

SPELMAN SPOTLIGHT

spelmanspotlight@gmail.com April 2009 Voice of African-American Womanhood

EXTRA! EXTRA!

The Spelman Spotlight Returns to Campus!

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Feza Kikaya
Managing Editor

Greetings my beloved Spelman community! The *Spelman Spotlight* has once again been resurrected from the dark pits of structural despair and is back in business! While some of you may be relieved to hear this, others of you may be surprised that Spelman College actually has its own newspaper. Whatever your reaction, we assure you that the *Spelman Spotlight* is here to stay. The *Spelman Spotlight* has served as a voice for the Spelman community for decades, and we intend to keep the *Spelman Spotlight* around for generations to come.

Contrary to rumors, the *Spelman Spotlight* has in fact been active over recent semesters. Since its shift in management three years ago, the newspaper has undergone inconsistent leadership, which ultimately resulted in the loss of foundational aspects essential to the progress of the newspaper. While we were successful in producing an

issue last spring, we found it necessary to cease production and solve structural issues before proceeding with the construction of the *Spelman Spotlight*.

Nevertheless, we are happy to announce that after meeting with Spelman faculty and staff, the *Spelman Spotlight* is back in action. Furthermore, the *Spelman Spotlight* staff is eager to ensure that the voice of the Spelman student is heard. With all of our technical issues behind us, we are happy to bring forth this April issue to the Spelman community.

While we have received numerous applications and expressions of interest from Spelman and Morehouse students alike in joining the newspaper, we want to inform you that all positions have not been filled. Thus, if you have always been interested in joining the newspaper staff, or if you simply have an interest, we encourage you to apply. We do not require our applicants to have any prior journalism experience, as we are willing to train our fellow

Spelman sisters that have the desire to continue the *Spelman Spotlight's* legacy. We have committed individuals, such as *Spelman Spotlight* alumnae, that are eager to assist students in establishing the skills necessary for them to be effective members of the staff.

Our vision is that the *Spelman Spotlight* will once again serve as the tool in which students may express their thoughts and concerns regarding whatever matters are pertinent to them and the broader AUC community. We welcome artists, writers, copy editors, photographers, and layout specialists, as well as those interested in the business side of producing a publication, such as publicity, distribution, and advertisements.

While we are delighted that the *Spelman Spotlight* is up and running, we cannot stress enough that without a committed staff, the newspaper will inevitably fall apart. During our hiatus, there were many that questioned the whereabouts of the newspaper, and some even attributed the

Spelman Spotlight's absence to be the fault of the editors. However, during our time of difficulty, few inquired as to what she could do to assist. If you would like the *Spelman Spotlight* to serve as a means of communication and expression on the Spelman College campus, then it is imperative that you involve yourself. It is because of the passion and dedication of certain individuals that we are able to put forth this issue.

To those of you that are weary about how much autonomy you will have to truly express your content or discontent with Spelman, we assure you that the *Spelman Spotlight* will not and is not required to censor its submissions. After all, we are a newspaper, and freedom of expression is our constitutional right.

Students who would like to join the *Spelman Spotlight* should express their interest by contacting the staff at spelmanspotlight@gmail.com. Additional contributions made by Editor-in-Chief Demetria Patton.

SSGA Hosts 'A Dream (Not) Deferred' Campaign

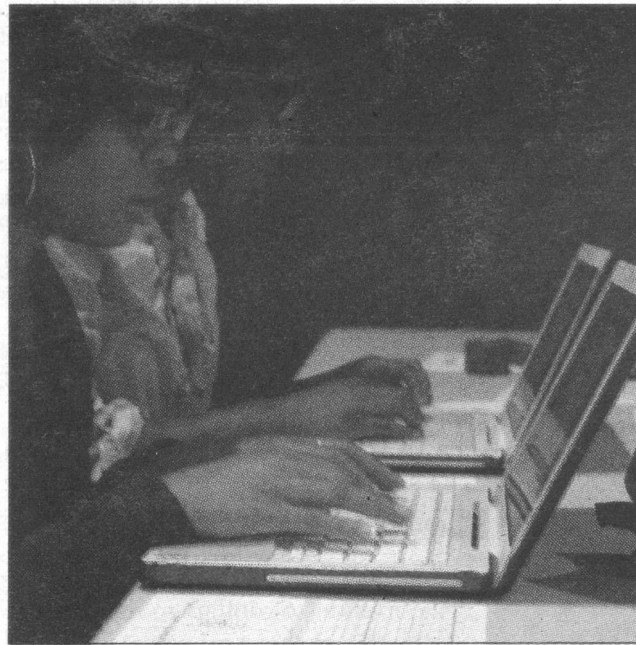
Spelman Sister,

In early February, Dr. Tatum delivered a presentation regarding the financial future of Spelman College. During the presentation, it became clear that the economy would have a severe and extended impact on our institution. In light of a projected \$4.8 million shortfall, we were informed that some programs and activities will be discontinued. However, Dr. Tatum stressed that any resulting cuts would not reduce the quality or integrity of our beloved college. For the 2009-2010 academic year, we will no longer have the OSETC office, the freshman success program, the children's dance program, the continuing education office, the Education Department, and supplementary funding for the Marian Wright Edelman Center.

Your Spelman Student Government Association (SSGA) is very committed to serving you and will continue its track record of providing financial assistance. Last semester we collaborated with Aramark to offer 16 full semester Meal Plan scholarships. We have also given away eight True

Blue Book Awards. As a result of our collaboration with Aramark and our increase in the number of True Blue scholarship recipients, we are pleased to announce that we will be giving away a total of 24 scholarships- totaling more than \$25,000. In addition, we recently launched "My Sisters' Closet," which provides free business attire to eligible Spelman students.

In addition, SSGA has decided to take a large percentage of its budget and place it into an emergency fund entitled, "A Dream Not Deferred." The concept for this fund is similar to Dr. Tatum's Starfish Initiative. However, the monies from this fund will prioritize first years, sophomores and juniors. While we think it is important to ensure that students who make it to senior year receive the financial assistance necessary to graduate, we also think it is important to ensure that the dreams of underclassmen are not deferred. It is our hope that by redirecting the funds of the SSGA back into Spelman College through providing financial assistance to its students, we will combat our economic shortfall and



WHITNEY SKIPPINGS-DUPREE
Spelman students draft letters for the campaign.

keep our sisters in school.

The current economy poses difficulties for all institutions of higher education. For example, Rosemont College, an institution for women, will become co-ed next year as a direct result of the economy. Dr. Tatum has

ensured us that Spelman's future as an institution for women is secure. She is working to raise more money for her Starfish Initiative, which reduces the college's debt. But, our work does not stop there.

On March 25, SSGA hosted "A Dream Not Deferred" letter-writing campaign, which allowed the students of Spelman to tell their stories and to send those stories to potential donors. It is our hope that we will be able to reach the hearts of alumnae and others and inspire them to donate to Spelman College. By working together, the

Spelman community will emerge from this difficult period stronger than ever.

Yours in Service,
Miriam Archibong,
President, SSGA

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Spelman Spotlight

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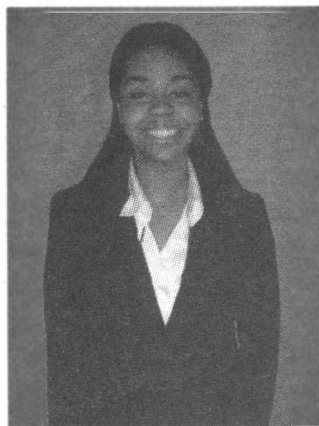
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Letter from the Editor

Dear Spelman Community,



It is with great pleasure that I write this letter. The *Spelman Spotlight* is back and better than ever! Although it has been a challenge working to ensure that Spelman College has a newspaper that accurately reflects the voice of the Spelman student, it has also been rewarding.

The absence of the *Spelman Spotlight* during these past semesters has made one thing evident: Spelman students need a newspaper that informs, educates, and expresses the thoughts of the Spelman woman. Therefore, I am overjoyed to present the April 2009 issue of the *Spelman Spotlight* to all of you.

You are reading this letter and issue because a small group of people worked diligently and believed that the *Spelman Spotlight* could return and be the voice of African American womanhood.

The *Spelman Spotlight* has chronicled campus life at Spelman since 1957 and it is my hope that in the years to come, the *Spelman Spotlight* will still possess that honor. However, the preceding is only possible with assistance, feedback, and participation from the Spelman student body. Therefore, if you want to have a frequent publication on Spelman's campus, I charge you to play an active role in the *Spelman Spotlight* so your voice and the voices of your Spelman sisters are heard.

Sincerely,

Demetria Patton
Editor-In-Chief 2008-2009

Israel-Palestine in a New Administration

Whitney Skippings-Dupree
Layout & Design Editor

According to USA Today, on March 3, 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, "The inevitability of working toward a two-state solution is inescapable." Handled, and even instigated by ineffectual appointees of previous Western administrations, the Israel-Palestine conflict is one that threatens to decimate the current generation and poison the minds of the next. Cross-regional bombing continues to destroy neighborhoods and massacre citizens despite numerous proposed armistice agreements and peace treaties. The land dispute between the Israelis and Palestinians has killed thousands, and the United States has finally begun to take a stance suitable for furtherance of a peaceful agenda.

However, it seems that Clinton has begun her political term on a different note than her predecessors. Immediately taking a trip to the Middle East within the first several weeks of her appointment, it is apparent that she has taken the initiative to make a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict a priority. Furthermore, she has acknowledged that productive discussion includes a dual state resolution. Clinton has also proposed to relegate millions of dollars to repairing the ravaged Gaza Strip in hopes that a rejuvenated Gaza would lend itself to being part of a more peaceful Palestinian territory.

Jewish leaders protest against what they have construed as a personal affront. There have been cries that Clinton no longer resembles the image she projected while serving as a senator and throughout her campaign for the 2008 presidential election. These leaders also maintain that she no longer supports Israeli rights as she did in the past. This is misleading, as Clinton's stance is still very much pro-Israel, coinciding with the

views of President Barack Obama. What has angered these leaders is that she seems to be just the slightest bit pro-Palestine as well.

The two ideologies don't clash nearly as much as her opponents might want the public to believe—it simply means she is pro-Resolution. Such a strong pro-Israel bias that has been held by the United States previously is not conducive to finding the preferable solution that will satisfy both nations.

Opposing Jewish and Israeli viewpoints also stem from another, lesser-discussed notion—that Israel simply is not used to having less than complete, categorical backing of Western leaders. So used to being supported, and rightfully so, Israel is no longer the innocent nation portrayed by its supporters. Thus, Clinton has offended her opponents by pointing out that Israel has had quite a significant hand in the violence as well, and called the wide destruction "unhelpful."

Clinton has made a point to show support for Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas, saying in a recent news conference that the PA is the "only legitimate government of the Palestinian people." According to Time, a spokesperson for the opposing Hamas countered her statements, saying that they were "a slap in the face of those who were expecting changes in American foreign policy...her statements show bias to the Zionist enemy." Apparently, constituents on both sides believe Clinton is biased toward the opposition.

Hopefully, Clinton has started a new trend in foreign policy dealing with the Middle East. Recognizing that the PA and the general Arab world will not rest without the establishment of a properly recognized Palestinian state is a single step in the long trek toward regional peace. While the issue does go beyond land disputes, it is without question that a solidification of territorial boundaries would allow the Palestinians and Israelis to move closer to harmonious cohabitation and simultaneously diffuse the larger Israeli-Arab conflicts.

Op-Ed

Education vs. Black America

Ashley Brooke Brown
Staff Writer

"Racism still alive, they just be concealing it..." says Kanye West on his freshman album *College Dropout*. As a rap artist known for being outspoken, especially on racial injustice (who could forget the infamous "George Bush doesn't care about black people..."), West could not have been more correct in the idea that America conceals racism. America's educational system is one of many examples of this hidden and institutionalized racial prejudice. There is an ever-increasing educational disparity between the schooling systems of urban communities, usually consisting of black and other minority students, and suburban communities made up of mostly white students. This systemic racism becomes apparent after an examination of testing used to determine students' intelligence, schooling methods used in America, and quality of education received at urban schools compared to suburban schools.

The Criterion-Referenced Competency Test, or CRCT, is a Georgia "achievement test" for students in the first through eighth grades. The CRCT determines whether students proceed to the next grade level. According to the Georgia Department of Education (GDE) the test is meant to ensure students are learning at their grade level, and to provide data to teachers, schools, and school districts in order to make better instructional decisions.

The GDE provides sample tests for students and their parents online. Considering that most black students have working parents or are more likely to live in single-parent homes, it is safe to assume that they are not surfing the web for CRCT sample exams. Furthermore, many urban schools and students who attend urban schools do not have, even in 2009, consistent access to computers and internet. These hindrances become racially disadvantageous for black students while their white counterparts continuously surpass them in test scores.

Dr. Joycelyn A. Wilson, professor of Hip-Hop at Morehouse College, believes that the CRCT is "racially biased." Wilson stated, "The test is skewed and written preferential to the [majority] race." She added, "Race and class are linked. Schools with little to no resources are expected to pass the same standardized test as those with better resources. This is

unfair because the CRCT is such a high stakes test." It has also been hypothesized that failing reading scores on the CRCT for third-grade black males is a major determining factor of the estimated prison population by the students' expected high school graduation date. This is not only discriminatory, but it suggests that those supervising America's schools also systematically determine who goes to jail.

The CRCT is a small part of a bigger racist monster and product of George Bush's legislation, which is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The United States Department of Education claims that NCLB gives more freedom to schools and parents, places more accountability on schools for student success, and achieves these goals through "proven methods" of successful schooling. They even go to the extent of breaking down the specific benefits of NCLB to blacks and Hispanics. However, such a system that requires educational assimilation across America is destined for failure because everyone does not learn alike. In addition, this system allows students to pass from grade to grade for the sake of "not leaving a child behind." Unfortunately, these individuals are black or Hispanic students who have not been granted the same opportunity at academic achievement as their white counterparts.

The recent loss of accreditation in Georgia's Clayton County school system, made up of mostly black students, shows the inequality of America's schools and the failure of this legislation and the system. These students will graduate from high school after being subject to a sub par education, proven by the school system's loss of accreditation, and will have to struggle with the possibility of being rejected from colleges because their school does not meet competitive academic standards.

Mr. Michael White, an economics teacher at Mundy's Mill High School in Clayton County, believes that the loss of accreditation was due to "poor leadership and incompetence." White claimed, "The morale of students is low due to the loss of so many good teachers and students." He also stated, "Initially, after the accreditation situation, there were students who did not care about their school work. They are, gradually, getting back to normal."

As a product of a suburban, predominantly white school system and a former volunteer at an Atlanta

public school, I have first-handedly witnessed the difference in school up-keep, availability of technology, and overall student morale and support. The mostly-black student populations in Atlanta public schools do not have nearly as much access to the wide variety of computer, audio, and visual educational technology as other students in many of the more affluent schools. The students in these schools seem to value their education less, as if they do not believe they can succeed, or as if to imply that they are not getting the support they need from their schools and communities.

This disparity in the lack of support is shown in the amount of funding that is received by "white" schools, much of which is raised by the surrounding community versus the scarce amount of funding and effort put into the "black" schools. These injustices become subliminal messages for black students who subconsciously place themselves inferior to Whites because they do not receive equal treatment and are constant targets of negativity and failure. Thus, their education is disguised as a helping hand.

So...what is the solution? This may seem like a contradiction, but the answer is: education. The black community can never progress or achieve without becoming more aware of its surroundings and the opportunities available. Like the old sayings go, "If you can't beat them, join them," and "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Blacks have to, first, realize these injustices and then recognize that we, as a community in search of growth and progress, must not rely on anyone else for our success besides ourselves. There will continue to be underlying discrimination in policies and procedures implemented by America's lawmakers. Realization and self-education are our only weapons against racism.

The Price of [Facebook] "Fame"

Candace Wheeler
Staff Writer

We Can Do Anything With Your Content. Forever. This was the tag line for a post on the blog, "The Consumerist." The post was in response to Facebook changing its terms of service. "The Consumerist" warned Facebook patrons that the new terms would give the site ownership of their content such as pictures, messages, and chats even after a person no longer has an account. Furthermore, the new terms give Facebook the right to distribute user content to other companies in the name of site promotion.

In a post on Facebook's site, founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg took a moment to respond to the growing frenzy caused by the changes. "People want full ownership and control of their information so they can turn off access to it at any time. At the same time, people also want to be able to bring the information others have shared with them—like email addresses, phone numbers, photos and so on—to other services and grant those services access to those people's information. These two positions are at odds with each other," he stated.

The dilemma that Zuckerberg describes is not only relevant to the Facebook realm. One can argue that in society today, people want to be readily visible to the public, but would still like to believe that they have a semblance of control over what messages they send out to the world.

In a digital age which encompasses multimedia messages, texting, online usage on just about any handheld device, and sites dedicated to 'social networking,' we as consumers continue to blindly sign our rights away. As the teens of this generation are reared in an environment where such technological "privileges" are seen as the norm, our culture will take new form and change, and not necessarily for the better. I am reminded of stories told by my grandmother about how young people used to be so much more carefree without the monitoring device known as the cell phone and the high-tech stalker technology known as the internet.

As I reflect on these stories, I feel nostalgic for simpler times I never knew. What would life be like if someone couldn't ask you what you were doing every single second? Or if saying you were out

didn't require a status update on your user profile?

The rise of social networking sites such as Facebook has allowed the everyday college student, the recent grad who wants to reconnect with friends, and the technologically-challenged to become mini celebrities. This is made possible by the content of user profiles on such sites. One is expected to upload an attractive or appealing photo of themselves, include personal information such as hometown and birth date, update user status to let other members know what they are doing and are encouraged to add as many friends as possible, whether or not they actually know them. Not to mention the added site features such as 'mini feed,' which reads like tabloid news and publishes stories like relationship status updates and who is no longer friends with whom. Facebook is turning the average American into the latest Perez Hilton, spreading gossip and internet stalking their colleagues, peers and closest friends.

In an age where we are inundat-

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Opinions

Beating Away Respect

Denia Moreland
Staff Writer

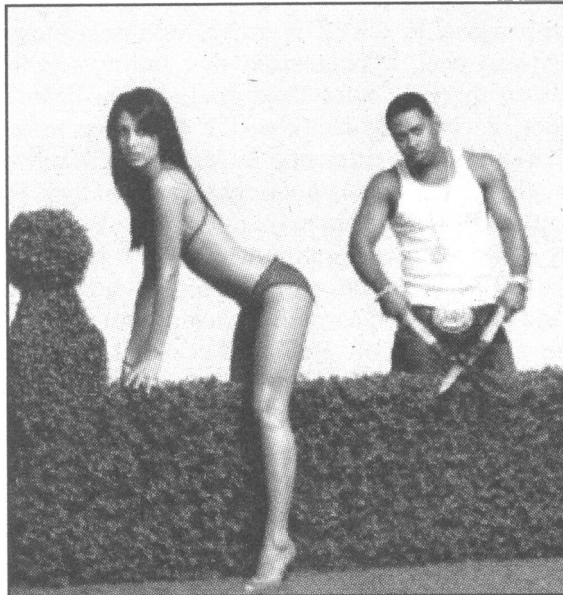
Are you going to let him beat?

It's the springtime, you and your girls are going out tonight wearing your trendy, super-cute outfits that you've been putting together all week. You get into your car and zoom off towards tonight's nightlife destination. While riding in the car, you turn on the radio and are greeted by the sound of Bobby Valentino's voice. You love this song so you turn it up. But, what kind of message are you really listening to? I'm sure we're all familiar with the popular song entitled "Beat Beat" by Bobby Valentino. The first time I listened to this tune, I was tied up in its catchy hooks and Valentino's trained and well-rehearsed vocals. It has a nice combination of beats and vocals, and it's an easy rhythm to sway to when you're out with your girlfriends.

If you're not familiar with this song, let me introduce you to some of its lyrics. Here are a few lines from the edited version of "Beep Beep:"

Shorty been eyein me...
She lookin like she thinking about tryin' me
She want it she can't take no more
I'm about to take her to my spot
I'ma get it hot, she gonna turn around and let me

Beep beep beep beep beep



BLENDER

I believe that we oftentimes don't understand that when we listen to music, it involuntarily becomes a part of who we are and how we think. In a nutshell, this song suggests that it is the norm for a woman to allow a guy she just met to "get a taste of her goodies" later on that night. After I finished my first listen, I heard the song again and actually took the time to judge the song from a lyrical standpoint.

I know you're probably tired of hearing people forever analyze popular lyrics in today's R&B music, but for some reason I couldn't let this particular song go unnoticed.

Is sex a demonstration of intimacy, or merely a glorified weekend hobby? When I consider this, I immediately think about our future generations, and how many unplanned children result from one night stands, end up unwanted and become a financial burden and inconvenience for the parents.

As women, are we merely objects of sexual satisfaction and solely here to grant some guy at a club temporary satisfaction? Ladies, I'm just wondering where the respect has gone. Is this the way nightlife really works? Guy meets girl, the two share an attraction, and then all of a sudden the two are engaging in intercourse and all it took was for him to simply ask for sex? More specifically, a question such as, "Excuse me miss, but sexy can I take you to my crib?" I'm sorry, but that should not suffice. As women, we should know we are sexy, so a random man's confirmation should not inspire willingness to fulfill his desires. If you want to have sexual flings, have

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Eternal Facebook Fame

Continued from Page 3

ed by advertisements and where commercials are more entertaining than actual television programming, the motto has become that you need to sell yourself. Whether that be in order to attain that new job in these tough economic times, to receive that scholarship to pay your way through college, or (as our celebrity culture teaches us) to create a brand that is more valuable than your actual talent, the problem that this highlights is that there are limitations in a world where we want everything and we want it immediately.

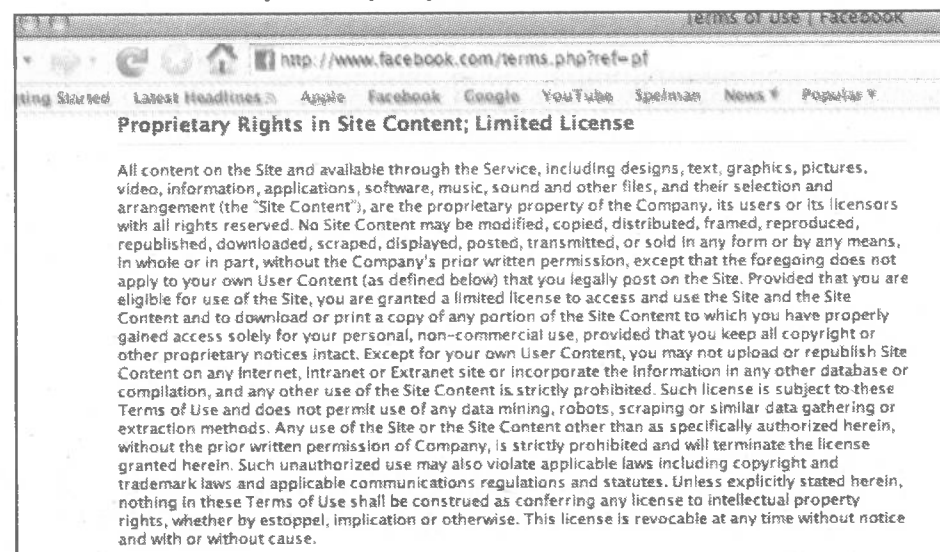
Zuckerberg highlights that we cannot be both producers and consumers and expect to never get shortchanged. That can be seen by the celebrities whose lives we follow daily. Ask Paris

Hilton if she can have her own show about finding a best friend on MTV without someone releasing a private sex tape in which she is featured. If anyone could speak to Rihanna at this moment, they would know that you can't be the latest fashion icon and pop princess and not have your domestic violence situation spread all over the news. Just as these young starlets have had to learn that fame comes at a price, so do we.

But how great a price is one willing to pay? I believe that answer can be found in the response of the users of Facebook since the debate over terms began; there aren't any known threats of members' discontinued use of the site and aside from a few articles on the net, this issue has been handled rather quietly. Simply translated, we

want to be seen and we will worry about the consequences of those decisions later. Oh and by the way, if you

have any comments of your own you would like to share, well you can just Facebook me.



FEZA KIKAYA

The Facebook Terms of Service as defined on facebook.com.

"O God Forever Bind, Our Pockets To Thine?"

Sydney E. Robinson
Staff Writer

"I don't think I can do this anymore." The expression on my Spelman sister's face says it all. "The books, tuition, and room and board—my parents can't manage to pay for this." I watch her sit in a chair in Upper Manley with a look of uncertainty on her face.

At this very moment, nothing really seems to matter. Our study group homework is pushed on the backburner as my friends and I try to comfort her. "I just want to go to Spelman, without all these financial issues. My parents can't afford this," she says. We all try to relate in some way as best we can, but we don't succeed because while some of us have full scholarships, others of us have loans that are keeping our minds at ease.

The dilemma is recurring, but what is the cause of many girls packing up their Spelman dreams and moving them to the public college or university of their convenience? The worsening economy is the recent recipient of blame.

In a recent Spelman Town Hall meeting, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum introduced the Starfish Initiative. The initiative was created in order to help women of Spelman struggling with financial hardships through fundraising.

The name of the initiative came from a story about a young girl walking by the sea that finds many

starfish dying because of their distance and lack of water from the ocean. She doesn't want them to die so she begins throwing the starfish back into the ocean one by one. As she continues to save their lives, a man walks by and tells her to give up on throwing them back in the ocean because there are too many to save. She replies by saying, "If I can only save one, at least I will have done something."

The efforts of this initiative were applauded, but the process by which students acquired funds

"I'll never forget how I was unable to focus on classes wondering whether or not I would be here for the rest of the semester."

- Anonymous senior

seemed to surprise and infuriate some in the crowd. Although this initiative was a great way to reach out to students, many felt the process of deciding who received the money was unfair.

Dr. Tatum gave an example of how the money was raised and how students were selected to receive the financial assistance. She stated that when the money is received, she calls the financial aid office to identify which students need assistance. Three factors impact whether or not a student becomes a recipient of the initiative: the amount of the dona-

tion, the amount of money the student owes, and her classification.

Dr. Tatum added that a senior would have preference over a struggling sophomore in the initiative because the senior would be closer to graduation.

"I understand that some seniors need financial assistance like the rest of us, but I feel that my family does just as much as any other family to keep me at Spelman," stated California native and Spelman Sophomore Ashley Thomas. "I don't feel that it's fair that if I need financial assistance from Spelman and I have a 4.0, a senior who's GPA may be much lower than mine gets first choice because she's about to graduate."

For many upperclassmen, the Starfish Initiative seems to directly affect them in a positive way. An anonymous senior stated, "I don't know what I would have done without Spelman's financial help with the Starfish Initiative. I'll never forget how I was unable to focus on classes wondering whether or not I would be here for the rest of the semester. God is good," she said.

Financial ability is unique to each Spelman student. While some students depend on the earnings of their parents, others depend on assistance from the government, the benevolence of donors, or Spelman's gracious financial programs and scholarships. Whatever the case, all Spelmanites should be granted a fair chance to continue towards a degree, no matter her classification.

News

Spelmanites Give Back During Spring Break



BONNER OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
Students pose outside community service site in Galveston, TX.

Michelle D. Anderson
Staff Writer

On March 7, 2009, nine Spelman students traveled to Galveston, Texas on a four-day alternative spring break trip with Spelman's Bonner Office of Community Service and Student Development.

During the trip, Spelman Senior Chaturia Rouse and other students lived in a community-like setting where they slept on cots at an abandoned elementary school and bathed

in showers located in an outside trailer.

For Rouse, a biology major, this service trip was long-awaited. She had a strong desire and purpose to take an alternative spring break vacation since her first year.

Rouse's most memorable moment took place when she pulled hundreds of nails from a woman's house so that the homeowner could begin rebuilding her residence. "Seeing her be so appreciative of our help was rewarding," she

said.

Student volunteers also pulled weeds from yards that resembled jungles, helped refurbish homes, assisted children, and picked up debris from a beach on Fort Travis.

Junior Psychology major Carling Ray said that her experience on Fort Travis was one of the most memorable. "It was the hardest day. Their whole island was wiped out," said Ray, a native of Bermuda who is quite familiar with the damage caused by hurricanes.

Staci Bruce, the Bonner Office's new community affairs coordinator, stated that the trip was important not only because it forced students out of their comfort zone and exposed them to other people's plights, but also because it gave students an opportunity to learn about their best qualities. "It is a good eye opener. This type of work will make students learn about their personality or about themselves," Bruce said. "It really makes them reflect on what their abilities are."

Rouse said she learned to count her blessings because she realized that everything can be taken away instantly. "It was great seeing the progress. Most of all, meeting all these wonderful people with unique personalities, and creating bonds with them," Rouse said. "I learned that time flies when you are helping someone, and it actually seems fun not taxing."

Students learned many lessons and began to build long-lasting relationships, Bruce said.

"I really understood the power of teamwork," Ray said. "We had to create a system to get the debris into the pile."

An increasingly-popular tradition for U.S. colleges and universities, alternative spring break trips allow students

to engage in volunteer work through short-term projects that assist communities with significant social and environmental problems.

This year the Bonner Office received about 30 applications for the alternative spring break trip. Bonner coordinators ultimately selected nine students who seemed genuinely interested in community service work, Bruce said. The program coordinators stated that they wanted to avoid selecting students who failed to follow application directions or who wanted to pad their resumes.

Last year the office hosted an international alternative spring break trip to the city of Monte Cristi in the Dominican Republic. The trip to Monte Cristi allowed students to provide educational and recreational opportunities for abandoned children. This year the office decided to focus on a national location rather than a region abroad.

National Hurricane Center data shows that Hurricane Ike was one of the most destructive storms in United States history. As a result, nearly 16,000 families in the Galveston-Houston area are living in temporary federal shelters and an additional 1,700 were referred for assistance but could not be reached or were refused aid, according to the *Houston Chronicle*.

Plan B Becomes More Viable Option for Young Women

Nicole Barden
Staff Writer

In a recent ruling, a federal judge made the "morning-after" pill available without a prescription to 17-year-olds. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) must comply with the ruling within 30 days of the decision. While being available over-the-counter, the "morning-after" pill, also known as Plan B, was previously only available to adults.

US District Court Judge Edward R. Korman said the FDA was influenced by the conservative views of the Bush Administration to prevent or stifle studies and rulings on Plan B. Instead of deciding if the drug was safe for women, the FDA was concerned with whether or not it would increase sexual activity and the use of emergency contraceptives among teenagers.

Reena Mahabir, a senior at Spelman College said, "I don't see a problem with it. I think it should be available. Girls have sex at any age and girls need to be able to have options at that age. In some places girls get an abortion without parental consent. It's a good way to give girls more options to have control of their bodies and that's most important."

If taken within 72 hours of intercourse, Plan B can decrease the risk of pregnancy. Plan B can be considered a potent birth control pill. It contains a very high amount of progestin, a hor-

mone found in birth control pills.

Korman's claim that politics influenced decision making is valid. In 2003, a 23-4 vote by an FDA advisory committee determined that Plan B should no longer have a prescription requirement. Another committee voted 27-1 that females of any age could use the medication safely. Despite these findings, shortly before a decision on the subject was required in 2004, the FDA decided to take 90 days to further discuss whether the drug should become an over-the-counter medication.

In 2004, the FDA prevented Plan B from being sold over the counter. Roughly a month after this decision, Barr, the pharmaceutical company that produces and markets Plan B, sent a second application to the FDA outlining a request to have Plan B available over the counter to people 16 and up. The FDA missed the deadline to respond to the new application.

After allowing a 60-day extension to make a decision, Susan Wood, director of the FDA's Office of Women's Health, resigned over the agency's numerous stalling tactics. Finally, in 2006, the FDA allowed Plan B to be sold over the counter but only to adults with photo identification.

"The gravamen of plaintiffs' claims is that the FDA's decisions regarding Plan B...were arbitrary and capricious because they were not the result of reasoned and good faith agency decision

making," said Korman who went on to add, "Plaintiffs are right. The FDA repeatedly and unreasonably delayed issuing a decision on Plan B for suspect reasons."

These roadblocks put in place by the FDA and the Bush Administration influenced Korman's decision. He said, "the record is clear that the FDA's course of conduct regarding Plan B departed in significant ways from the agency's normal procedures regarding similar applications to switch a drug product from prescription to non-prescription use."

Many conservative groups believe the pill is similar to an abortion. They also think it is dangerous for minors to take Plan B medication without guidance from a parent or doctor. Korman disagrees and points out that in many countries, especially industrialized nations, Plan B and other forms of emergency contraception are available without prescription or age restriction.

"I think people think it would encourage [minors] to have sex more. I don't think it will affect anybody not having sex already. For any woman or teenage girl having sex, this is an added choice for them, and any girl who hasn't had sex, this won't make her decide to have sex all of a sudden," said Mahabir.

Plan B is the only emergency contraceptive drug available in the U.S., and many groups seeking reproductive

justice want more accessibility to these drugs. The Center for Reproductive Rights was a plaintiff in the case that sparked this decision. Center President Nancy Northrup said, "Emergency contraception is proven safe and effective and today, we have succeeded in expanding access to 17-year-olds and are one step closer to making it fully available to all women, including young women for whom the barriers—and the benefits—are so great."

Wanda C.
Hunley '96
(1974-2009)

domesti

New Faces Open Floor to an Old Issue

By Kiki Stenson

Staff Writer

*"He is cute, he seems nice, he wouldn't do something like that."
"She must have done something to make him hit her."
"I don't like her anymore, she's getting him in trouble."*

The "she" is Pop singer Rihanna. The "he" is R&B singer Chris Brown. These statements were made by LaGrange High School students that were asked for their thoughts regarding the alleged domestic abuse of Rihanna, 21, by 19-year-old boyfriend Brown. The case between the two music stars has put a unique spotlight and reopened a national forum on the issue of domestic violence.

According to the US Department of Justice, domestic abuse, also known as Intimate Partner Violence, has been declining since 1993. Although statistically the numbers of cases are declining, as of 2008 about 5.3 million women are abused each year, and 1,232 of those women are killed by an intimate partner. Singer Rihanna has allegedly become one of these statistics; she has become a "face" for this issue due to the constant media attention targeting her situation.

In early February, Brown and Rihanna were involved in an altercation which allegedly left Rihanna bloody and bruised. Brown was charged with two felonies for his supposed assault on Rihanna; the charges include

beating, biting, and choking her before attempting to kick her out of his Lamborghini. The couple's dispute has been a beacon for media attention—both The Tyra Banks Show and The Oprah Winfrey Show have covered specials on domestic violence. On her show, Oprah even sent a message to "all the Rihannas of the world," by warning, "If a man hits you once, he will hit you again."

The act of blaming the victim, or the alleged victim, is one that has been common in domestic abuse cases. Jarian Person, a 16-year-old student at LaGrange High School, stated, "If [Rihanna] provoked him, then it's her fault. You just can't hit a man and make him mad and not expect to have something happen to you. That's stupid."

Even though public opinion has been divided on where the responsibility lies, Brown has already lost endorsements and has been banned from radio stations such as Sacramento's radio station 103.5 and WAKS FM/ 96.5 in Cleveland. He also withdrew from Nickelodeon's "Kids Choice Awards," which took place in March.

Domestic Abuse in College

By Krista DeSouza

Staff Writer

According to an article featured on Eyewitnessnews.com, most cases of domestic violence occur among people 15 through 25 years old. Domestic violence is not just physical abuse; it can also be psychological or emotional bullying. *Spelman Spotlight* is clarifying the blurry lines of what constitutes abuse, courtesy of BBC Lifestyle Relationships.

Destructive criticism and verbal abuse: shouting, mocking, accusing, name calling, verbally threatening.

Pressure tactics: sulking, threatening to withhold money, disconnecting the telephone, taking the car away, committing suicide, taking the children away, reporting you to welfare agencies unless you comply with his demands regarding bringing up the children, lying to your friends and family about you, telling you that you have no choice in any decisions.

Disrespect: persistently putting you down in front of other people, not listening or responding when you talk, interrupting your telephone calls, taking money from your purse without asking, refusing to help with childcare or housework.

Breaking trust: lying to you, withholding information from you, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreements.

Isolation: monitoring or blocking your telephone calls, telling you where you can and cannot go, preventing you from seeing friends and relatives.

Harassment: following you, checking up on you, opening your mail, repeatedly dialing 1471 to see who has telephoned you, embarrassing you in public.

Threats: making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting you down, destroying your possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a knife or a gun.

Sexual violence: using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts; having sex with you when you don't want to have sex; any degrading treatment based on your sexual orientation.

Physical violence: punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing, shoving, burning, strangling, raping.

Denial: saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying you caused the abusive behavior, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and begging for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again.

If any of these characteristics of domestic abuse relate to you or someone you know, please do not hesitate to talk about the situation with someone in Spelman's Women's Center who can advise you on the best steps to take from this point forward. Domestic violence is real, so let us take this day to be bold and stand up against it. Be clear and have no fear sisters! For more tips on how to spot domestic violence, please visit http://www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/domestic_violence/youth_index.shtml.

Domestic Violence

noun. a pattern of physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abusive behaviors used by one individual to assert power or maintain control over another, in the context of an intimate or family relationship.

It's Really None of Our Business...

By Shannon Palmore

Staff Writer

...But even so, I must admit it has become a guilty pleasure of mine.

Since news first broke of the violent altercation between the two young singers more than a month ago, I have been swept up in the frenzy, obsessively following the story as it unfolds in the media. Just like everyone else who happened not to be in or around Chris Brown's rented silver Lamborghini that night, I was drawn to the story out of shock and curiosity. I wondered what could have incited such a violent attack from a guy known for his captivating smile and squeaky-clean image.

I scoured the internet, clicking on any—and quite frankly all—news links mentioning the fractured couple. I read posts from popular blogs and gossip columnists, and listened in as radio hosts offered their perspectives on the incident. As I followed the story through various media outlets, I couldn't help feeling that I was invading the duo's privacy.

While journalists are responsible for reporting on the happenings in a community and beyond, it is unbecoming of a reporter—and the profession—for him or her to invade the personal space and privacy of others in order to do so. In the case of domestic violence assaults, laws have been enacted protecting the identities of victims. These laws were not adhered to regarding the case of Brown and Rihanna. Although it is painfully obvious that the woman on

the receiving end of Brown's blows is Rihanna, the public's suspicions should have never been explicitly confirmed.

The media has managed to not only reveal Rihanna's name, but also pictures of her bruised and battered face, and the reason behind the couple's altercation. Rumors swirled claiming



US MAGAZINE

the couple's fight ensued over a contracted sexually transmitted disease or over a text message Brown received.

Perhaps in a misguided way to battle the issue of domestic violence, the media decided to criticize Rihanna's decision to allegedly reconcile with Brown (I still don't know if I believe this. How do you confirm a reconciled relationship that had never been confirmed in the first place?). Through intricately-crafted news stories, some

journalists and media outlets have managed to proclaim their disapproval of the couple's reconciliation, while others have declared in a matter-of-fact way that Rihanna is sending a horrible message to the youth of America.

It seems to me that the media has adopted the wrong stance regarding the situation between Brown and Rihanna. While mention of the incident should have been made, further exploration into it should have not. What caused Brown's violent outburst, how Rihanna's faced looked afterwards, and whether or not the two reconciled is none of our business. What should have been regarded as a tragic incident has been manipulated by the media and has turned into a melodramatic saga. Instead of focusing on what was possibly happening between the couple, the media should have focused on the inevitable discussions pertaining to the issues of domestic violence. Some media outlets, such as *Essence Magazine*, have made this transition.

The situation between Brown and Rihanna is unfortunate, as is the media's handling of the situation. There is a thin line between reporting news and divulging private information, and in regards to the Brown and Rihanna incident, this line has been crossed many times.

In an effort to stay on the right side of the line, I am putting it out there:

the Chris Brown and Rihanna saga is none of our business.

Features

A screenshot of the Spelman E-mail interface. The interface shows a navigation pane on the left with folders like Inbox, Drafts, Sent, Follow Up, Junk Mail, and Trash. The main pane displays an inbox with a table of emails. The table has columns for Who, Date, Time, Size, and Subject. The email list includes messages from Kerry-Dean Nugent, Romona Wright, Carl McNair, Ray Galloway, PSHGLAM.com, Career Planning, Spelman NSCS, Rev. Beverly Saunde, Erica Knight, Candice Jones, Stella Beckham, Maria Lumpkin, Kai McCormack, Terry Bozeman, Terry Bozeman, Juanda Rayner, David Booze, Erica Johnson, sga, and Public Relations. The selected email is from Career Planning, dated 01/28/2009 at 05:10PM, with a subject of 'List of Spring Career Fair Employers and Text Reminder Option'.

Who	Date	Time	Size	Subject
Kerry-Dean Nugent	01/29/2009	11:11AM	5618	Interested in Global Training, Peace Building and Economic Justice!!!
Romona Wright	01/29/2009	10:35AM	4978	Fw: NAACP General Body Meeting Today!
Carl McNair	01/29/2009	09:57AM	514054	Position with Verizon Communications-Feb 4
Ray Galloway	01/29/2009	05:52AM	1259	Ennis Cosby Reading Room Closed - January 29, 2009
PSHGLAM.com	01/28/2009	07:30PM	37614	Rock & Republic's Recession Collection and Born-Again Vintage
Career Planning	01/28/2009	05:10PM	98625	List of Spring Career Fair Employers and Text Reminder Option
Spelman NSCS	01/28/2009	04:54PM	44374	Fw: meeting minutes
Rev. Beverly Saunde	01/28/2009	04:45PM	20705	Iyanla Vanzant's Community Forum in Silver Spring
Erica Knight	01/28/2009	03:58PM	136113	EMORY LAW SCHOOL FORUM - FRIENDLY REMINDER!!!
Candice Jones	01/28/2009	02:22PM	189981	Attention: Open Model Call this Friday!!!!
Stella Beckham	01/28/2009	02:14PM	1793	Class textbooks
Maria Lumpkin	01/28/2009	01:54PM	112808	Fw: Public Health & Medicine Meeting
Kai McCormack	01/28/2009	01:23PM	2132	Women in Neuroscience General Body Meeting
Terry Bozeman	01/28/2009	01:19PM	2907	WebCT discussion posting
Terry Bozeman	01/28/2009	11:47AM	2808	
Juanda Rayner	01/28/2009	11:22AM	105567	PT Accountant Posting
David Booze	01/27/2009	03:09PM	12743	Spring 2009 Credit Hours
Erica Johnson	01/27/2009	10:08AM	2369	ADIYL Thank You
sga	01/26/2009	06:56PM	3971	You're invited to lunch with the Board of Trustees
Public Relations	01/26/2009	02:04PM	3934	Click on Links to View Spelman's Reaction to the Inauguration of Barack

A screenshot of the Spelman E-mail interface.

Your Spelman Email: The Revolving Door

Briyyah McClain
Staff Writer

Red is such an empowering color that puts you in the mood for love and makes you think of the passion between you and that special someone. But at Spelman, the color red equates to tons of emails from faceless individuals you never knew existed. Many of our Spelman sisters do not check their Spelman email accounts because their inboxes are often times stained with red! Regardless of the many opportunities that lie in the bodies of these emails sent from faculty and friends of the college, they remain undiscovered because there are just so many messages sent each day.

However, there is no need to stress, as I read every single email that passes through my inbox, including the ones that end up in the recycling bin. As a result, March 20, 2009-April 13, 2009

brought about very important emails since the season of seeking summer internships and summer jobs is well underway.

Are you wondering what you missed? Or maybe you just want a quick update so that you can clear out your inbox. Whatever your reason, I have highlighted 10 noteworthy internships, events, and scholarships, etc. just for you!

1. Uncommon Schools held interviews at Spelman for those interested in teaching low-income students upon graduation.

2. Miss Spelman and her Court Advisory Board applications were made available on April 17, 2009.

3. Student Orientation Leader (SOL) applications were made available and due March 25, 2009.

4. Spelman's Scholarship Coordinator provided the Institutional Schol-

arship link to students. The deadline to apply for one of 50 scholarships that cover all disciplines and classifications was extended from April 12, 2009 to April 15, 2009.

5. Student Affairs for Global Experience (SAGE) informed students about the December 2009 trip to Japan. The email message included the deadline to sign-up (March 31, 2009) and the overall cost of the trip.

6. The Watson Fellowship information session was publicized for students of all classifications to attend, particularly rising seniors.

7. Important housing selection dates and fees were issued to all students.

8. Suffolk University publicized its MA in Women's Health program that provides students with a competitive, annual, full-tuition scholarship to students interested in the field of Black

women's health. Deadline to apply for the scholarship was April 15, 2009.

9. NAACP and NSCS executive board applications were made available to students and due March 27, 2009.

10. UPS Community Scholar and A.C.T.S. scholarship applications were made available and due in late March.

Perhaps these highlights appeal to you. Perhaps you are now feeling so guilty that you feel slightly inclined to check your Spelman email account after reading this. Maybe you are wondering if any of these opportunities are still available. If it so happens that your inbox hasn't reached the 100 percent mail file mark, you may be in luck, as these opportunities are only a click away.

Be guilt-free: the revolving door clearly stops for no one.

My 'Hairstory': Learning to Love My Roots

Alexis Ranata Carter
Staff Writer

** This story is intended to inspire my brothers and sisters of all backgrounds to love their natural hair.**

Hello! My name is Alexis Ranata Carter and this is my 'hairstory.' Giving off cottony black rays, my natural hair is like an illuminating puffy black halo spreading awes and head-scratching wonders to those that may look at it. Ultimately, my hair is a beautiful gift from God. Some people call it nappy, kinky, curly, 'hard-to-comb,' or whatever they may feel at the time. However, what naysayers call my halo does not faze me. I love my naturally afro-textured hair and all of its glory; however, my hair-confidence did not bloom overnight.

For most of my childhood, I grew up in predominately diverse neighborhoods, so at an early age I knew my hair was different from the rest of my non-black playmates. In kindergarten, this difference became more evident to my non-black friends and I whenever we played 'house.' For some reason, I would always pretend to be the 'play daughter' and my non-black friend was the 'play mama.' As the 'play mama,' it was her responsibility to take care of the children, which included grooming the kids. So, my 'play mama' had a simple task of combing my hair. That sounds like an easy responsibility, right? Ummm... no! My 'play mama' tried to run a weak, fine toothcomb through my thick kinky hair but it snapped into little pieces.

I began to feel ashamed of my God-given hair. My white 'play mama' belittled my little nappy head because the comb did not easily flow through my head like it would through her fine hair.



ALEXIS RANATA CARTER

Throughout elementary school and middle school, 'house' and other games involving hair was torture for me. Most of my classmates, both black and non-black (those with straightened hair), criticized me for not controlling my unruly, 'bad' hair. During this time my classmates teased me, but I just thought my hair was different—not 'bad.'

Craving to be like the rest of my classmates, I begged my mom to chemically relax my naps away. A few weeks before eighth grade started, I received my first relaxer. Oh man, I was so excited! Yet, my mom and my hairstylist repeatedly asked me if I was sure. Of course I was sure. For me a relaxer meant no more teasing, like duh I was sure!

No one forewarned me about the possible negative side effects of chemical relaxers. I simply thought my hair was being straightened. I was motivated to no longer be the odd girl in class. So, I permanently altered my hair so it could be similar to that of my peers.

The relaxers caused my scalp to feel like it was on fire. No, my head did not literally catch on fire, but my scalp burned from the harsh chemicals. However, I did not care; I needed straight results. I tolerated the pain for three years.

Consequently, by the end of my junior year in high school, my hair was no longer a thick mass. It became limp and fine. I suffered from chemical burns and damaged hair all in an effort to attain silky hair. The joy I possessed because of my straight hair began to deteriorate. I wondered why I was doing this

to myself. My non-black friends were not chemically altering their hair texture.

I was growing sick and tired of the self-inflicted pain. Finally, the summer before my senior year in high school, I stopped chemically-straightening my hair. I transitioned back to my natural hair texture. I wore styles with both my nappy roots and relaxed ends. During this time, I rocked roller sets, braids, twists, hair weaves and wigs. I tried just about everything possible.

However, I found it tedious and difficult to wait until the chemicals grew out of my hair, so the day after my high school graduation, while in the shower, I cut my hair down to a little afro. I guess you could say I had a Britney Spears slightly crazed baldy moment. My family and friends were completely stunned. Since that day, my afro has grown out to about six to eight inches of soft fluffiness.

Now I am enjoying chemically-free natural hair; I can wear just about any hairstyle I want. Some days I flaunt a plain afro, braids or twists. I can even straighten my hair without chemicals. All in all, I love that my hair is able to do what I want it to do.

This June will be my one-year natural hair anniversary. Moreover, during this year, I have received many comments about my hair such as, "Oh shawty that 'do is fierce!" to "Girl, you bests slap a perm in that head." Good or bad, these comments do not affect me. This is my hair growing naturally from my head. Yes, I am proud of my nappy hair.

By sharing my 'hairstory,' I hope that I have inspired some of you to embrace natural hair. I am not a hair professional. Therefore, I am not going to share my hair care routine, because what may work for me may not work for you. However, good luck and love your natural hair!

Features

Where is a Woman's Place?

Brittney Daigle-Leonard
Staff Writer

Spelman women are not exempt from choosing between full-time motherhood and corporate success. While Spelman College's mission statement references creating leaders and social change, it does not reference the sacrifice that many women will make for family.

And this is for good reason. It is very unlikely to have a conversation in Upper Manley with a Spelman student who hopes to become a stay-at-home mom. And if she does, this will be after a decade of advancing her career and investing wisely.

I have heard many people say that it is pointless to go to school if a woman will just end up being a stay-at-home mom, but this is ridiculous. Furthermore, it is sexist to believe that a stay-at-home mom does not deserve to be educated.

Believe it or not, college was originally created for the pursuit of higher knowledge, not higher pay-

checks. Therefore, a woman who has attained a degree and chooses to support her children full-time has not wasted her money on a degree.

This is not to say that Spelman only supports high-earning occupations. It is acceptable and sometimes encouraged to have a lower salary if you are actively "changing the world." But if you are not, you should actively seek a well-paid, well-publicized position with a respectable company. With graduate or professional school as your stepping stone, of course.

However given the current economic climate, it is difficult to fathom not having a reliable source of income after graduating from an undergraduate or graduate institution. But when one's spouse is financially successful, this is sometimes an option.

On MSNMoney.com, MP Dunleavy said, "Economists say that the stay-at-home parent who relinquishes a career may lose about \$1 million over the years."

But this is not factoring in the savings on childcare and other areas such as dining out and tutoring. Although it may not budget out to \$1 million in a lifetime, it may total close to that amount when combined with the qualitative value of family.

Simultaneously juggling motherhood and a

career is possible. The Civil Rights Act protects the careers of pregnant women. However, it does not protect women against stagnant positions as a result of childhood illness, school plays, and back-to-school nights.

"...it is sexist to believe that a stay-at-home mom does not deserve to be educated."

The women who make these sacrifices also do not receive societal accolades. Only their families know the extent of all of their hard work and dedication. There is not any paid vacation time and she will not get a bonus every year if she keeps up the good work.

Please do not misunderstand me; I am not trying to convince anyone to cancel her plans of becoming the next president of the Xerox Corporation. What I do want is for Spelman women to realize that the possibilities for their future are limitless, even if that means temporarily giving up their careers.

So I end with the constantly-debated question: Where exactly is a woman's place? My answer: Wherever she finds contentment and joy.

Word

on the street

Should a woman stay at home or pursue a career?



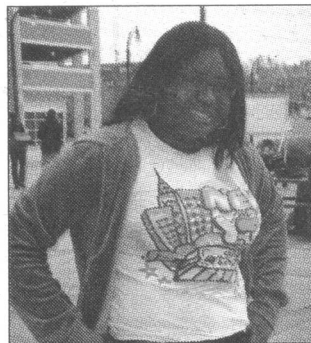
"I think she can do both if she's a well-balanced person but at the end of the day, you don't want one to suffer because you're trying to excel at the other. It's about time management...I think both are possible, you can't limit yourself to one or the other."

-Brittani Carlington
Spelman Soph, Hawai'i



"I believe that it's really up to the woman. I don't believe in stereotypes, or I don't believe a woman's only option is to bring in income...it depends on the financial condition of the household. If finances were needed, I would expect her to work."

-Tim Norris
Morehouse Jr, Georgia



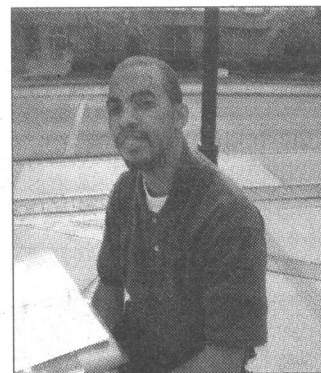
"The woman shouldn't always work all the time because she needs to build a relationship with her children, but she can't just stay at home. Need a balance - you can't be too consumed with either."

-Itisha Jefferson
Spelman Jr, New York



"If it's something that fulfills her as a human being, she should be in corporate America, but it is her duty to take care of home. However, it's a shared duty. I do feel like there are gender roles and they do provide a type of definition to our society. They don't have to be as stringent in this modern time, however I feel that a woman taking care of the household is important."

-Edward Debrady
Morehouse Sr, Pennsylvania



"It depends on the woman; what are her priorities? I would prefer that if she were to be a stay-at-home mom, that she invest in her own business...something that brings in income."

-Jiwan Dixon
Morehouse Sr, North Carolina



"I think a woman should balance her home and work life. Stereotyped roles of women have ceased and we are living in a world where balance is important. I think it's important for women as a whole to go after their passion and not necessarily what makes money."

-Brittany Fennell
Spelman First-Yr, Maryland

Student Government '09-'10

SSGA President Vice President

My name is Morgan L. Pierce and I am a junior English major from Fort Mill, SC. I will proudly be serving as the Spelman Student Government Association (SSGA) President for the 2009 – 2010 academic year. Thank you so much for the support that you have shown me through my journey at Spelman College. I could not have imagined all that I would gain through the powerful sisterhood present at Spelman. I am so excited about the upcoming academic year and all of the possibilities that it holds!

Since being at Spelman, I have served in other leadership capacities including Freshman Class President, Administrative Director for SSGA, and currently as the Vice-President for SSGA. In these positions, I was afforded the opportunity to learn about the concerns of the student body and how to serve you best. Next year I aim to work with other members of SSGA. Moreover, I will work to ensure that Spelman students are informed about all of the opportunities that reside on the campus and to create new opportunities. There will be chances to hear powerful speakers, opportunities for networking and scholarships, chances to grow and mature as a woman, and more! Under the new constitution that SSGA recently ratified it states, "Every woman that attends Spelman College is a member of SSGA," and we truly take that to heart. SSGA cannot function without the input of students, so please make sure we hear from you! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email SGA@spelman.edu. I look forward to working with you all. Let's make it a good year!

My platform is as follows:

Elevating the Spelman Woman, Enhancing the Spelman Experience

Knowing your SSGA

- New Constitution education
- Knowing SSGA's resources
- Knowing your officers

Bringing our Spelman community closer together

- Alumnae mentoring program
- Alumnae database list serve
- Knowing our Board of Trustees

Offering more student opportunities

- Making more money available to students
- Highlighting the opportunities available to students on and off campus



Sisterly in Service,
Morgan L. Pierce



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for voting in the recent Spelman Student Government Association (SSGA) elections in February. Your participation led to the formation of a wonderful SSGA that will work hard for the enhancement of the Spelman experience and the betterment of the institution. As SSGA Vice President, I have various initiatives that will assist in executing this task.

House of Representatives:

As the SSGA Vice President, I will preside as the Speaker of the House for the House of Representatives. I will also ensure that the SSGA website has a section for grievances from the student body so that all concerns can be taken to the House of Representatives and then delegated to the appropriate committee. This method will effectively gather student concern and ensure that changes will be made to make Spelman a better functioning institution for the student body.

Registered Student Organizations' Community Service:

In addition, I plan to continue the St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital letter-writing campaign because the experience allows for students and Registered Student Organizations (RSO) alike the opportunity to contribute to a great cause. However, I would like to conduct a toy drive that will complement the letter-writing campaign. Moreover, I intend to continue distributing Thanksgiving baskets to low-income families with the participation of all RSOs. Finally, I would like to have a charity dinner in which proceeds will go to St. Jude's and will serve as the spring semester community service event. This dinner would include an auctioning event in which speakers invited to Chicken and Business, various Spelman faculty and staff, as well as student leaders will attend a dinner event on Spelman's Oval to raise funds for St. Jude's.

Professionalism:

In conjunction with the Secretary of Academic Affairs, I would like to bring various professionals to Spelman to speak regarding the attainment of their positions. I would like to have a panel of professionals come to Spelman regularly during the semester to speak to students about overcoming the challenges of becoming a professional. The students who choose to attend these events will then be invited to the charity dinner that will take place at the end of the year in which they can use the professional and networking skills learned throughout the year. Also, I would like SSGA to publicly endorse a book each month about a professional or positive reading for the Spelman student body to be more informed about and engaged in different cultures.

So again, I would like to thank the student body for entrusting me with the great task of serving as SSGA Vice President for the 2009-2010 year. I am sure that this will prove to be a positive and exciting experience for all of us!

photos courtesy of Freddie Rankin

SSGA Officers



Christa Schweizer
Secretary of Academic
Affairs



Gaybrielle Gant
Secretary of Enrollment
Management



Regina Larkin
Sec. of Institutional
Advancement



Regina F. Graham
Secretary of Finance



Iva Stewart-Barre
Secretary of Student
Affairs

Class Council Results

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Parliamentarian

Co-Social

Co-Publicity

Class Representative

Sophomore

Taylor Allen

Dymon Morgan

Marie Anderson

Chelsea Williams

Vacant

Ayanna Cash-Clements

Britne Williams

Briana Bowie

Chelsea Johnson

Vacant

Junior

Charise Patterson

Taren Marsaw

Vacant

Katherine Boykin

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Sasha Mills

Senior

Topaz Sampson

Monica Battle

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Yasmine McMorris

Vacant

Cherrelle Hayward

Vacant

Vacant

Arts & Entertainment

Living Revolutionary: Spotlight on Vinson Muhammad

Demetria Patton
Editor-In-Chief

Known widely as Mr. AUC, Vinson Muhammad is a senior Morehouse College Business and Marketing major from Macon, Georgia who wants to change the world with his music.

It's a little ambitious; however, if it can be done, Muhammad can do it. Coming from a musically-inclined family in which his mother and grandfather play the piano and his brother plays the trumpet, his love for music was destined to happen.

"I've always had a love for music. I liked music ever since I realized I was black. My dad listened to Jimmy Hendrix and Pink Floyd when I was little. I sung in the chorus and started playing the trumpet when I was in the fourth grade," he said.

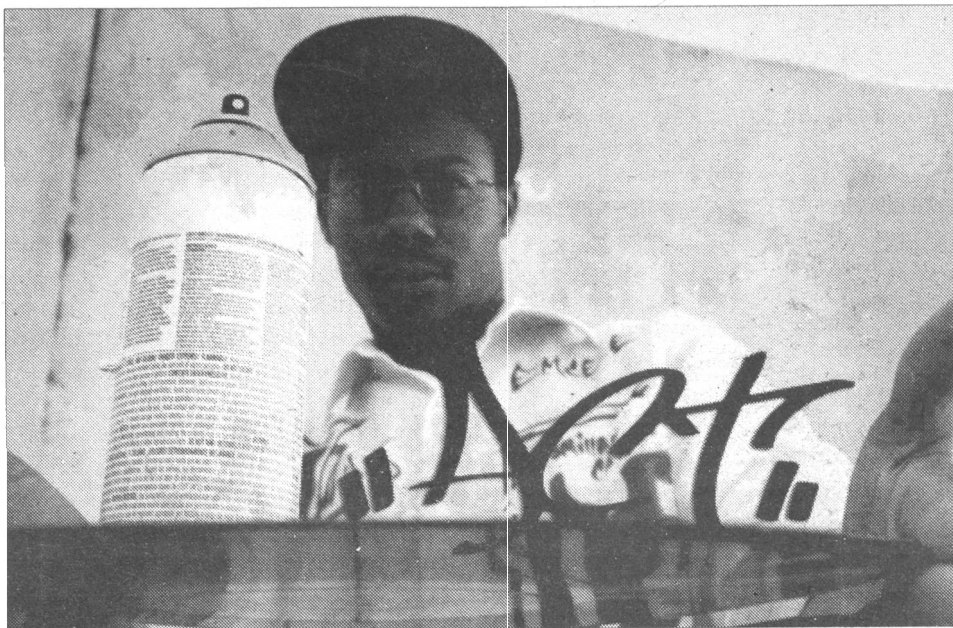
Muhammad's love and passion for music is undeniable, but the road to mainstream success and recognition may be a bumpy one. Ever since hip-hop and rap music hit the mainstream, there has been an abundance of self-proclaimed rappers and MCs who hope to make it big.

Refreshingly, Muhammad is not among the group of overnight rappers and MCs in search of money and fame. Rather, he's a step above the rest. Muhammad has independently released his first hip-hop album titled *ACT* and does not have a desire to become a mainstream artist.

With tracks such as \$20 budget, Muhammad believes that his album is pertinent and identifies with student life in the Atlanta University Center (AUC).

"My \$20 budget track is relevant. As a student, who can't identify with being on a budget?" he said.

Moreover, Muhammad hopes that his album sends a positive message to



RAHBI WOOD
Muhammad on his album cover.

everyone who listens to his music.

"That's why I named the album *ACT* because I believe people should act on their dreams, especially if they have the resources to do so. Through my music, I want to show people the positivity in myself, so they can see the positivity in themselves," he stated.

Nothing short of revolutionary, Muhammad not only wants to inspire change through his music, but also by actively creating programs that will address issues important to him. Before graduating, Muhammad hopes to create a fundraising initiative that will assist Morris Brown College.

Amid financial difficulties, Morris Brown is millions of dollars in debt, has lost its accreditation, and has less than 300 students enrolled. Muhammad is saddened by the current status of Morris Brown and believes that more needs to be done by surrounding educational institutions and students.

"The fact that they still have stu-

dents says a lot. The AUC needs to realize that we are family and begin to help."

Muhammad plans to donate \$1000 of his album proceeds to Morris Brown. In addition, Muhammad wants to begin the Morris Brown College \$1.00 campaign. The campaign will call for every student at Spelman College, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse School of Medicine, and ITC to donate \$1.00 towards the institution. Muhammad believes that the campaign will be an easy and inexpensive way for all students to aid the ailing historically black college.

"Just think, there are approximately 3000 students at Morehouse and Spelman and not counting students at other institutions, we can raise \$10,000 easy. And all of that money will go to the school," he said.

Doing his part to make a difference, it is no doubt that Muhammad

will impact the world. If you have not had the pleasure of hearing Muhammad perform, I charge you to ACT! Muhammad is scheduled to perform on April 25, 2009 at 595 North. You can also pick up his latest album at the Morehouse College bookstore.

"Beat"

Continued from Page 4

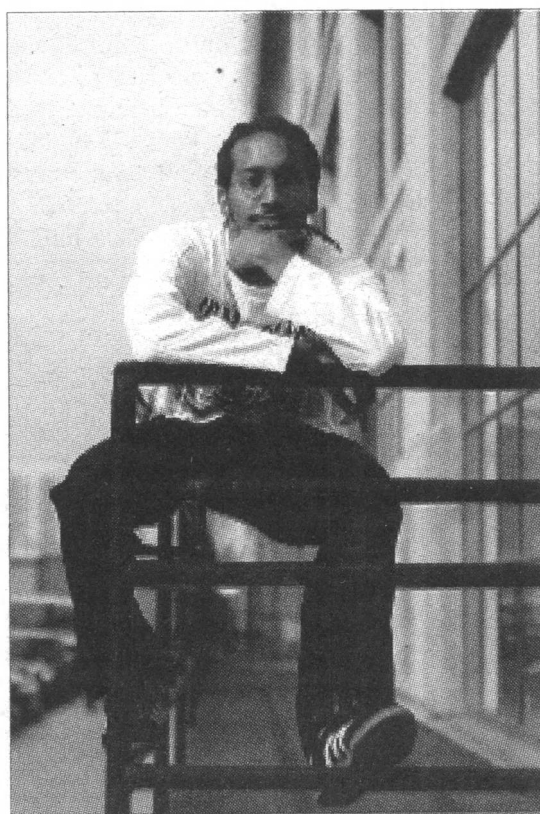
them, but women should never feel obligated to a man after receiving a compliment.

However, this is what Valentino suggests. What happened to the romanticism of getting to know a person over a span of time and eventually evolving into a deep and lasting relationship?

Everything about America is becoming more fast-paced, but in my opinion ladies and gentlemen, sex should neither be taken nonchalantly nor initiated at the drop of a dime. If we support songs that suggest women are not worthy of a few dinner dates and a phone conversation, what does this say about where we stand as a society?

I am not bashing Valentino for his single, because he knows what sells today—sex—and he's simply taking advantage of that reality. Like everyone else, he has bills to pay. I'm merely wondering how long we will allow ourselves to be depicted as beings of such sexual indiscipline. As a society, more exclusively as a black society, it would be beneficial if we no longer allowed artists to "beat" the image of women into the ground. Black people have been 'beaten' enough, don't you think?

Rashid Amir: Hip-Hop at its Core



Rashid Amir, underground hip-hop artist.

Leanne Pearson
Staff Writer

His friends know him as Nigel Welch Jr. but to the New York music scene he is known as Rashid Amir. Music is not new to the up-and-coming emcee. In fact, he was nurtured in music by his mother

who sang in a band called "Chocolate Fire," and currently sings with "The Great Day Chorale" formerly headed by Louvinia Pointer.

Having grown up in New York City during the 90's explosion of hip-hop, Amir noticed the variety of artists and the messages they delivered. He wanted his music to have a positive message behind it, a message that voiced his inner thoughts about life and society. Amir drew upon the style of hip-hop, which originated in the days of Run-D.M.C and has been continued through the lyrics of artists such as Mos Def, Talib Kweli, and Common.

Amir released his first mixtape *Tailor Made* in September 2008. The mixtape is an expression of his thoughts and ideas on lyricism while capturing what he believes is the true essence of hip-hop. *Tailor Made* is Amir's introduction to the world as an artist fighting for his voice to be heard.

On Musicnation.com Amir shares how he became an emcee and what he wants listeners to take from his music. "I ask you to acknowledge my presence. Walk this way and start hearing my message influenced by Christ; my words are written with no pen, just drawn in the image and likeness of my soul," says Amir.

Amir's presence has been noticed. From his first track on his self-released CD *Tailor Made*, he begins by saying: "got you open like gash wounds" in the track "Eyes on the Prize (That Type)." His message hits hard from the moment he opens his mouth attacking present-day artist for their selfish motives and ignorant messages. "Most dudes nowadays forgot their purpose, making music for selfish worship," however Amir continues by declaring, "It's for the

people."

People can relate to Amir's music because he speaks to life experience and the betterment of oneself. He is not spending his time trying to create the next hot beat and dance move. His lyrics speak from a deeper place. In the track "Slaves," Amir illustrates his mastery of hip-hop. The ideology of blacks today still living with the slave mentality, Amir speaks about the need for change, a need to end the contradictions that we allow to exist in society.

"Got fellas getting up on the microphone start to jive preaching Black Power and how to correct their lives but be the same cats that be cheating on their wives."

He speaks on the use of the 'N-word' and the negative lyrics and images of women and blacks in rap and hip-hop videos today. Each, he says, represents shackles holding back the black community from achieving endless possibilities.

Amir has appeared on various other mixtapes, but *Tailor Made* is his message to the music community that he is a force to be reckoned with. Currently, he is an independent artist but thanks to technology he was able to effectively promote himself. As a result of *Tailor Made*, Amir is performing in numerous venues throughout New York City. He has an upcoming event with Frsh Pulp Live. FRSH Pulp Live™ is a platform to bring audiences the very best in music from across the globe as well as to create unique experiences for audiences through art, music and fashion.

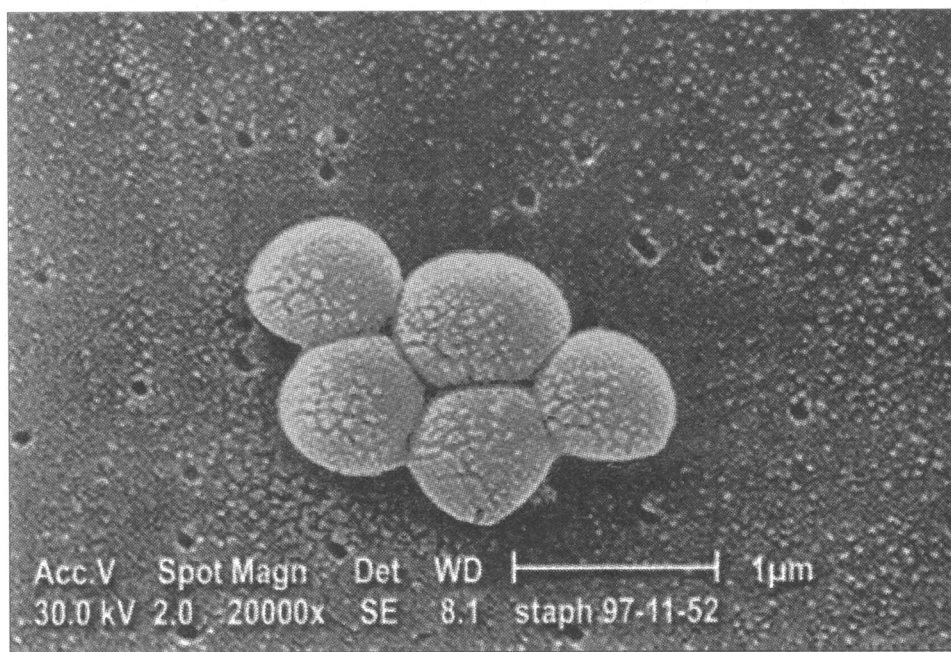
The 21st Century welcomes a new voice in hip-hop. Amir possesses a voice true to old school traditions while incorporating new and fresh ideas.

Health & Wellness

Be in the Know: Understanding MRSA

Spelman's Department of Student Health Services recently reported that methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a contagious bacterium that is currently spreading throughout Spelman's campus. More specifically, MRSA is a potentially harmful type of staph bacteria that is resistant to commonly used antibiotics and may cause skin and other infections. Therefore, it is important to not only understand MRSA, but to also be aware of the ways in which the infection can be prevented and treated if contracted.

Below are some important facts about MRSA, as provided by WebMD and the Center for Disease Control (CDC):



An image of the bacterium.

Compiled by Feza Kikaya
Managing Editor

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a bacterium that causes skin infections in different parts of the body. Community-Associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) causes serious skin and soft tissue infections in otherwise healthy individuals who have not been recently hospitalized or undergone medical procedures.

What are common symptoms of MRSA skin infections?

Most MRSA skin infections appear as a bump or infected area on the skin in the form of a pimple or boils. These infected areas may be:

- Red
- Swollen
- Painful
- Warm to the touch
- Full of pus or other drainage
- Accompanied by a fever

What causes MRSA?

Garden-variety staph is common bacteria that can live on the body.

Plenty of healthy people carry staph without being infected by it (about 25-30 percent of us have staph bacteria in our noses). However, staph can become detrimental if the bacterium enters the body, as it can then cause an infection.

How is MRSA contracted?

MRSA is usually spread through direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person or through contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with infected skin (i.e. razors, towels, used bandages).

Some environments have factors that make it easier for MRSA to be transmitted. Such factors are known as the five C's and are as follows: Crowding, frequent skin-to-skin contact, Compromised skin (i.e., cuts or abrasions), Contaminated items and surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness.

Who gets MRSA?

MRSA infections are most common among people who have weak immune systems and are living in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care centers. Infections can appear

around surgical wounds or invasive devices, like catheters or implanted feeding tubes.

CA-MRSA skin infections have been identified among certain populations that share close quarters or experience more skin-to-skin contact. Such locations include schools, dormitories, military barracks, households, correctional facilities, and daycare centers.

How is MRSA prevented?

The following measures can be taken to prevent the spread of MRSA:

Practicing good hygiene – wash your hands with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cover skin abrasions or cuts immediately with a clean, dry bandage until healed.

Avoid sharing personal items that come into contact with your bare skin. When exercising, use either a cloth or towel to reduce contact between your skin and shared equipment (i.e. weight-training benches).

Maintain a clean environment by establishing cleaning procedures for frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come into contact with people's skin.

How is MRSA treated?

If you suspect that you have MRSA, immediately cover the infected area with a bandage and contact your healthcare professional. It is especially important to contact your healthcare professional if signs and symptoms of a MRSA skin infection are accompanied by a fever.

Treatment for MRSA skin infections may include having a healthcare professional drain the infection and, in some cases, prescribe an antibiotic. Do not attempt to drain the infection yourself – doing so could worsen or spread it to others. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses (even if the infection is getting better), unless your healthcare professional

tells you otherwise.

How can I prevent spreading MRSA to others?

Cover your wound – Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages until healed. Also, follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph, including MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages and tape can be discarded with the regular trash.

Clean your hands frequently – You, your family, and others in close contact should wash their hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing the bandage or touching the infected wound.

Do not share personal items – Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and laundry detergent. Use a dryer to dry clothes completely.

Is MRSA life-threatening?

Although most MRSA infections are not serious, some can be potentially dangerous. In fact, many public health experts are alarmed by the spread of tough strains of MRSA. MRSA can cause more serious skin infections or infect surgical wounds, the bloodstream, the lungs, or the urinary tract. Because MRSA is difficult to treat (given that it is resistant to many antibiotics), it is sometimes called a "super bug."

For more information about MRSA, visit MacVicar Hall to consult with onsite Spelman health experts. You may also visit WebMD online at <http://www.webmd.com> as well as the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa> for further details about the bacterium.

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Please send all photos to
spelmanspotlight@gmail.com
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