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Orientation Weekend: A Semester Begins

By: Elizabeth Coon (R.A.)

The morning of August 31 found the MCPC RAs very nervous. It was the beginning of a new semester, and Saturday was the day students arrived and Orientation Weekend began. After struggling with luggage in the stifling August heat and bidding parents goodbye, the RAs led well-fed groups on tours of the Messiah and Temple campuses, where students were introduced to the main thoroughfares of Temple University.

After tours, everyone gathered in the chapel for the “Living at MCPC” session. Ryan Wilson, Director of Community Life, said a few words about the unique nature of the Philadelphia program. He challenged students to intentionally participate in the community as a campus this semester. Donna Gray, of Temple University Safety Services, gave a brief overview of the necessity of being alert in the city, which put some nervous students at ease. Dr. Peterson, the program director, concluded the night with a talk on academic integrity and its integral role in the health of any community, especially the Messiah community.

That night, staff and RAs took the students to several different ethnic restaurants in an effort to introduce them to ethnic diversity within Philadelphia. The choices included Garibaldi's, a Mexican spot, and Kabul's, an Afghani restaurant, which students enjoyed immensely. Afterwards, students finished unpacking and getting settled, and also gathered in the cafeteria for board games and fellowship.

Sunday was a day designed for rest and finishing the move-in process. After

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A Touch of Magic in Philly

By Charley Wilkinson

Art is the center of the real world: A bold mantra that has categorized the feelings of many artists and art appreciators for centuries, and also the building-side catchphrase of one Philadelphian, Isaiah Zagar. Upon meeting the unassuming 68-year-old in his studio on a Tuesday afternoon, one would fail to guess at the colorful past and illustrious work behind his woven bag and giraffe-print shorts.

But like his warm, eclectic spirit, the work of Isaiah Zagar needs no real explanation. His mosaics peppered around Philadelphia add whimsy and color to all the public spaces he transforms, beginning a legacy admired and recognized by many visitors and all who live in the surrounding areas

where he works. His pieces are made from recycled and donated materials—glass, earthenware and bicycles—that tend to retain the essence of their assembled pieces. Inspired by assemblage artists like Dubuffet and Gaudi, Zagar redefines space and material by collecting and reallocating discarded objects as part of a holistic image.

His mosaics are featured throughout the world, but his most major work is concentrated in several lots on South Street in Philadelphia. Lots 1020 and 1022, several tracts slated to become expressway, were reclaimed by Zagar as he expanded his artwork outside of his South Street studio. The abandoned lots, however, did not remain so. In 2005, the absentee owners placed a price on the property, evicting Zagar and his garden—threatening to bulldoze the project entirely. Thanks to the pro-bono

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“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.” -Desmond Tutu

Orientation

visiting a church of choice and lunch, two groups headed downtown to Old City (featuring Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, complete with the Rocky statue. These outings were followed by trips to several unique dessert cafés.

Monday, the last day of the Orientation Weekend, started relatively early with our community service project at Uber Street Garden. A series of gardens, supervised by Skip Weiner, has been established throughout the city of Philadelphia to provide safe and beautiful places for children to play. MCPC students worked together to improve the conditions of two lots. The end of a morning devoted to weeding, trash pick-up, mulching and moving sod brought a very satisfying feeling when everyone viewed the hard work they had done. The afternoon brought more meetings to prepare us for life in the city, at Temple, and on the MCPC campus. We ate dinner as a community, concluding the very busy weekend, leaving us well-prepared for the start of classes the next day!



Students at the Uber Street Garden pictured with Skip (center). *Image courtesy of R. Cody Wanner.*

Out In Left Field with Elizabeth Thompson

Shoppers, “YES WE CAN!”

While living in Harrisburg this summer, I noticed more and more Obama ‘08 signs tilted on windowsills, “Change” bumper stickers on cars, and “Yes We Can!” flyers on telephone posts. When I moved to Philadelphia two weeks ago, I have noticed these displays of support even more. From the Obama posters on the sides of buildings to the hipster fawning a sport coat with a pixelated Obama on his tee and a “HOPE” pin on his chest, advertising of this current election is stifling.

I decided to outfit my curiosity with the most logical task: googling “Obama campaign gear” to see what sort of merchandise is available for your run-o’-the-mill proponent of change. I was directed to Barack Obama’s official site and was overwhelmed by the plethora of gadgets and gizmos that the campaign has for sale, all attributed to be union and American made. Beyond the typical “Catholics for Obama” lawn signs and “HOPE” T-shirts, I discovered a massive array of fashion knicks and fist-pump knacks. Not only is the epidemic of Hope™ available in my size, but I can drink it out of nalgene, hang it in galleries, and tell that special someone I love you with it on an “Obama Charm.” Now, how can anyone resist *that*?

Knowing full-well that some can, and will, resist when the Obama charm is turned on, and in the spirit of bipartisanship, I committed to a similar Google search of “McCain campaign gear.” I anticipated a much more reserved approach to the merchandized Maverick. Like “Straight Talk, Straight Stuff.” Unlike the “Runway to Change” and “Artists for Obama” options I saw at ChangeUnlimited, the GOP Trunk (actual name of first hit) offers “Great AmeriMcCain” shirts, *Faith of My Fathers* DVDs, sports towels, golf balls, and “Coalitions Ap-

parel.” Though tempted to peruse and interpret; I decided to seek out McCain’s official site. GOP Trunk is run by an “independent, for-profit company,” and no one wants that getting in the way of true, honest politics. Obviously this company was aiming to make more merchandise to throw at consumption-driven Republicans than a naysayer-libby could shake a stick at.

I technologically tip-toed over to JohnMcCain.com. On my way around I noticed that though the site contained different editions for the supporter, the undecided, and the unregistered voter, somehow no one had the forethought to even try and win me over as a registered Democrat. But I doubt that any version would really achieve that goal with the new Lipstick ad as a headliner. Perhaps the McCain campaign knows better than I. It may not be worth the web space.

So I finally selected the store button on Senator McCain’s and Governor Palin’s website, and lo, and behold, I was redirected to GOPTrunk.com! Not only has the McCain campaign outsourced their merchandise from their official site, it is more quantitatively stocked than that of their opponent. A huge amalgam of supporters can find the perfect keychain or pin to fit their identity: race fans, Arab Americans, Jewish Americans, Lebanese Americans, future leaders, values voters, bikers, and so many more are fit to click and add to cart. The last category of the site features the “Go Green” items, the “eco-friendly,” “Go Green McCain Onesie with New Recycle Logo” and the McCain travel mug, “molded with up to 100% recycled material and an enhanced biodegradability additive.” Who, friends, can resist *this*?

My experiment—obviously void of the scientific method, as a control seems to be null and void in this region of American infrastructure—yielded what results? Though I expected to witness a fairly frustrating array of materials for distribution at these sites, I am instead simply shocked by the outright egregiousity of the consumerism. When

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Scientists Confirm Bon Jovi Song as Meaning of Life; Millions Dance!

By: Samantha Moore and Melissa McKrell

Barren cliff in Nevada, Wednesday-- Scientists testing mysterious vibrations in the Earth's surface have found a curious link between the meaning of life and the 1980s hit "Livin' On a Prayer" by Bon Jovi.

"We are no longer halfway there," said leading geologist Raz Mazford.

Members of Team ROCK felt initially cautious about the pulsations, but were convinced upon pressing their ears a little further into the ground.

"At first we thought it sounded more like Chuck Berry," crustal analyst Joan Holmes said. "But there was no mistaking 'Gina works the diner all night. Working for her man, she brings home her pay for love.'"

Balloons and ticker tape enveloped Manhattan in a sea of color when the news broke on Tuesday. China temporarily released political prisoners to view the televised event.

Barack Obama said this confirmed a suspicion he'd had for years.

An Obama aide said he plans to join a host of converts such as Conor Wint, 47, on their way to the site.

"I too once held my six string in hock," said Wint as he stroked the leather jacket he bought to com-

memorate his "nirvana."

Economists in Washington have painted a bleaker picture for the nation, pointing to the dozens of heartbroken stockbrokers threatening to jump out of their Wall Street offices.

One expert explained, "As they cling to the sides of their buildings, lenders are asking: 'Is this it?'"



"Scientists"
courtesy Yahoo images

(Editor's Note": In light of a few popular Philadelphia publications, this piece is simply meant to make one ponder, laugh or roll their eyes at the absurdities of news in print. This article is in no way truthful or accurate. Just funny.)

All Things Music

By: Pete Corning

Philadelphia is a big and scary place, and at first glance the music scene here may seem slightly more inaccessible than at good ole' Messiah, where national acts appear monthly in Brubaker and weekly in the Union. If you are anything like me, you are already going through withdrawal of some sort; maybe the only thing keeping you from running down Broad this very instant screaming Katy Perry at the top of your



These two know music. "Pete Corning and SAB's Jeff Rioux". Image courtesy Sadie Wunder.

lungs is that new Girl Talk or Fleet Foxes or Lil Wayne (*Tha Carter III*, love it or hate it, was the perfect summer album) banging in your sexy white earbuds, keeping you cool. Relax though, I've been here for four months now, and Philly has yet to disappoint me musically.

At this point you are probably thinking, "But there is so much to choose from on any given night, Pete! Where do I start??" Two question marks is extreme friend; its time for you to head on over to <http://www.r5productions.com>.

R5 (named after the regional rail) is a DIY concert promotion company started in Philly in 1996 by a man with a dream for high quality shows, at an affordable price in intimate local venues (ranging from a church sanctuary to an old theatre). By all measures, they have succeeded, booking bands from the Arctic Monkeys to Death Cab for Cutie, from Mos Def to Broken Social Scene, and a million other bands in between. Chances are you haven't heard of a lot of the bands playing here, and I haven't either, but I guarantee that an R5 show will be a good, cheap night out regardless.

Some of my personal favorite upcoming shows:

Why? with Mount Eerie - September 17 @ First Unitarian Church

Mogwai - September 19 @ Starlight Ballroom

Black Kids - September 29 @ First Unitarian Church

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Copeland (above) and Lovedrug (below) to perform October 24th @ First Unitarian. Pictures courtesy Google Images.

Ratatat (endorsed by Grantham student Andrew Bargh) – October 1 @ Starlight Ballroom

Jenny Lewis (of Rilo Kiley)-Oct 1 @ The Keswick Theater

Fleet Foxes – October 2 @ Starlight Ballroom

Hot Chip – October 5 @ The Trocadero

Mirah – October 24 @ The Sanctuary of First Unitarian Church

Copeland / Lovedrug / Lydia / Lights-Oct 24 @ The First Unitarian Church

Deerhoof – October 25 @ Starlight Ballroom

Interact with an integral part of Philly culture! Go to shows! Enjoy!

Magic

work of Philadelphia lawyers, injunctions were filed to stop the nighttime demolition of the garden, turning away the bulldozers in time to save what is now a piece of Philadelphia's cultural spirit.

The Magic Garden on South Street is only one of many artworks in Philadelphia executed or supervised by Zagar during his career. But because of the tumult surrounding its acquisition and ongoing financial struggle to keep the property, the Magic Garden has come to symbolize Zagar's political and aesthetic ideals as his masterpiece.

The Magic Garden, in process since 1994, has been deemed complete by the artist, a pronouncement which celebrates the conclusion of one artwork and promises his ongoing support for public works across Philadelphia. A "Moveable Feast" will be held on November 1st on South Street to celebrate the Garden's completion, as if the piece itself needed any further ado.

Cody's Corner:

A Big Fight on a Big Playground

What do you think of the Russia – Georgia conflict? You might be thinking, "Well, Russia invaded Georgia and Georgia tried to defend themselves. The tyrannical Russia would not relent, so Georgia needed aid from America. Russia is bad and Georgia is good." Maybe that's what you are thinking. Well, I don't blame you. I think that is how the whole conflict has been framed, so to believe that would be **t o t a l l y l e g i t i m a t e .**

To look at it another way, check out some key facts: South Ossetia (the part of Georgia that Russia "invaded") has about 70,000 people in it, most of whom are pro-Russia. In the 1990s, South Ossetia fought against Georgia to gain independence. In 2008, heavy fighting continues and Russia sends in troops to back up the Ossetians. (BBC, 9/10/2008)

So who do you think is right or wrong?

(E-mail Cody your opinions and ideas) @ rw1205. He would love to respond!

Out in Left Field

this seemingly American-owned catechism is married to political invention, what can We, the People make of it? Is this a new way that our votes are being bought, along with our advertising space on heads, torsos, and infants? All could argue, "What's new? All elections past have also sought to pander to the public to the greatest common factor!"

I consider the slogans represented by these T-shirts and buttons. "Yes We Can," "Country First: Reform, Prosperity, and Peace," "Got Hope?," "Change We Can Believe In," and "America Deserves Better." I have listened to friends, family, and academic colleagues respond to the 2008 presidential race by sincerely and unapathetically saying, "Either way, we'll get the same thing!" And from the look of the "consumeratic" tendencies and *necessities* that each campaign has launched to snag each and every vote they can, it looks a lot like the same thing. Maybe all these slogans of a better and changed America are just the rest of the make-up bag the GOP left behind.

However cynical Americans can be, is there merit in choosing corruption from corruption, evil from evil? This registered voter has not decided that yet, and thus prefers not to work the clipboards at said local campus to ensure the overly busy or disinterested are ready for that fateful November day. As I decide, I imagine I will continue to drink in the attack ads, glance at posters between galleries, and wonder how all this will benefit our children and the earth. Meanwhile, I may just keep up with the GOP Trunk, patiently awaiting the arrival of "Mother, Moose Hunter, Maverick" ribbed tees. I am just the one who could not possibly resist *that show* of patriotism.

**We Know YOU Have
Something to Say!
Make It So!**

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