



Culture Pirate

By **OMER
AHMED**
News editor

Delicious blasphemy

While I am not a Christian, I have many fond memories of Easter. One is of an Easter egg hunt with my cousins in Texas. It was the first time that the religious significance of Easter was explained to me and, quite frankly, it was confusing. If there was all this stuff about Jesus, where did the cute bunnies come into the picture? Why aren't we hunting chocolate Jesus eggs?

I now know that the bunny is just a symbol of spring and fertility. I also know that the Christian focus is not chocolate but Christ. However, I still want me some chocolate Jesus eggs.

Now an artist in New York, Cosimo Cavallaro, has almost fulfilled my desire with his "My Sweet Lord." It's a 200-pound, milk chocolate rendition of Jesus naked with his arms stretched out as if on the cross. It's one of the coolest things I have ever thought of eating.

Unfortunately, a number of New Yorkers have found the choco-Christ offensive and its showing was canceled. No surprise. In the past, New York's then-mayor, Rudy Giuliani, withheld funding from a museum for showing an elephant dung-covered Virgin Mary, and former New York senator Al D'Amato addressed the Senate regarding his outrage over a piece depicting a urine-submerged crucifix.

These two pieces, just like the choco-Christ, are not just blasphemy for blasphemy's sake. They have artistic meaning and, in some cases, valuable messages. The dung-clotted "Holy Virgin Mary" was created by a Nigerian-descended Briton who was combining elements of African tradition (dung as a symbol of fertility) with his Christian faith. Sister Wendy Beckett, a Catholic nun, explained that the "Piss Jesus" was symbolic of how society has turned its back on Christian values. Basically, that society has been pissing on Christ and his message.

The choco-Christ is just as explainable. It's naked to show that Christ was human, not some far-off unknowable deity. It's brown not because the artist was trying to bring Jesus' race into question as so many have done. The artist just likes milk chocolate since it is so sweet, which also explains the choco-Christ's medium.

Even if an image seems blasphemous, it is important to look behind the offense to what the images evoke. The Danish cartoons from 2005 were most definitely blasphemous to Muslims, but they were a legitimate critique of radicals who distort the faith of Islam for their own violent reason. If you can look past the nakedness of choco-Jesus, you'll find a way to venerate Jesus that tastes better than a bread wafer.

Counselor: past through stories

By **MICHAEL ABURAS**
Staff writer

While most of us were sleeping in until 1 p.m. or catching a tan during spring break, Ohlone Counselor Maria Ramirez closed The Third Annual Storytellers of the Americas Conference at the University of Buffalo in New York held March 30 and 31.

This year's theme for the conference was "Hearing Yellow Woman: Voices of the Indigenous Women of Oral Tradition" to honor women and their mothers. Ramirez was chosen to read her story, titled "Chicana 'Her-Story.'" The conference was also to honor and close March as Women's History month.

"Chicana 'Her-Story'" discusses America from the perspective of indigenous women. "We've been virtually voiceless in the history books. It's not just Chicana, it's trying to give a view of the Americas," said Ramirez, who is Chicano, Apache and Puerto Rican.

The biggest honor for Ramirez was meeting the Iroquois confederacy. "I honor them in my 'Chicana 'Her-Story,'" because they influenced the early feminists.

Ramirez submitted her story online and received a warm response from Nicole Dragone, one of the organizers. Dragone said in an email the reason for closing the conference with "Chicana 'Her-story'" was "Because 'Her-story' tells the story of Indigenous Women since colonization began, we wanted to ensure that everyone had a chance to attend this session. Truth is, all the conference organizers want to be there for this session."

"The organizers were so happy that they got a response from Ohlone because they know it's named after native people," said Ramirez.

In addition, Ohlone was the only community college represented at the conference.

Ramirez has been very busy performing "Chicana 'Her-Story'" for various events during Women's History Month. Ramirez also per-

formed for the Latina Leadership Conference March 16 and 17 in Modesto.

Ramirez is vice president of the Latina Leadership Network of the North who hosted the event. Ramirez was also hosted by the ethnic studies department of Logan High School for "Dia De Los Muertos," or "Day of the Dead."

The conference featured indigenous people from all over the country from Alaska to Samson Creek in Canada. Some of the tribes who attended included the Mowhawk, Seneca, Black Foot and Iroquois, whose original name is "Haudenosaunee," which means "people of the long house."

According to Ramirez, the Iroquois women had the right to vote for chiefs, if they wanted a divorce there was no stigma and they could vote whether or not to go to war. "We feel that the way women are treated nowadays is like the way the earth is treated: like an object you take and use," said Ramirez.

After the conference Ramirez was invited by Diane Benson, who ran for governor of Alaska on the Green Party ticket in 2002 and is from the Tlingit nation, to come to Alaska to perform her "Chicana 'Her-Story.'"

Benson's son lost his legs in the Iraq War and Benson told the conference that it made her feel like she lost her spiritual legs.

Ramirez closed the conference with the Native American expression, "A people are not defeated until the heart of their women are on the ground."

"Then I asked them if their hearts are on the ground and they all said 'no,'" Ramirez said.

When asked how she got into storytelling, Ramirez explained: "The M.E.Ch.A. students about eight years ago asked me to do a presentation for Cinco De Mayo and they said 'don't just lecture us.' So I thought, 'what better way than storytelling, teatro [theater] and hip-hop to promote education and decolonize our minds.'"



Photo by Jack Husting

Maria Ramirez wore ceremonial dress to a storytelling conference over the weekend.

Deadline set April 12 for student art entries

Students interested in showcasing their art for a chance at \$2,500 in prizes at the annual Fine Art & Design Student Show may submit their works on Thursday, April 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Louie Meager Art Gallery. The art, which must be framed, matted or mounted, will be shown from April 20 to May 15 at the Gallery. Submitting art costs \$1 per piece. For \$5 students can submit unlimited pieces.

In the show's almost 30-year history, submissions usually number about 400. Judging whittles the number down to a little over 200, which are then shown at the gallery. There will be a Reception & Awards Ceremony from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on May 8.

Pieces must have been made by students in an Ohlone art or design class in the past 12 months. Contact Gallery Director Margaret Stainer for more information.

Bagpipes, dancing featured at concert

By **NOAH LEVIN**
Staff writer

The drone and high-pitched whine of bagpipes could be heard emanating from the Jackson Theater Sunday. The source? The Prince Charles Pipe Band Celtic Concert, presented by the Prince Charles Caledonian Club of San Francisco.

Acts for the concert included the Prince Charles Grade Three Pipe Band, Irish dancers from the Barnes' Academy of Irish Dancing, the Prince Charles Grade One Pipe Band, and local Irish folk band, Molly's Revenge. Proceeds from the concert went to Ohlone's anthropology museum.

The concert opened with the Grade Three Pipe Band, which consisted of several bag pipers and drummers, in full Scottish traditional garb. The pipe bands ran like a strict military marching band, the players standing in a half hexagonal shape on the stage.

Led by a major, the songs of the

Grade Three were mostly marches, with pieces like "Fleshmarket Close," by James McColl, which stood out with its high trills and low, entrancing drones, and rhythmic breakdowns at the end.

Each piece played was relatively short; the band was then joined briefly by a pair of Scottish Highland dancers, the very talented Cooper sisters.

The Coopers are 13-year-old Lauren and 12-year-old Madeline. But don't let their ages fool you. Lauren is the U.S. champion in her age bracket, and Madeline is ranked second in hers.

During the intermission, the Coopers mentioned that they got into highland dance through going to the Scottish Games. Lauren and Madeline, who have not only traveled much of the U.S., but have also gone around the world to compete, enjoy dancing very much.

They went on to say, "The best part is definitely meeting people and making new friends at competitions."

The Grade Three pipe band was then followed by dancers from the Barnes' Academy for Irish Dance. The dancers – 10-year-old Kess Rule, and her older brothers Ciarran, 9, and Connor, 11, and 13 year-old dancer Lane Olsen – performed group as well as solo dances for the enthralled crowd.

The stiff, traditional Irish dance might seem boring and stale to the unaccustomed eye, but the magic was all in the formidable footwork of the young performers.

Solo pipe player Kyle Rothchild then took the stage, playing an up-tempo, popping piece on his bagpipes.

The curtain then came down for a brief period, as Master of Ceremonies and Chief of the Caledonian Club of San Francisco John Biggar told mildly funny and slightly off-color jokes as the Irish folk band Molly's Revenge prepared for their set.

Consisting of four members, Molly's Revenge is a traditional Irish folk band hailing from nearby

Santa Cruz. A high-powered, fun set of songs was played by the band, adding at least myself to their already large and growing following.

The Grade One Pipe Band followed after Molly's Revenge, and though the latter performance was a hard act to follow, the skilled and regimented members of the Grade One band showed the experience of the elder club members as they masterfully played with pipes and drums in perfect synchronization.

The sponsors of the event, the Caledonian Club of San Francisco, is a Scottish community organization with chapters across the U.S. and around the world.

The club has been a presence in the Bay Area for more than a hundred years, most notably putting on its yearly Scottish Games and Gathering at the Pleasanton Fairgrounds. The event put on here at Ohlone was similar to one of these gatherings, with a packed house of rowdy Scots gleefully enjoying the pipe music and festivities.

Students bring acts to the stage

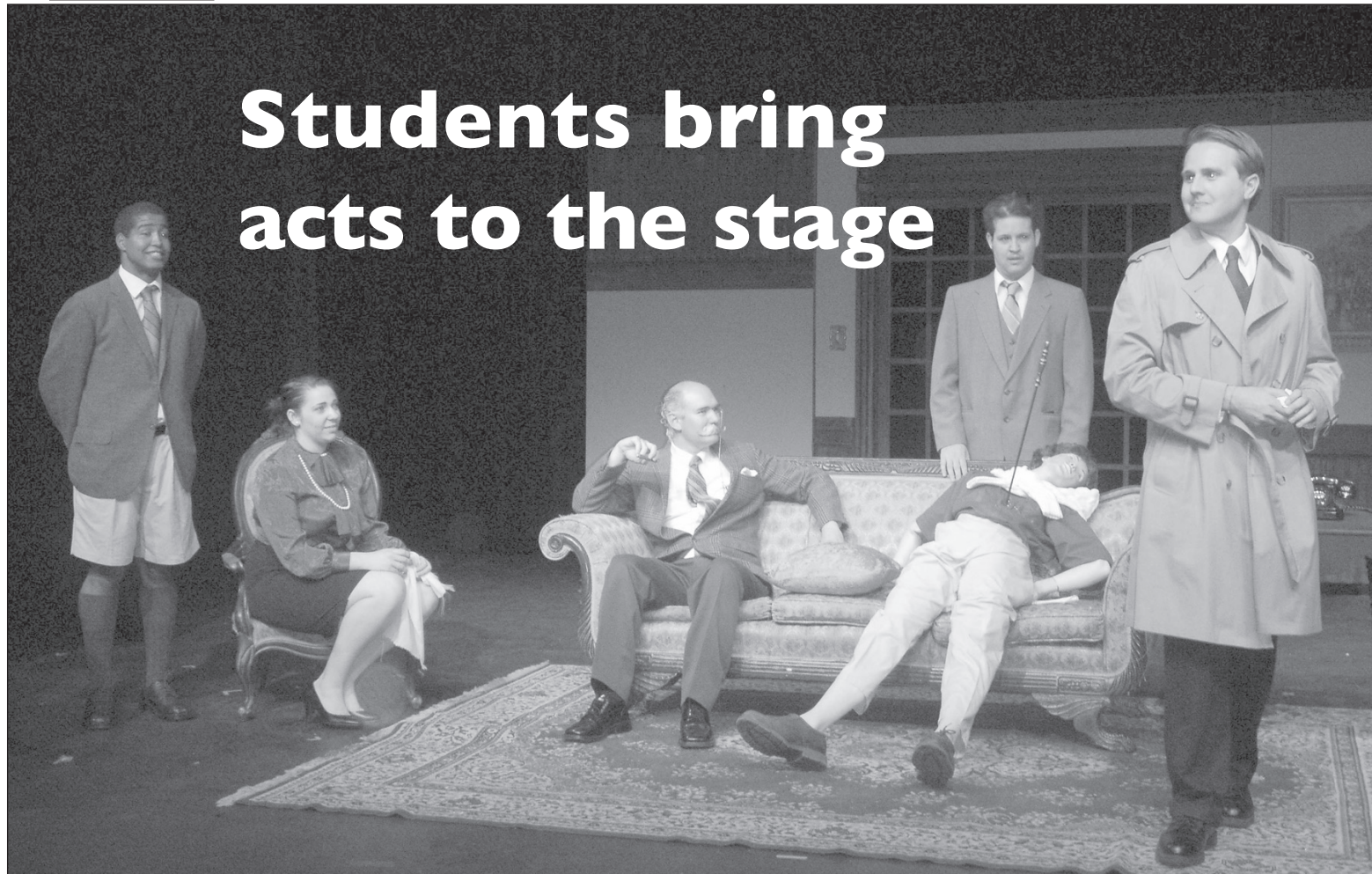


Photo by Kevin Protz

A scene from the Student Repertory murder-mystery 'Strueth,' far right, a detective (played by A.J. Hamilton) investigates the murder of the lifeless 'Henry,' lying on the couch. From right to left: Ryan Bentley, Michael Callen, Jessica Stanley and Jeremy Leonard.

By **CHEYENNE MARTIN**
Staff writer

"One 'Axe' in a Box" by the Student Repertory Class ran from March 21 to March 23 in the Black Box Theater at Ohlone.

The first act, entitled "Streuth" and directed by Claudia Vildard, featured a joke on theater as well as the audience in murder mystery form. Initially, understanding what was going on was difficult. However, with faulty sets and actor's lines hidden in cigarette cases, the audience was able to catch on. In "Streuth," everything that could possibly go wrong in a live production did. The cast made fun of the roles that are often featured in a murder mystery. One such role was the over-dramatic wife, Mrs. D'Arcy (played by Jessica Stanley). A.J. Hamilton portrayed a clueless inspector, who seemed to be one step behind what was going on around him.

Once you understood that the mishaps were on purpose, the act was very funny.

Next up was "Nice Tie," starring

Tom Shivley and Michele Leonard. "Nice Tie," which took place at a bar, began when Shivley said "Hi" to Leonard, who very quickly entered into a frantic state and delivered a fast-paced monologue of probable affairs and troubled children that could result if their relationship evolved from that moment on. The punch line came when Leonard ended her crazed act of probability with the comment, "nice tie though."

At first Shivley retracted, scared and defeated, but then came back with his own rendition of what could happen, a better and happier one. Directed by Noah Levin, this act was high in energy and truth, and produced smiles from many in the audience.

"Ferry Boat" was next on the night's bill, also directed by Levin. Starring Brenden Monlux and Janelle Ikeuchi, "Ferry Boat" was an audience favorite. Taking place in a ferry, Ikeuchi portrayed a quiet, sexy librarian-type, "Eleanor," who obviously liked to keep to herself. Monlux's character, "Joey," was an annoyingly charming guy who

talked too much about nothing and took an instant liking to Ikeuchi. His closest attempt to a pick up line was, "Ever think about suicide?"

However, throughout all Monlux's ramblings of coffee, doughnuts, franks, and how much other girls want him, the two developed an attraction and the "dufus finally got the smart girl."

Kelsey Cole, a former student and audience member, said she loved the "absolute awkwardness" of the act. After a short intermission, it was time for the "10-Minute Macbeth," directed by Salem Barner. "Macbeth" took place in a radio station titled KFUF where all the actors proved the typical stereotype of stuck-up and full-of-themselves actors. Macbeth was "played" by KFUF actor Dr Evil (Adam Rabinowitz), Macduff by Christopher Walken (A.J. Hamilton) and King Duncan by John Wayne (Mike Callan).

Even without knowledge of Shakespeare's Macbeth, "10-Minute Macbeth" was funny to the entire audience, thanks to the pop culture references and how well each actor

matched their persona's-persona's voices.

"The Sheep" which starred Joe Nicholas and Jackie Tebow, was an extremely strange act, to say the least. The act started with Tebow packing to leave her husband on the suspicion of his having an affair. After denying it, Nicholas finally admitted to having an affair - but that affair was with a sheep.

The last act of the evening, "Ikke, Ikke, Nye, Nye, Nye," started with a small spotlight on a red phone. Edith (Kelley-Briana Greer) played the seductive co-worker of a scrawny and awkward guy, Graham (Ricky Brown).

Throughout this act, Greer used imagery, wine and innuendos to seduce Brown. However, whenever Greer left the room Brown would pick up the phone and start to get excited. Strange as it might have been, Brown and Greer had the audience rolling with laughter and proved to be another favorite of the audience.

Next up for the Ohlone theater is auditions for "Miss Saigon," the college summer musical.



Devil's Advocate

By **ANNA NEMCHUK**
Editor-in-chief

The tao of work

I never appreciated how little people enjoy working. Many people say they want to work in a bookstore because they just "adore" books. Unfortunately, they also seem to be allergic to any actual work.

I left high school early and went straight to Ohlone, having decided I'd had enough homework, at which I was outstandingly awful, and standardized tests, at which I excelled to an obscene degree, to last several lifetimes. In my newfound freedom, a job seemed apropos. Translation: my parents threatened bodily harm. Customer service was, and still is, in my opinion, a four-letter word - so there went any possibility of grocery stores, fast-food "restaurants" and my long-cherished dream of a career as a Vegas showgirl.

After some thought, (about five minutes) I squirreled a part-time position at the animal shelter working with cats, dogs and the occasional duck, figuring most complaints could be dealt with via a good chin scratching.

Me: "So what happened to that chicken we got last week?"

Vet technician on duty: "I took him home to my grandfather. He keeps chickens. Oh, and speaking of, he gave me the most delicious homemade chicken soup yesterday."

Me: "!!!!!"

Unfortunately for my long-suffering sires, I developed a tendency to bring my work home. Observing a worrying trend - an average of a cat per month - I was strongly encouraged to seek alternate employment.

The first time I came to Half Price Books, I was 12 and Daddy had so much fun prying my fingers from the doorjamb all subsequent visits were relegated to the "treat" category. I remember Luis, one of the employees, asking if I'd read Leo Tolstoy upon discovering we were Russian. I sheepishly muttered something. I saw Eifman's "Anna Karenina" ballet a few weeks ago in Berkeley - does that count?

Now this would be customer service, true, but bookstore customers had to be a cut above the norm - I mean, they could at least read, right? (Little did I know...) There were no positions available when I tracked down Luis, now the manager. Nor were there any when I checked next month. Or the month after that... but persistence (obstinacy) won and about eight months later, victory was mine.

Almost three years later, I adore my job, which, while involving a certain amount of customer pandering, has more to do with running a business. My point? I'd love to get paid for reading. Until then, if you want to work in a bookstore, or anywhere else, try WORKING.

Auditions for 'Miss Saigon' April 13

By **CHEYENNE MARTIN**
Staff writer

Auditions for Ohlone Theatre's spring musical "Miss Saigon" will take place on April 13 at the Smith Center. The musical will run this summer from July 5 to July 14.

"Miss Saigon" is a musical about a soldier who falls in love with a woman while in Vietnam. Eventually the lovers get separated and spend many years trying to find each other. The play is "Very romantic and very tragic," said director Tom Blank.

The bulk of the story takes place in Vietnam, so a majority of the roles will need to fit an American and Asian look. "Unfortunately there is only one American female lead," said Blank.

Auditions will be held on April 13 between 9 a.m. and noon. Appointments can be made by contacting Tom Blank at tblank@ohlone.edu or by emailing jcollins@ohlone.edu. An appointment is not needed to audition, but those with appointments will be given priority over walk-ins.

The auditions only require a prepared song with sheet music. For a ballad, only 16 bars are required and for an up-tempo song, 32 bars are required.

There are some roles that require dance and a short audition will be held, but those auditioning are not required to participate in the dance portion. Currently there are more than two dozen spots booked for the audition date.

The theater department is looking

for a good-sized cast, said Blank, which will consist of seven principal roles, a dozen minor ones and 30 chorus members.

All parts are still open. For those that have never auditioned or may be considering auditioning but are scared, Blank offered comfort. "Expect to have a really good time," said Blank. "Come in and sing 16 to 32 bars of your favorite song!"

Blank expects "Miss Saigon" to be extremely popular due to the pop nature of the music. Being a rock Opera like "Rent," he thinks many young people will enjoy it.

The show has a very "contemporary sound," said Blank. "It's very modern."

The set has big plans also, with Fred Alim and Steven Wathern planning to "combine bamboo with

barbed wire," said Blank.

Blank described the music director, Janice Holmes, as "one of the best musical directors I have worked with in my entire career."

Also, because of the complicated vocals, Blank said he will "spend more time casting major roles correctly."

Call-backs for principal characters will be held on the following Sunday by invitation only.

Due to the adult nature of "Miss Saigon," the Ohlone theater is doing something out of the ordinary. Instead of having curtain at 8 p.m. as has been done in the past, curtain for "Miss Saigon" will be at 8:30 p.m. instead.

Anyone interested in the details of the auditions or the show itself is encouraged to contact Blank.