for his peers who are in need of the dream act.

To qualify for the dream act, these students must have a good criminal and moral standing, and must have entered the country before the age of 16. If they qualify, they will be able to attend a two-year college or join the military, and later would come off immigrant status and obtain a green card. “If the Dream Act is passed, then people without papers can go to college and hopefully get the benefits like financial aid,” contended Moya. With no resources currently available to these students, having the Dream Act passed would truly give them the opportunity to fulfill their dreams of finally becoming an American.

On Aug. 1, 2001, the Dream Act was introduced to the United States Senate and has been waiting to be passed ever since. Last month, on Sept. 21, they had a vote, “don’t speak don’t tell” bill, which was a lot of different bills attached to each other; gay rights in the army was one of them along with the Dream Act. In order for the Dream Act to pass, they needed 60 votes to get approved. They got 56 answers of yes and 43 nays. “It didn’t pass because it had other bills attached to it, such as the gay rights in the army; it was devastating to so many people, because it would open so many doors for them if it were to be passed,” stated Moya.

Right now, Moya, and other Dream Act supporters, are working on “the final push” calling all senators and the president to spread the word and get as many calls as we can into senate by sending emails, letters, posters, or doing whatever it takes.

“People want to get involved on campus, we just need to get the senators to vote for the Dream Act as a standalone bill. We just need a date for them to vote on it, because we basically have it as a stand alone bill. Trying to get it passed before 2011, that’s why this is the final push, because in 2011 a new congress will come up and we don’t know what’s in store then,” said Moya.

At this point, it is essential that the act be passed before it’s too late. A good number of government officials that have been reached are democratic senators that are on the Dream Act’s side and people like Raymond Moya have been calling the republicans like senator McCain from Arizona, senator Lemieux from Florida and Senator Reid from Nevada in attempts to gain their support.

To help push the dream act through and make thousands of people’s dreams come true, call Senator Reid at (202) 224-3542. “Don’t give up, it’s not over yet and we are all family, we are one,” Moya concluded.
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Staying fit in the fast-paced world

Getting college students to embrace physical fitness can be an intricate task. Exercise competes against Facebook, video games and compelling television programs. With this sort of competition, both working out and sweat can seem even less enticing to students.

North Campus’ remedy is to provide free classes every Tuesday and Thursday. A successful combination of boot camp, zumba and yoga has encouraged physical wellness among the student population.

This is the only campus to offer a free fitness program. The classes are held in building 60 room 116 at 2 p.m.

Dechiaro, teaches this class.

The key ingredient of zumba class is music. Moving to the beat and tempo changes can be a huge calorie burning exercise and intense cardio releases a lot of sweat and toxins from the body. It is also a great core workout because it uses dance moves that target the abdominal and back muscles.

Every Thursday is yoga class. Pattinson said, "It is a rigorous class and two benefits are internal organs.

The instructor is really knowledgeable, nice and friendly. She is not afraid to correct you if you do something wrong," said BC Student Jordan Yarala, teaches this class.

The key ingredient of zumba class is music. Moving to the beat and tempo changes can be a huge calorie burning exercise and intense cardio releases a lot of sweat and toxins from the body. It is also a great core workout because it uses dance moves that target the abdominal and back muscles.

An upbeat break from the intensity of boot camp is zumba on Wednesday. Latin music and dance created a high-energy feel good atmosphere during class.

The yoga practice increases flexibility and improves internal organs. These two benefits are important, because the stretching of muscles and joints and the massaging of organs ensures oxygen goes to the body resulting in the detoxification of the body.

"Health is the most important aspect of these programs while keeping them on campus," explained Asar, "We give them the opportunity to be healthy and remember healthy students make good students."

Dinner on Thursday is yoga class. Yarala, teaches this class.

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"Health is the most important aspect of these programs while keeping them on campus," explained Asar, "We give them the opportunity to be healthy and remember healthy students make good students."

Worst Breakfast

Cheesecake Factory French Toast Napoleon
2,460 calories
6 lb saturated fat
1,789mg sodium
246g carbohydrates

The Cheesecake Factory may have some of the most delicious foods but also the most dangerous. Their French Toast Napoleon contains over a day’s worth of calories. Talk about ending your day before you even start it.

Worst Burger

Chili’s Jalapeno Smokehouse Bacon Burger
1,750 calories
129g fat
5,255mg sodium
69g carbohydrates

Chili’s is known for their delicious desserts that seem almost irresistible after a meal. This is one dessert that should be avoided. Covered in heavy salt the 213 grams of sodium in this side dish can send a person over the edge.

Worst Dessert

Chili’s Chocolate Paradise Pie with Vanilla Ice Cream
1,800 calories
78g fat
910mg sodium
215g carbohydrates

Chili’s is known for their delicious desserts that seem almost irresistible after a meal. This is one dessert that should be avoided. Covered in heavy salt the 213 grams of sodium in this side dish can send a person over the edge.
DJ Caldwell: a musical entrepreneur

BY BRANDON WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Being around in the world of music since the 1980s, Lorenzo Caldwell has been doing what he does best for over 25 years. Creating his own mix tapes, producing for recording artists, and spinning records on the turntables show that Caldwell has done it all. Today, he currently is the head of his own online radio station and magazine, MOC Urban Radio.

Caldwell is the head of the urban and rhythmic division of the Los Angeles-based Mediabase. His work can be found on radio stations, including Miami’s WHQT Hot 105 FM, where he can be heard every Saturday night.

Born in Lawrence, Mass., Caldwell got his first introduction to music when he was seven years old. Seeing his parents’ large music collection, Caldwell said, “he was a kid learning about music, prior to 1977.”

The music he learned about as a child resided in his future works. As a teenager, he made mix tapes he dubbed as “music of class.” According to mocradio.com, “his series of mix tapes were distributed in several markets.” His first album was a masterpiece by popular R&B funk band “The Commodores.”

Dubbing hip-hop as “music of class,” Caldwell said, “that’s where the name for MOC Radio came about from.” Starting with a small market of mix tapes that became popular he grew the appetite for more success. After moving to North Carolina in 1985, “I met some friends that wanted to rap, and we put out a little record that became a hit locally,” said Caldwell.

He went off to college in October 1989, to study Studio Engineering in Atlanta. Being in Atlanta as a student, during the time, he met the late Tupac Shakur, as well as an “Arrested Development” front man Speech. In addition to working as an independent record distributor in 1991 he also has contributed production work and remix tracks for many recording stars throughout his career. The list includes popular R&B group Silk, the late Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes, from the former R&B trio TLC, Anthony Hamilton, Brandy and many others. One of his more recent and best-known collaborations was his work with Ludacris who once said to Caldwell “all of a sudden it’s another song, and your mixing is very tight!”

Caldwell hit the top of the radio DJ charts in 1997 while tapping a 5 p.m. mix show five days of the week on WQMG FM in the North Carolina area. With a top show, he went from an unpaid to a paid position within the same year and was hired to do retail promotions for Tommy Boy Records, the former home of many prominent acts like Naughty by Nature, Queen Latifah, RuPaul and many others. “All of a sudden, I just had like a gazillion jobs,” said Caldwell. Unfortunately, with WQMG FM losing its format, due to consolidation, as Caldwell mentions, he would soon be out of a radio gig. Caldwell said “Corporate is keeping that kind of music away from us.”

In the early 2000s, Caldwell founded MOC Urban Radio. The station was available through podcasts, and now currently streams worldwide at mocradio.com. Within the same time, his good friend Andrew Knyte also began NJ54Ever.com, the premier online music community dedicated to new jack swing and urban music. Both companies developed strong ties in radio, as NJ54Ever networks “teamed up” with MOC Radio, broadcasting two hour online radio experiences, in the first half of 2004,” according to nj54ever.com. Still to this day, Caldwell “programs music from an urban perspective, having a huge impact on his age group, as well as others.”

Back in 2001, LC became employed with Clear Channel’s Mediabase, a premier radio network based out of Los Angeles, and is currently head of the urban and rhythmic division. Moving to Miami around the same time, Caldwell joined the “Core DJ” movement. This is a popular DJ organization, according to mocradio.com. “It’s huge, and was started by Tony O’Neal,” said Caldwell.

With a growing number of DJs he stated that corporate under appreciates them. “Core DJs” is an organization that consists primarily of radio DJs on the nationwide level. Popular South Florida urban radio station 99 Jams also has a share of DJs that are apart of this organization, including Drive Time personality Lorenzo “Ice-T” Thomas, DJ Kool G, and DJ Entice.

Caldwell currently does the “Thunderstorm Mix, with Hot 105’s Marc Young and has been involved with the station since 2006. He is also on air with Boston’s new Touch 106.1 FM, Richmond, Va. WKJS Kiss FM. Since Jan. 2010, LC has held the program director position at Touch 106.1 FM in Boston. Throughout all of his many appearances and time slots, Caldwell can still be found on his own website mocradio.com.

With many hit shows on his resume, including his show here in South Florida, he mentions “I’m trying to be number one everywhere I go.”

With all Caldwell has done with his career, he “encourages students to have persistence, as well as finish school, and surround yourself in the world of media and music.” Caldwell feels that it is important to intern and get your name out in the business.

“We pay or no pay, don’t be discouraged. Accomplish your goals, and [don’t] think of financial aspects. Do what you do with passion,” he said. Caldwell can be reached on his website www.mocradio.com.
Katy Perry stirs up ‘Sesame Street’

Pop singer takes criticism for her revealing wardrobe on children’s show

BY ROGHANNE AVIN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

She’s been to Rodeo Drive and she’s preached the virtues of being a “California Gurl,” but one place Katy Perry has visited that stirred up quite a controversy was her friends on Sesame Street. Perry's revealing wardrobe during her duet with Elmo has parents talking about everything but her voice.

The pop sensation, born in Santa Barbara, Ca., holds a squeaky clean background. The second child of two pastors, Perry was raised in a religious environment. Her parents own a ministry where she started singing at the young age of nine and continued onward. It was safe to say that she only listened to gospel music and avoided what her mother called secular music. She even attended a Christian school and summer camp. Perhaps some of those pastors were included in the backlash from Perry’s appearance on the familiar kid’s show.

Towards the end of September, Sesame Street started leaking sneak footage with celebrities like Will.I.Am to honor their 41st anniversary on television. Perry was one of the many talents featured on the show. She was filmed singing a version of her song “Hot N Cold,” with Sesame Street’s most famous monster, Elmo. If Elmo’s fur wasn’t already red he may have been blushing from Perry’s obviously low cut sweetheart top dress with a nude sheer layer to her neckline.

With fame comes controversy. Since “Sesame Street” is geared toward children ages one to six many viewers deemed her wardrobe inappropriate. The teaser clip went viral on YouTube and was displayed on several media sites including tv.gawker.com. Viewers swayed opinions on the level of appropriateness in Perry’s choice for “dress up” with Elmo. User ellsie_daisy expressed “Hot is more for Bourbon Street, not Sesame Street.” On the other hand many did not find a problem with the wardrobe choice and claimed that children see more cleavage at “a grocery store” than in the two and a half minute clip on Sesame Street.

It is understandable that they would react that way, but to solely blame Perry is unfair. Why not blame “Sesame Street?” After all, they could have said no to the dress. It is usually customary for all major television shows to approve an actor’s clothing, if not supply them with wardrobe. I think that controversy was a form of publicity for their 41st season. Perry may have promiscuous songs like “I Kissed a Girl” working against her favor in the eyes of parents, but she clearly has key determination that children can look up to. She always had a passion for performing and worked her way up from an amateur dancer learning swing and the jitterbug in a recreation building to selling out theaters and shows.

Fame was never seen as unattainable to Perry. Although she dropped out of high school and earned her general education degree in her search for fame, she studied music at many levels and even dabbled in Italian opera for several years. At the age of fifteen, she caught the attention of some rock veterans in Nashville, Tenn.

After wavering back and forth between record companies Perry had her failures but worked her way up to a rising figure in Hollywood.

Perry may be getting a lot of attention for her expression as an artist but while her professional life remains on the fast track to unlimited success. Her personal life will keep the furied parents at ease. She is now the wife of actor Russell Brand, known for his roles in “Forgetting Sarah Marshall” and “Get Him to the Greek.”

Her newest album “Teenage Dream,” which is generating much buzz, and her fairy tale with Brand prove that not even a misdemeanor on “Sesame Street” could bring Perry down from the top of the charts.
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Haunting tale drives Internet gamers mad

BY JEFFREY MARTINEZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Video games are generally regarded as harmless fun, or as a diversion from the more stressful periods of our daily lives. Yet at times, these worlds of entertainment hold more than they let on, which is something darker and more menacing. It is said that when a person dies a tragic death, their spirit remains behind to haunt the world they once roamed. If so, does that same rule apply to a virtual world?

Cyberspace has been taken over by Jadusable, a sophomore known as Jad by his online followers, who decided to crack his hands on something spooky and interactive. His real name is unknown, but he goes by his online username Jadusuable or even the nickname, Jad.

Online forums had quite the shake up on Sept. 9th, when the mysterious college.

With the first exposure of his web presence to the world, Jadusuable created a stir. There are hundreds of users who claimed to be the spirit of the Moon Children, a fictional cult created to destroy the world.

As Jad puts it, “When you read a scary story, there’s no doubt that it can be creepy, but in the back of your mind you know you’re safe behind your computer screen. I attempted to shatter that “fourth wall” with BEN, I wanted to write a story that involved the reader so they would feel more connected to the story.”

With the technology for shooting a film in 3D being as early as 1865 using a camera that allowed two lenses to focus at different points, it was not until this decade when Wax” Imax theaters have been full time run of all 3D movies. As Jadusuable explains, “The technology for shooting a film in 3D makes the lives of the viewer more immersive.”

To add to his crafty plot his character disappeared after an odd text message and YouTube video popped up. The video showed a still image of a man with a white ribbon on his shoulder and a motorcycle or any of the more grotesque footage featured in the film magnified. Not to mention movie prices for 3D increase dramatically.

I’m not bashing our new technologies, but there is a fine line between entertainment and scary horror stories.

With new technology, we don’t have to sit with the paper glasses in theaters or home for that matter, because they’ve upgraded dramatically to the big black shades. Unfortunately that’s all I enjoy about the progressions of the 3D glasses, they are actually better looking and better for your eyes. I feel that the craze has become as ridiculous as it could use a bit of toning down.

Home theaters are pretty cool when you want to have a night in with your friends, but a 3D television is a little much. I know that times are changing and too much of a good thing can turn out bad.

Films like “Avatar” may be expected to have amazing graphics and 3D should be utilized, but with the recent “Jacksis” 3D no one needed to see Johnny Knoxville crash through a class window on a motorcycle or any of the more grotesque footage featured in the film magnified. Not to mention movie prices for 3D increase dramatically.

Movies aren’t just doing well in the box office based on the plot. Three dimensionally films are huge competitors that almost always champion over 2D films. Supply and demand is only going to give us back more 3D movies, along with pointless 3D televisions and Blu-ray players. What are the odds of a thousand directors making movies also in 3D and hoping to have the same results?

I’m not bashing our new technological advances in movie watching, I just feel we may have been better off without it.

3D cinema is a literal sight for sore eyes

BY MELISSA SIMONS
STAFF WRITER

I love technology for the simple fact that it makes my life easier. From the wonders of the cell phones with applications ready for everything to movies with special effects that make it seem like they are really there, what isn’t to love about technology? So when the oversized glasses that accompany almost every major blockbuster these days.

With the release of 3D movies has become more than a fad and almost redundant over the past year. It used to be the world for small budgeted films in the 80s and 90s, but at that time there was not a large market of people interested in watching a movie with a ridiculous paper glasses on with red and blue filtering for the eyes. When audiences took them off after a movie, they realize what a story they played out. In the 90s, the oversize glasses that accompany almost every major blockbuster these days.

When the next biggest 3D boom was in the 1970s with 3D classics like “Blowman,” “The Naked Gun,” “Men in Black,” “House of Wax.” The box office gross has continued to grow and even the glasses have gotten a little more forgiving. I don’t know about you guys but I don’t want to strain my eyes for a few hours with shadows of red and blue.

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Deadly effects result of gay bullying

BY DONNA LEVASSEUR
STAFF WRITER

How many heterosexual couples or students are living on the "down low?" By "down low," I am referring to a man who is involved in a heterosexual relationship but is still having sexual relations with another man.

"In September at least five teenage boys committed suicide after being tormented for being gay," according to ABC News. Being bullied because of your sexual orientation is a form of prejudice and harassment. Is society forcing gay individuals to suppress their identity, to conceal the very essence of who they are physically, mentally and emotionally? It poses the idea that society has become so homophobic that it is causing young gay men and women to choose between death or living a life of depression, lies, resentment and rejection.

It appears that more and more young people at home or in school are choosing death, due to fear of rejection, bullying, shame and possibly losing their circle of friends. For some young adults this can mean the world to them.

This travesty has been more common over the past few months. Most recently, Tyler Clementi is a lost face to the world due to bullying and discrimination against homosexuals. He kept his sexual orientation a secret from his peers. Clementi, a student at Rutgers University, posted last words to his friends on his Facebook page on Sept. 22 to announce his suicide. According to an article from ABC News, his death was due to the exploitation of a live-streamed video of a sexual encounter Clementi had with another man in his dorm room. Students, Dharun Ravi and Molly Wei, have been charged with two counts of invasion of privacy after placing a camera in the room on Sept. 19.

Is it fair for anyone heterosexual or homosexual to live under such conditions? I don't understand why your sexual orientation should deem you a good or bad person. Shouldn't things like your character, values, integrity and how you relate to your peers and others in society offer some credibility into your character? Your sexual orientation is a personal and private matter. If you choose to announce it publicly, is this a crime or should it be kept private because it is not acceptable by some in society?

Either way, this rash of suicides by young teens is devastating and warrants attention. There are several organizations that have sprung up in the past couple of years addressing these issues on anti-gay sentiments and acts of violence against gay men and women. One in particular is The Trevor Project, a nonprofit endeavor established to promote acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender-variant youth. The Trevor Project was founded by writer James Lecesne, director and producer Peggy Rajski and producer Randy Stone, creators of the 1994 Academy Award winning short film, "Trevor," a comedic drama about a gay 13-year-old boy who, when rejected by friends because of his sexuality, makes an attempt to take his life.

On the local level, Broward College (BC) has a Gay Straight Alliance where students can belong to a group accepting of the homosexual community. Many colleges and universities, including BC, has set up a system of safe zones on campus where students can go if they feel threatened because of their orientation.

Regardless of your sexual orientation, color, race, or nationality, being subjected to harassment and bullying of any kind is unacceptable on all levels.
SKYLAR BIEGEL  
CENTRAL BUREAU CHIEF

Take a moment, close your eyes, and imagine you’re eighteen, living on your own, just entering adulthood, struggling to make ends meet and you find out you’re four weeks pregnant. You have a low income, no emotional support, and one option to raise the baby; the thought of abortion comes to mind.

Now, as you think about abortion, you begin to do research, only to find out the state of Wisconsin, in which you live, has banned abortions.

In response to a far-reaching anti-abortion bill passed by the Wisconsin State legislature, shops in Wisconsin stopped providing abortion services in May of 1998, and most women forced to cross state lines to access legal abortion. Wisconsin is just one of the many states that are attempting to legalize abortion in an effort to convert the contrasting states into being prolife.

State laws and the new phenomenon of Anti-abortion Crisis Pregnancy Centers, which are located in small and large towns throughout the United States, are both hindering those who believe in a woman’s choice. These centers have been established as anti-abortion groups and are called, “crisis pregnancy centers, pregnancy counseling centers,” or “pregnancy help centers.”

They are often located near high schools, or in extreme scenarios, across from abortion clinics. These centers follow a format promoted by the Pearson Foundation to deliberately misinform and misleading young and unsuspecting women.

These centers vary in name, including; Crisis Pregnancy Center, Pregnancy Aid, Birth Right, Operation Save America, Life Choices, or Pregnancy Counseling Center.

These groups want to be the first contact a woman makes when she thinks she might be pregnant so they can talk her out of considering abortion. These centers “are” to be some of the worst places ever. They have women waiting up to an hour for the results of a pregnancy test that should only take a few minutes. While forced to watch anti-abortion videos, or be surrounded by anti-abortion demonstrators.

Women describe being harassed, intimidated, and given blatantly false information, or being forced to pray with the crisis pregnancy center’s staff. In some cases, they were even followed home, where mail and phone calls intruded their homes.

Outside of the states that have put strict laws on abortion and the pregnancy crisis centers, there are other elements that obstruct a woman’s right to be pro-choice.

"I don’t understand why it is anyone’s business except that of the mother and it her body, her choice; no one should have the right to interfere with that choice. However, government is becoming more and more influential in changing the laws of abortion."

Even in Florida, changes may be upon us. For example, Governor Charlie Crist has vetoed the most controversial bill of the 2010 Florida legislative session, which would have required women seeking an abortion during the first trimester to undergo an ultrasound exam and pay for it. The bill would have required women to view the live ultrason and image, or have it described by a doctor unless they could prove they were victims of rape, incest, or domestic violence. This is horrific and inhuman, because not all women report their rapes, incest or domestic violence. All in all, the bill is atrocious, unfair, and can cause an unnecessary amount of pain for any woman who is seeking an abortion.

In its entirety, the battle between prolife and prochoice is never-ending. It will continue until the end of time, unfortunately, because it is so controversial with so many different aspects. However, if it were up to me, I would demand that all legal bans and laws on abortion be dropped, allowing every woman the option to be prochoice. After all, we are all the masters of our own destiny.