

# Chinese New Year Hits Brooklyn College



Student organizers of this year’s Chinese New Year event stand alongside the presenters of the lion dance at the Student Center. PHOTO/ Nakeisha Reece

BY M.A. RAHMAN

The first Chinese New Year event to be celebrated on campus in recent memory became a reality, courtesy of the members of Brooklyn College Table Tennis League bringing a plethora of activities for students to join in.

Shanlin Li, a Chemistry major and senior, iterated her and her fellow club member’s determination to make this event become a reality before they leave Brooklyn College.

“I noticed there was no Chinese New Year event on campus and I said ‘Well, we have a lot of Asian students here so why not do this ourselves?’” Li said promptly detailing her months-long organization of the event.

According to Brooklyn College’s 2018 Fall semester ‘Enrollment Snapshot,’ over 18 percent of the student makeup is Asian.

With funding assistance from the Student, Activities,

Involvement Leadership (SAIL) Center and coordination with the Pre-Dental Society, BC Sustainability Club, CLAS, ACA, and the Chinese Student and Scholars Association, organizers were able arrange a myriad of activities to be enjoy at the Student’s Center along with a lion dance on campus much to the surprise of students in the afternoon.

The Student Center’s nearly two floors worth of room needed to be reserved for students to enjoy the full range of activities Li and her peers had in mind: table tennis, card games, a photo booth, cotton candy, and the much-appreciated karaoke.

When food was not the main course of the distraction of the day, throngs of students flocked to the now dark and ornate Greenwood room, where sprinkled about were traditional Chinese decorations and

lanterns creating a particular atmosphere that added to the casual karaoke singing.

Queenie Lin, a senior and psychology major, was the designated chaperone for students singing karaoke.

“It’s quite great actually, much better than I thought it would have been... students chose whatever songs they wanted and they really support each other, I haven’t really seen any booing,” Lin said pleased.

“It was great, I really enjoyed it. I got to sing one of my favorite songs,” said Lordy Balance with a gleeful smile, shortly after gaining the applause of students hearing her sing “Born This Way.”

On the same floor at the Jefferson lounge, a substantial space was occupied by two table tennis tables.

Here, students could either choose to try play on one table, utilized by some of the most stand out, experi-

enced, and determined players in the room, members of the Table Tennis League that with a certain precision, allowed them to serve and strike back the tennis ball in a mostly uninterrupted, fluid fashion frequently captivating the observation of students passing by.

There was also another table tennis table used by another group with a generally more casual attitude for playing involving much more light-hearted fun as tennis balls routinely flung right off the table right into a wall.

Alex Louise Pierre, a senior, and film production major expressed his enjoyment of the occasion, citing the pleasure he gets from having an opportunity to play table tennis, something he regularly does with Table Tennis League.

To Pierre, the activity is a kind of stress relief enabling him to drift his focus off film

making while still on campus.

“It’s only been 20 minutes since my last classes ended and I got here but I’m already enjoying it,” said Andrew Porter, a transfer student, and Music Composition major.

Although initially uncertain of how the event would have been received due to the amount of time/resources spent planning it and the pressure she felt following much promotion of it, upon reflection Li cited these fears as factors that motivated her to ensure students enjoyed the celebration.

“Overall, I’m really glad that we got to have the celebration and have that many people celebrate Chinese culture on campus before I graduate,” Li said. “I think it’s a good start and I hope we can continue in the future.”

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BULLSPIT!

Bullspit! is a weekly satirical column by Brooklyn College comedian Ryan Gleason.

Parenting Advice From a Non-Parent

BY RYAN GLEASON

As I get older, I can and do expect friends of mine to tie the knot and have children soon, not necessarily in that order. Recently I have been noticing friends of mine having kids or announcing that they and their partners are expecting. I am so incredibly happy for them, I can't help but imagine if my girlfriend and I were to have a child. I think I would be an amazing father despite never taking care of a small child for more than a few hours. Parenting can't be THAT hard.

Here are some parenting tips I assume make sense and would not harm or mentally scar your children:

- 1) Babies cannot drink Mountain Dew, but if you freeze the Mountain Dew into a popsicle, they totally can consume it that way.
- 2) Dogs are great companions for babies, especially if you raise a



Parenting can't be THAT hard. PHOTO/ Pixabay

- pup and baby together, their bond will be unbreakable. But sell the dog when the baby turns around one so the little stinker knows about loss and disappointment early. Welcome to the human race kid!
- 3) If your baby is restless, put some breastmilk/formula in your mouth, swish it around and swallow it. Then, blow your hot milk breath into their face. It will remind the baby of what it was like in the womb when you/your partner got gas.
- 4) Watch movies and television with full volume. The

- baby's ears need to adjust to real-world sounds. Right now they are so used to squishy silence from inside the body, they need to be introduced to sirens, bells, rock music, and utter chaos.
- 5) Never give your baby a stuffed animal; too easy to turn into a dirty, crusty, drool filled sponge. Give your baby action figures with many small and removable pieces.
- 6) Teach your child another language so when they are inevitably drafted to the next world wars, they have a fighting chance at begging for mercy

- from the enemies. It doesn't matter which language, I'm sure our current president has made enemies with everyone.
- 7) When giving your baby a bath, use dish soap to create the most long-lasting and buoyant bubbles they have ever seen.
- 8) Don't, in any way, give them wooden blocks. Trees should not be cut down from Mother Earth's surface for your dumb baby's enjoyment. Protect the environment! Use plastic blocks.
- 9) Put pillows everywhere. Babies are naturally top heavy and fall down all the time. And despite it being hilarious sometimes, there's only so many videos of babies falling that will fit on your phone. So after the 5th or 6th time, maybe baby proof the place.
- 10) This one isn't a joke. VACCINATE YOUR DAMN KID!



EVENTS LISTING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

**John Hope Franklin Series**  
**3:40 PM - 4:55 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium**  
**Brooklyn College Library**  
Panel featuring Laylah Amattullah Barrayn, a documentary photographer based in New York City

**Freedom Concert**  
**5:05 PM - 6:05 PM**  
**Don Buchwald Theater**  
**Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**

A concert presented in conjunction with the History Department honoring William Grant Still's The Lynched Him on a Tree.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 &  
FRIDAY, MARCH 1

**Acting as If: Tips and Tricks to Appear Confident**  
**6:00 PM - 9:30 PM /**  
**1:15 PM - 4:15 PM**  
**1309 James Hall**

Learn ways to become and exude a higher level of confidence.

**Winter Composers Concert**  
**8:00 PM - 9:00 PM**  
**Don Buchwald Theater**  
**Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Video Interview Prep By Bloomberg (Collaboration with Smooth-Talkers & NABA)**  
**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**  
**5th Floor - Student Center**

**Gavin Lecture, Department of Biology: Erich Jarvis**  
**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium**  
**Brooklyn College Library**  
Professor Jarvis' research focuses broadly on the molecular and genetic mechanisms that underlie vocal learning.

**SMOOTH-TALKERS: Public Speaking / Interview Skills Club**  
**12:30 PM - 2:00 PM**  
**5th Floor - Student Center**

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

**Job Search 101 Workshop**  
**1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium**  
**Brooklyn College Library**

MONDAY, MARCH 4

**UndocuAlly**  
**12:30 PM - 2:00 PM**  
**6th Floor - Student Center**  
The UndocuAlly training program is part of larger organizing effort at Brooklyn College to improve the experience of undocumented and DACAmented students on campus.

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

**MSNBC Fireside Chat**  
**12:15 PM - 1:30 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium**  
**Brooklyn College Library**  
Meet two on-air broadcast journalists from MSNBC as they discuss their career paths and share valuable advice regarding the media industry.

**Info Session: Careers and Internships in Cybersecurity**  
**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**  
**1309 James Hall**

**So you want to be a Doctor?**  
**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**  
**6th Floor - Student Center**  
A panel on how a minor or dual major in Religion can help you in your pursuit of a career in medicine.

**WGST: Beyond the Shooting: Eleanor Gray Bumpurs, Identity Politics and Community Activism**  
**2:15 PM - 3:30 PM**  
**5th Floor - Student Center**  
A lecture by Dr. Lashawn Harris.

**Transmission: a performance by Barbara Herr**  
**5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium**  
**Brooklyn College Library.**



# United 4 Israel and the Two-State Solution

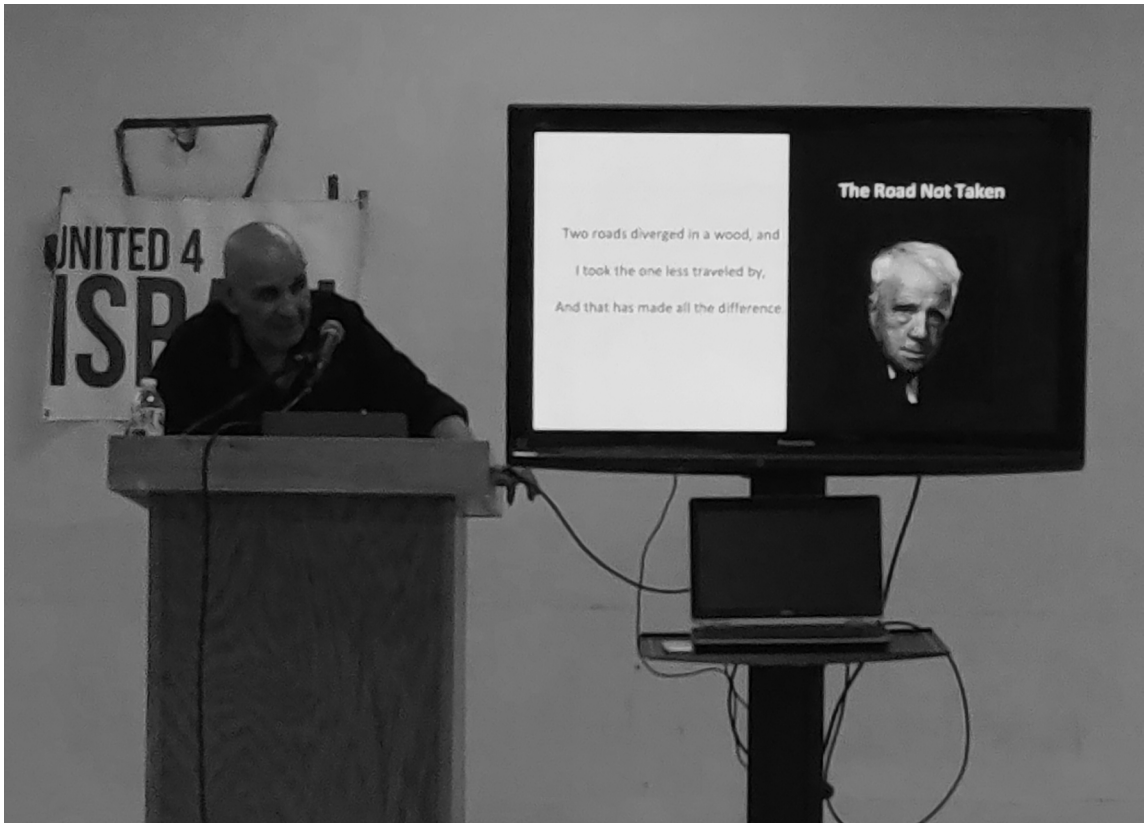
BY MARCUS AYALA

Israel and Palestine have been fighting over the Middle Eastern land for decades with no end in sight. The two-state solution was the main topic in the “Vision of Peace” event on campus last week.

One proposed solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a two-state solution. The two states tried to reach an agreement as a part of the solution on a border in 1967, in vein. Israel didn’t accept Palestine’s offer. Diplomatic efforts to reach a solution included, 1991 Madrid Conference, 1993 Oslo Accords, 2000 Camp David Summit, 2001 Taba negotiations, 2002 Arab Peace Initiatives and the 2013-2014 peace talks.

A person that has over 30 years of experience in the Israeli government and is a member of the executive and steering committee of commanders for Israel’s security is Rolly Gueron.

Gueron believes the two-state solution will create a more civil future. He said, “I would love to see Israel stretch to the Mediter-



“Vision of Peace” focused on the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. PHOTO/ **Marcus Ayala**

anean.” He also sees it as highly unlikely that anything like that would happen anytime soon. He refers to it as, “A pessimist is an experienced optimist.”

Akmal Salimov of the Biology Club and Brooklyn College student was there at the event and gave his take. He believes the two-state solution can work out.

He believes both Israel and Palestine could have a land of their own under the same government. According to Salimov, “Both sides could still exist among their own people but still practice their own religions and beliefs.”

Instead of progressing, Salimov believes the Middle East is regressing. “The tension has been

growing and the conflict has been building up.”

He believes a reason for this is the information the media and prior generations pass along. “Palestinian leaders use media to show themselves as superior as well as Israel,” he said.

Addie Abihzer who is President of United 4 Israel wants to see peace in the

future. She believes “You’re hurting people that want to live the way you want to.”

She still thinks the two-state solution would be a start. “A two state solution is necessary because two independent states serve the best interest for both nations.” She wants them to unite and live in harmony, still she realizes, “The idea of two possible states can exist ‘united’ is foolish.”

“The optimist approach to the whole situation is that we can’t get peace we can hope for at least a civil coexistence,” she said. “It could be far down this like with the constant killings. It’s still something that would have to come from both sides of the conflict.”

“The Palestinian government needs to see and understand that it is in their own interest to keep trade alive with Israel,” Abihzer said, “and Israel needs to see that in order to maintain stability in the region they need to be more patient toward their neighbors.”

# BC in the Know 2 Silences Political Post After Sexism Was Called Out

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

BC in the Know 2 is a private Facebook group where Brooklyn College students and faculty go to express their concerns about campus, job/internship opportunities, and news related to the college. Last week, the NY Post published a story about Bernie Sanders, a candidate running for president in 2020. The story said Sanders might be coming to Brooklyn College to start his campaign.

Like what any campus reporter would do, I posted it on the page. To note, posts have to be approved. Three hours later, I check the page and another student’s Sanders’ post was approved. And then, so was mine. This is fine because often, there are multiple posts of the same topic.

Anyway, students commented on that post. But after a while, when sexism was pointed out, comments were turned off, only turned back on a few hours later after moderators were asked why.

One student said, “Don’t you dare steal from my

friend, you twerp.” Brooklyn College chapter president of Young Progressives of America Corrinne Greene, replied and said, “Spread the Bernie love.”

A while later, the student responded, “I wasn’t talking to you, darling. I’m talking about he stole my friends post especially when it’s already shared.”

Greene called him out on his condescending comment, saying, “Darling? Sexism is alive and well.”

To note, “darling” is a condescending remark when it is used in that context. It is patronizing and it is arrogant. When it is used by random men, it is used to make woman feel “less than” them.

The student asks her if “ma’am is OK,” and then asks Greene to point out where he was sexist. I then called him out, to which another student replied with a comment that was even more condescending than the first.

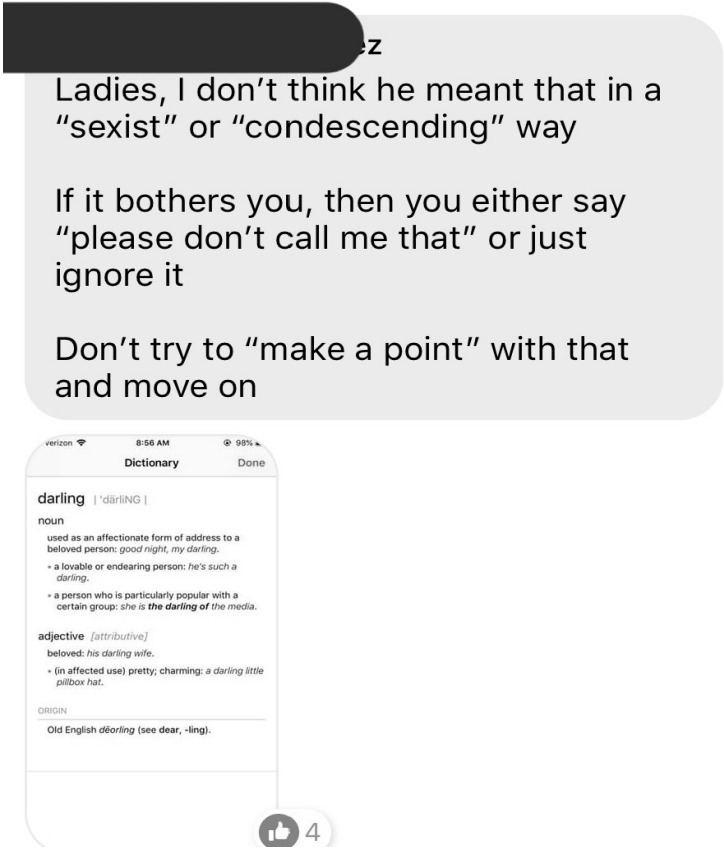
“Ladies, I don’t think he meant that in a ‘sexist’ or ‘condescending’ way. If it

bothers you, then you either say ‘please don’t call me that’ or just ignore it. Don’t try to ‘make a point’ with that and move on,” he said. But there was more. The student included a screenshot of the definition of the word “darling.” Four people, including one of BC in the Know 2’s moderators Danielle Kogan, liked his condescending comment.

“I disagree that [his] comment defended sexism,” she told the Excelsior. “He articulated his opinion well, and answered the thread in a way that seemed open to discussion. I appreciate that energy because it goes a long way, so I liked it.”

“We have to have patience with each other if we want to learn to speak more consciously, and at least [he] actively tried to start a discussion,” she said. When asked if she thinks she defended sexism by liking a sexist comment, she said, “I do not believe I defended sexism.”

Kogan, a reporter for the campus radio WBCR that



Screenshot taken from BC in the Know 2. PHOTO/ **Facebook**

also does newsletters and online news stories, is a moderator on a page where other reporters from other campus outlets go to get their stories out. She essentially has the power to approve posts and to disable comments.

To note, there are also members of the CLAS stu-

dent government that are moderators, such as David Schykerynec, and some from Greek clubs on campus. All of them have the

**SEE “BC IN THE KNOW 2 SILENCES POLITICAL POST AFTER SEXISM WAS CALLED OUT,” 4**



**CONT'D FROM "BC IN THE  
KNOW 2 SILENCES  
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power to censor and approve posts they so choose.

When I asked Kogan if she thinks that is fair, she asked me if I asked members of CLAS or Greek organizations moderating the page if they also thought it was fair. I did.

"For a Facebook page, I feel it is as fair as it can possibly be at this moment," she said. "There's obviously no hard government system the way there is with clubs on campus. The people currently managing the page without a doubt work actively to establish an open space

for students to speak freely."

But if that were the case, why were comments disabled after sexism was called out? Why weren't there any implications for the students that were sexist and defended sexism?

"I wouldn't say nothing happened. It's likely a message has been sent if he hasn't been removed," she said. It is to note, that neither occurred right away.

When Kogan was asked why she turned off the comments for the Sanders' post, she said, "... the [moderators] were overwhelmed monitoring the same discussion in multiple threads. Shutting comments off was supposed to allow the discussion to con-

tinue in the earlier thread."

Schykerynec agreed. He said it wasn't about silencing the students. "Mods were moderating essentially the same discussion in separate threads. It was too much so someone tried to limit the conversation to a single thread."

He noted that it "probably wasn't the best idea and it was discussed after the fact."

When asked what he would do if he saw a sexist comment, he said, "it depends on the context of the comment."

"Microaggressions vs beligerent vs outright incitement of violence. It's not black and white so there's not gonna be a single answer of what I would always

do in that situation," he said.

"I'm not personally gonna kick someone out for, say example, an insensitive joke they shouldn't have made," he added when I asked him what he would do if someone made a racist, anti-Semitic or Islamophobic comment. "That's different from saying x people are good/bad at y or x people love/hate y. And that's different from saying we should do x to y people."

According to Noam Swisa, an administrator of the Facebook group, sexist comments are not tolerated.

"We obviously don't support sexist comments but as of right now, we acknowledge that we have not yet thought of a way to ensure people who make said com-

ments don't continue to do so," Swisa said. "A lot of things are done on a case by case basis - our only 'rule' as of right now is that users will be banned for inciting violence, but we have absolutely in the past banned people for trolling or making racist or sexist comments."

"We do rely very heavily on members tagging us or reporting the comment though in order to enforce that. We are working on a more comprehensive set of rules which will include definitions for what is and isn't a ban-able offense, what warrants a warning, etc."

## Black Panther Party Resurrection

BY MARCUS AYALA

Former Black Panther Party members held a "Black Panther Party Resurrection" panel along with experts at Brooklyn College Student Center detailing the history and exploits of the former political party in light of contemporary systemic predicaments African-Americans face.

Taking place on Thursday, February 21st, the same day that Malcolm X passed away, organizers of the panel from the Black History Committee and Woman of Color at Brooklyn College iterated the decision to hold such a panel on that day is a deliberate one.

The event, which saw former members of the Black Panther Party and aforementioned experts speak of their personal experiences relating to the BPP as well as contributing factors that they believed led to the downfall of the party.

This included the then-head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover's alleging of the party to be 'the greatest threat to national security' at the time and subsequent attempts to undermine them.

Shepard P. McDaniel was a member of the Black Panthers at age 19 in 1973. The average age of a new member was 17. He believes the Black Panthers started getting targeted in 1968. After Martin Luther King died the group started growing and the arrests began.

"There's still real Panthers in prison," McDaniel asserts referring to all the leaders the FBI arrested over the years



The "Black Panther Party Resurrection" panel detailed the history and exploits of the former political party. PHOTO/ Marcus Ayala

that are still behind bars.

"They took our leaders away from us," McDaniel continued aggravated, before proclaiming that despite the parties ceased existence, he still defiantly considers himself to be a Panther.

Like him, other members said that they wanted to help mold the next generation yet wants them to be something different. "That was then, this is now," McDaniel states emphasizing that organization is key to achieving greater goals, adding "[there's] nothing you can't do if you organize and do it."

Tarik J. Haskins was also a member of the Black Panthers and an alumnus of Medgar Evers College of CUNY. He's been in the struggle for over 50 years expressing that he was a member of

the Black Liberation Army.

He expressed that the African-American community needs to learn how to free themselves. Some people in the community pass down negative qualities from past experiences to the next generation.

Like McDaniels, Haskins believes the key is the next generation, and their role should be to teach the next generation to develop self-confidence to believe in themselves and fight together.

A special guest of the event was Cory Provost. Provost is the District Leader of the 58th Assembly District, which includes Flatbush. Provost has held the title since 2012 and is a Brooklyn College graduate.

Provost characterized the meeting as being over-

all informative. Stating an important point he observed, "most people don't get involved until they have a problem." In his view, the event underscored a vital goal he himself looks to share on "how to be impactful in your community."

In attendance were Charlexia Rey, a BC student, and Business Administration and Management major who voiced her opinion on the event saying that "it's empowering to be among people who've done so much."

Relishing in what often felt relatable and poignant messages from the panel, Rey in her own view states "the knowledge they were passing down was inspiring."

With the impressive turnout from start to finish, it's easy to say the panel-

ists were getting their point across to the rest of the next generation as well as Rey.

Sharon Davis is the Vice President of Woman of Color and the NAACP clubs and one of the organizers of the event. Even being part of many groups, this event was still influential to her. According to her she gained even more knowledge she could use for future experiences, Davis notes that she wanted to still "continue the fight in our communities."

The former members likened themselves to having 'paved the way' and now believe it's up to the next generation to fight for what they believe in.



The opinions expressed in the Opinions Section do not necessarily reflect the views of The Excelsior.

# My Issue With College Grading Systems

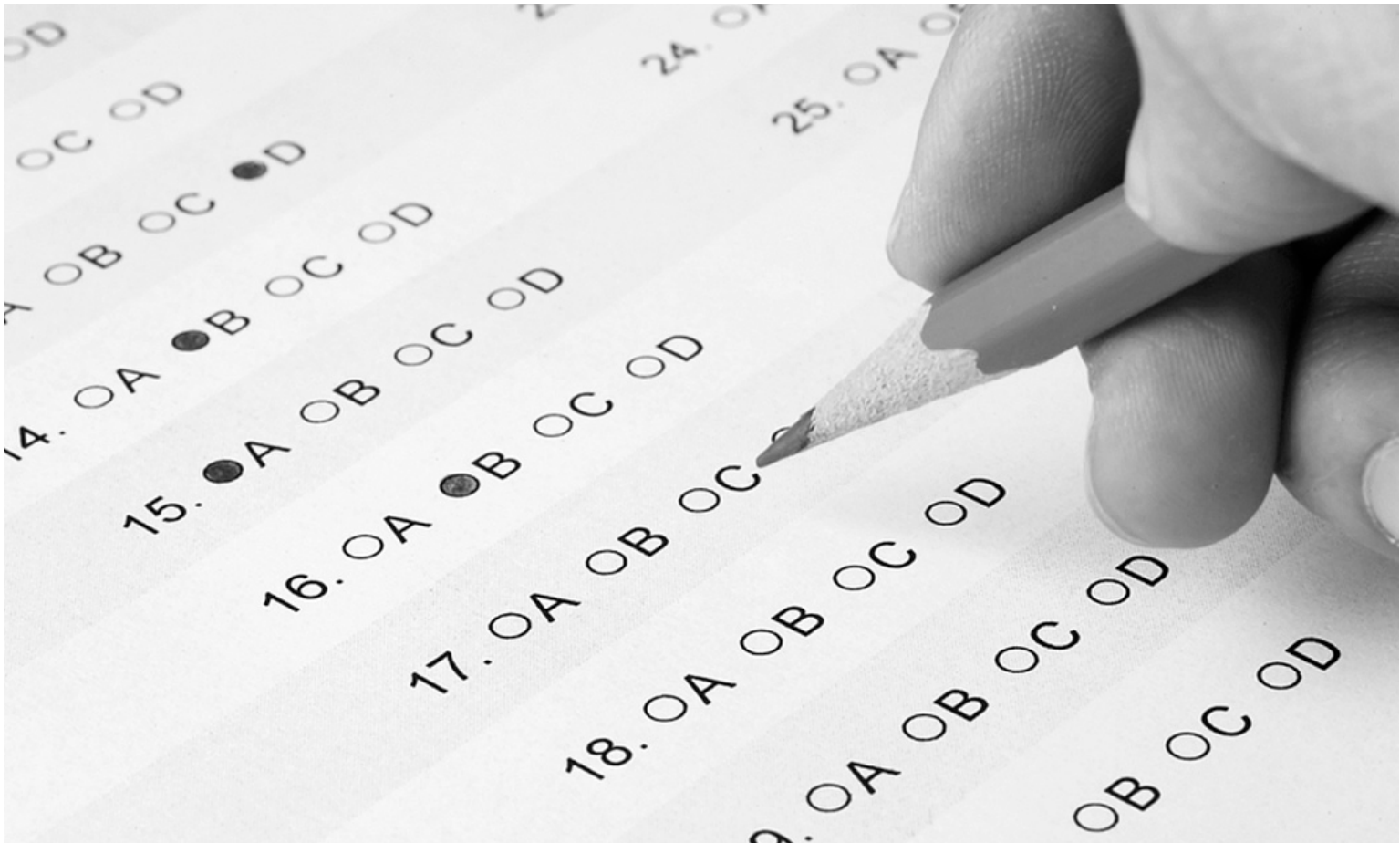
BY EDMUND ZHEN

“I welcome to the world, the graduating class of 2015.”

Like an explosion, an eruption of cheers and laughter shook the auditorium walls. The room started to rain black square caps as endless waves of percussive claps drowned out the sounds of ecstatic students. “I did it,” I thought to myself. “I finally graduated.”

To this day, my mind is emblazoned with the same euphoric feeling when I reminisce about that moment. I remember the specific feeling that vitalized me for what was to come. Prior to my last year in high school, my older friends had described college as one of the best things to ever happen to them. From experiencing giddy exuberant parties to receiving a well-rounded education, their description was surreal. Being the young naive teenager I was, I soaked in every word and expected my college years to be a new epoch in my life that would closely resemble theirs. Fast forward to today, I look back at the years I’ve completed and can only laugh at the stark differences in my initial expectations and my reality.

Discontent wouldn’t be the most fitting word to describe my experiences, but there were a few things



Students can get a more well-rounded education if they didn’t have to constantly worry about their GPA. PHOTO/ Flickr Creative Commons

I wish I’d done differently. I wish I were a little more daring. I wish I didn’t cocoon myself with people within my own race for the sake of comfort and safety. I wish I didn’t feel so obligated to make tactical decisions to stay in my academic lane and not explore other classes.

I am not saying Brooklyn College doesn’t advocate intellectual expansion, but I find it extremely difficult to pursue a well-rounded education when I have to constantly worry about my GPA

after getting one bad grade. For example, if I took an acting class only to discover that I hate it, I would still have to force myself to perform well in order to save my GPA. But how come? Why must I force myself to comprehend something so uninteresting that my quality of work comes out mediocre? Why can’t I have an option where the grading system for the first two years is based on either a pass or fail structure that doesn’t affect our GPA? Wouldn’t that encour-

age more students to step out of their comfort zone?

In fact, I believe it would give students some breathing room and improve their comprehension skills if they knew that the consequences of getting a mediocre grade won’t cripple them. In today’s world, knowing multiple skills is a must. Having students exposed to different fields not only introduces them to new worlds and ideas, but I also believe it would allow departments to receive more funding as

more students would be majoring/minoring in them.

But even so, I am aware that this idea has its flaws. The slippery interstices regarding the mechanics of the grading system as well as the eternal political question surrounding how to fund this both pose problems.

Though I am not confident enough to state good solutions where funding can be acquired, I believe that if people truly think in terms of benefits for students, breakthroughs will happen.



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# Machine Learning

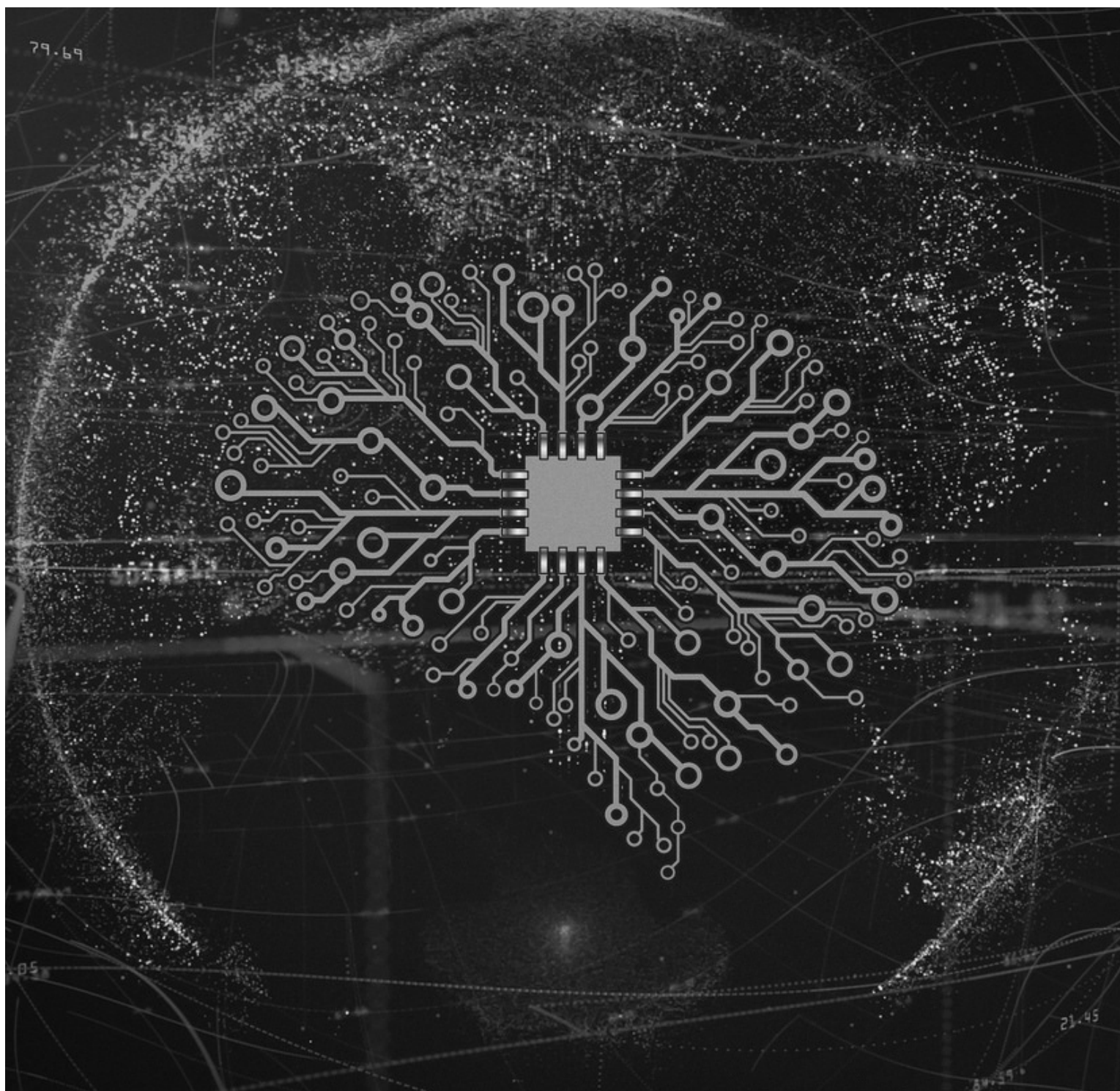
BY MICHAEL CASTANEDA

A lot has been written about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the effects it could have on our future. Recently, the topic has received more coverage thanks to a three-day symposium at MIT last month. Discussions and recommendations on how AI can be regulated through new laws were some of the central points made during the conference. Unfortunately, there were only a few acknowledgments on how AI works and the effects it already has on our lives. Because of that, I want to concentrate on the exciting aspects of theoretical AI, which alternatively, is known as Machine Learning (ML).

Machine Learning is the process in which software's become self-autonomous through applications of algorithms and statistics, allowing them to recognize patterns and make inferences.

Data is what software's rely on to grow. The more data software's ingest, the more accurate its results would be. Currently, we have so much data in the world that machines today are still too far behind to ingest it all. For example, someone can write a machine learning process and put it out into the internet and it will set itself to learn. In fact, this has been done many times. If someone wants to learn about speech, they can set an ML process to listen to talk radio. (Note: by this stage, problems can arise because there is so much hate on the internet and talk radio that ML processes have learned racial bias. Also, remember that some of these processes will be used to determining bank loans and who might get arrested. But we will return to that.)

The levels of sophistication of the training determine how the ML will learn, and there are many different approaches to it. Some have another process that acts as a reinforcement agent in the learning process, whilst some are more of a Black box effort. The general theme is to take varying levels of approximation and hone it down to something more concrete. That is called Deep Learning, where it correlates to another theme called Neural Networks. The goal of Neural Networks is



There are many exciting aspects of machine learning. PHOTO/ Flickr Creative Commons

that it tries to map computer processes as similar as possible to what our brains have.

But does it really achieve that? No, and it doesn't matter. Computers don't do math the way we do. They can't handle the symbol manipulations of Calculus, for example. But with numerical methods, computers do math better than most people except for maybe mathematical prodigies like Dr. Arthur Benjamin. Given this, computers have become really good at recognizing shapes, which makes self-driving cars more of a reality. However, the context of it still poses a challenge, which is key.

Without context, machine learning can be a little scary. If machine learning systems can execute actions without remorse or favors the norm without context, then not only are there possibilities of danger, but also a very boring digital existence.

There have been machine learning algorithms that identify people with darker skin as a threat. This is great if you are a white crim-

inal, but not so good if you are Black, Indian, or a dark-skinned Hispanic or Asian.

Also, it would be boring because say I go down a rabbit hole of retro Jim Carrey movies on Netflix, Deep learning would type me and never let me learn the genius of Taylor Perry. I'll just be watching dumb 90's comedies for the rest of my life. I admit I am exaggerating here, but you get the point.

Who Is Using It?

The two big players are, of course, the United States and China. China uses machine learning to keep track of every citizen of China and possibly everyone they can in the world. They keep track of everything you do and give you a score based on how well you are behaving as per the Communist Party's rules. If you are not behaving as they think you should, well, we don't hear too much from those people.

In the US, every person is being digitally strip-mined and US Companies are making billions off of it. Silicon Valley has con-

verted our lives into data in its database. Every piece of information about us from our conversations, shopping histories, our browser histories and if you let them, your DNA is being run through massive machine learning algorithms for purposes that are unknown to us.

Technology is neither good nor bad a lot of the time, but how and what it's being used for is what makes the difference. There are many useful ways ML has made our Google searches better, and there are many instances where I would like to see improvement. For one, when I type "New" on my iPhone, why won't it ever suggest "York"?

Machine learning processes can also be applied to many other fields. When it processes every type of cancer known, it can shed light on a disease that might have slipped through the cracks.

Levels of gun violence can also be lowered because it turns out that people who commit these massacres have similar credit card behaviors;

such as stockpiling guns and ammo over a short period of time by opening lots of new credit cards to achieve that. Credit companies are aware of that behavior but don't report it, because they are not required to.

Therefore, sensible laws are needed.

It is easy to anticipate counterarguments - if companies and governments are to be limited in their use of machine learning, then our streets will not be safe, companies earning will be stymied, and human progress will be limited. Thus, it is a good time to get ahead of these curves before Fox News starts a 24/7 propaganda campaign against machine learning regulations.

The first thing to ask for is a cogent disclose on how your information is being used and who owns the data on your habits. Whatever rewards points you get at Duane Reade is certainly not enough to let any business entity the rights to gain power over you, your family, or your future family.



# “Happy Death Day 2U” Review

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

The sequel to the spunky horror movie *Happy Death Day* premiered on Thursday. Amply titled *Happy Death Day 2U*, the movie takes off right where the first one ended. Audience members find out what is causing the “loop” and get to explore an alternate universe. Although it is obvious that the writers wanted to follow the same steps as the first movie, with twists and all, it comes out pretty repetitive—making the movie feel longer than it actually is. On top of that, like with the first movie, the writers moralize the story—however with this one I found their moral logic to be questionable. This made it harder for me to root for the main character as I could see that she was going to follow a path that I highly disagreed with. Overall, however, the writers did a decent job of matching the dark humor, intensity, and plot twists of the last film—making for a decent film as far as horror movies go.

**\*Spoilers Ahead\*** One of the most notable differences between the first movie and the sequel is the genre



“Happy Death Day 2U” comes out pretty repetitive, making the movie feel longer than it actually is. PHOTO/ Universal Pictures

switch. The first movie did not stray too far from a comedy/horror. *Happy Death Day 2U*, however, goes into the science fiction genre. Its revealed that what is causing the time loop is not some spiritual cosmic force, but Carter’s roommate Ryan’s science project. I am unsure if I like this revelation, but Tree, almost as

though she is unintendedly speaking for the audience voices her disappointment.

This new development complicates the plot, which is a big jump from the first movie where the plot and structure were pretty straight forward. The focus of the movie, which starts off on Ryan, shifts to Tree. And again, she has to relive

her birthday over and over again. Perhaps the writers thought that audience members would be amused or nostalgic for this, but it comes off as incredibly lazy and boring—the writers did not realize that no one is nostalgic for a movie that came out two years ago.

Tree, as a result of Ryan’s science experiment gets

blasted into another alternate dimension, in line with the multiverse theory. In this alternate universe, her roommate is not trying to kill her, Carter is dating Danielle, and, Tree’s mom is still alive. Tree at first, wants to stay in this new universe as her mom is still alive. But she soon gets jealous of Danielle because she is with Carter, who she is in love with, and wants to go back to her old dimension. To me this is completely absurd. It is completely unfathomable to me to kill off my mom just so that I can be with my college boyfriend. I understand that the writers wanted some sort of epic love story, but how can you possibly give up many more years with your mom just to spend likely 1.5 years with a boyfriend?

Besides these points the movie was entertaining, I just wish that the writers realized some of their mistakes before rehearsing, shooting, editing, and releasing the film. With that being said there is word that *A Happy Death Day 3* will be coming out sometime in the future.

# “Velvet Buzzsaw” Review

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

The much-anticipated Netflix Original Movie “Velvet Buzzsaw” is a sharp satire of the bourgeoisie art world, but it is barely a comedy. The thriller horror is centered around the lives of a famous art critics Morf (Jake Gyllenhaal), Art collector Rhodora (Rene Russo), and her assistant Josephina (Zawe Ashton).

Josephina stumbles upon a dead unknown artist’s apartment to find captivating paintings. While the art world is amazed by this discovery, they soon discover the art has a sinister mind of its own. There is no shortage of violence in this movie as many characters meet a bloody end. However, that is not my problem with the film. “Velvet Buzzsaw” brings up many different critiques of the pretentious art world, but fails to resolve the critiques with nuanced themes. Clearly, this film believes it is deeper in meaning than it actually is.

The acting in this film



“Velvet Buzzsaw” is not Dan Gilroy’s directorial debut, but it leaves much to be desired. PHOTO/ Netflix

ranges from brilliantly absurd, like Jake Gyllenhaal in most of his films, to awkward and almost cringe worthy. The most memorable performances were done by Zawe Ashton as Josephina and Jake Gyllenhaal as Morf. Both of these characters were in an intense and strange romantic relationship, Jake Gyllenhaal did an

excellent job of portraying a man, who identified as gay, falling in love with a woman. This strange occurrence provoked intense confusion in Morf and his conflation was portrayed with nuance. Josephina, on the other hand, goes from being an insecure assistant who is in love to being an aloof top player in the art world. Zawe Ashton

plays this part pretty well, albeit with some awkwardness.

Between the first and second half of the film there is a major shift. The first part of the film, or the better part, focuses in on characterization and digs deep into major themes like the worth of art and the problems with the art world. The second part should have developed

these issues more or resolved them all together. Instead audiences got gruesome, and sometimes comical killings of the characters one by one. While this was somewhat entertaining, it would have been much better if this movie focused less on the generic horror aspects, and stuck to its unique beginning with some horror elements worked in. With the way it is, the film feels completely hollow and themes that it established feels silly by the end.

This is not Dan Gilroy’s directorial debut, which is surprising considering how much better his other films are. Audiences may recognize similar elements in “Velvet Buzzsaw” to Gilroy’s other thriller: *Nightcrawler*, which also stars Jake Gyllenhaal. Gilroy’s style is ambitious and it is clear that he has a lot to say, however he needs to work on his storytelling techniques in order to find a balance between the themes he brings and the thriller aspects of the film.



# Paul George’s Case for MVP

BY NICHOLAS WILLIAMS

With the NBA season winding down and MVP talks rising up, Oklahoma City Thunder forward Paul George is turning heads with his extraordinary performance this season and is making a case for league MVP.

Before the season started, George was considered to be a top two-way player in the league, a player who can give you good offense and top-notch defense. Despite his abilities, George didn’t seem like a player who can lead a team to a championship, but rather a player who can be a complementary piece to another superstar level player.

George is having the best season of his career, elevating his game to new heights. He is averaging career highs in points, steals, and rebounds. He doesn’t just have a case for MVP, he also is a front runner for Defensive Player of the Year. He has shut down the notion of not being an MVP caliber player as he is looking like a top five player in the league and with that also the Oklahoma City Thunder is looking like



Paul George is turning heads with his extraordinary performance this season and is making a case for league MVP. PHOTO/ **Getty Images**

a championship contender.

George has put the league on notice, leading the Thunder to a third seed in the competitive Western Conference. He is averaging 28.7 points, eight rebounds and 4.1 assists per game while shooting 45 percent from the field, 40 percent from three-point territory and 83 percent from the free throw line.

He is having one of the more efficient seasons of his career and he is getting to the free throw line at a higher rate with around six per game.

He is currently second behind Houston Rockets guard James Harden in points scored per game. This is a career high for George as before his highest scoring average was 23.7 points

in the 2016-2017 season with the Indiana Pacers.

Without a doubt, MVP caliber players must be able to lead their team on both offense and defense as well as help close out games, George is doing this and an elite level and the Thunder are benefiting from his efforts.

George has tough competition with James Harden and

Giannis Antetokounmpo in the MVP race, but George is playing at an elite level and doing more for his team on both ends of the floor in a tough conference. George is definitely placing himself as a favorite to take the MVP trophy home in June.

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