

The GRIOT

DANIELLE MCCONNELL, EDITOR
BRITTANY SANGO, EDITOR

In the records of West African history, "Griot" (pronounced gree-oh) was the honored name bestowed on wise and knowledgeable story tellers entrusted with the task of documenting tribal histories and genealogies.

Colorado State University



Introducing R.A.I.V.

Brittany Sango

Did you know that according to the Coalition Against Sexual Assault, one in every six women and one in every 33 men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime?

Or did you know that college age women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted? And an every staggering two minutes, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted? These are just a few statistics to reflect upon.

As part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I would like to introduce a new department from ASCSU.

ASCSU student body president Cooper Anderson and vice president Jennifer Babos have recently implemented a new interpersonal violence department called Rams Against Interpersonal Violence. (RAIV)

RAIV is headed by two coordinators, Allison Watts and Rachel Dreschler. During student body president and vice president elections last spring, one of Cooper and Babos's goals was to increase interpersonal and other forms of violence.

"Cooper Anderson and Jennifer Babos last year ran on the platform that they would increase awareness about sexual assault as well as other forms of interpersonal violence such as domestic violence and sexual assault."

"And in doing so, they created our department so that they could have events to create a grant in order to raise money about sexual assault," Watt stated.

Watt and Dreschler work diligently to spread awareness of interpersonal violence throughout campus. On Oct. 26, they hosted RAINN Day where organizations such as Crossroads, SAVA and VAT came out to the plaza to help educate people

about interpersonal violence and where they can go if they become a victim.

There is also a possibility that awareness can further spread through a grant from the Department of Justice, creating a support website and hosting a spring event.

"We're also trying to get a grant through the Department of Justice so it helps sponsor training the different areas of interpersonal violence of campus and just broaden the base for those services in numerous ways," Dreschler said.

Although RAIV is a new department specializing in interpersonal violence, Dreschler and Watts emphasize that they do not personally work with victims of interpersonal violence.

"We are mandatory reporters because we work for the university so the survivor comes into our office and does tells us their story we will have to report it.

We are not here to be that resource that survivors report to so it is important that survivors know that we are mandatory reporters," Watts said.

If anyone would like to get involved or know more about RAIV, it is just a click away. Go to the ASCSU website and fill out the application.

Interpersonal violence is a serious issue, and more people are needed to be advocates and help spread the word that interpersonal violence is not ok!

"You can also get involved by spreading the word of interpersonal violence and what it is and how to prevent it and being willing to speak out about it.

New Director

Danielle McConnell

The office has faced several struggles over the past few years, in the area of finding a true direction in leadership.

The B/AACC office and students have gone through countless numbers of interviews with candidates, people who have been positioned but were not permanent, and people that were permanent but didn't stay.

However, this academic school year I am pleased to announce we have a new director, one who seems to fit quite well in the office, and shows no interest in running away anytime soon.

As of October, Mrs. Bridgette Johnson became the permanent director of the Black/African American Cultural Center.



Mrs. Bridgette
Courtesy of:
www.facebook.com

Although new to the position she is not new to the office or the students.

Previously serving as the retention coordinator in the office, and mentor to a large group of students, Mrs. Bridgette was welcomed back into the office with open hearts and smiles.

Speaking for myself, I know that Mrs. Bridgette will be an amazing asset to the office this year and for many years to come.

I hope that this will give the office an opportunity to showcase its true design and strength, which was once so intensely held.

I, along with the B/AACC staff, would like to welcome Mrs. Bridgette Johnson to the office. We look forward to see all the amazing things we can do together!

Inside this issue:

<i>New Director</i>	1
<i>Tim Wise Anti-racism Presentation</i>	2
<i>The Cry for Independence</i>	3
<i>Introducing R.A.I.V</i>	4
<i>Being True to Yourself</i>	7
<i>See Me</i>	8
<i>Calendar</i>	10

Tim Wise's Antiracism Presentation

Brittany Sango

Tim Wise came to campus Nov. 4 to discuss racism. Wise made me contemplate things that I have never considered, like why racism is so hard to talk about or what prevents people from having a deeper conversation about racism.

I remember my freshmen year at CSU and how difficult of an adjustment I had because of the lack of diversity. I remembered living in Braiden Hall and being involved with the Key Academic Community.

Although I greatly enjoyed that program, the one setback it did not quite help me with was stepping outside of Braiden and being one of few or the only student of color in many of my classes.

I think racism is so hard to discuss because people are afraid of the comments that may be said. They're afraid to hear someone else's pain or anger about their personal experiences. Or simply people may be afraid to discuss racism because they do not want to offend anyone.

However, after attending Wise's presentation, I realized that in order to open up for deeper and more meaningful conversations about racism and how to solve it, people must overcome these fears.

I believe it is fear that prevents people from developing new strategies to better prepare themselves when faced with racism or even acknowledge that racism still exists.

One student brought up the point that racism is a taboo topic because it contradicts who the United States is as a nation. We as

Americans portray ourselves as the definition of perfection, like nothing ever goes wrong. In the media we portray ourselves as having the ideal body image and flawless skin.

Our government is the right government to choose even though we really do not have a true democracy. But most importantly, the United States is portrayed as the "American Dream" where everyone has equal opportunity to succeed and live the life they have always wanted.

But this is not really how the United States is. Many people were stripped away from everything they knew and taken to a foreign country where their language was not spoken and their families were no more.

One comment that really stood out to me concerning what stops people from having a deeper conversation about racism was that privilege gives an easy way to opt out of ignoring that you or someone else may benefit from violence because it hurts other people. What do you guys think?

Overall, Tim Wise's presentation was great. I enjoyed sitting in a circle with other students and faculty having a casual conversation about racism. And the best part was that everyone felt comfortable and were open to discussing it.

S.E.L.L.O.U.T—Breaking Stereotypes

Danielle McConnell

This semester Colorado State University hosted an intellectual group of individuals to showcase the comical ideas behind stereotypes.

Lou, Vince, Billy, and B.T came to the stage in an attempt to allow the audience to recognize just how often stereotypes are incorrect.

Each of them had their own personality, and their own differences that made the show interesting, and shocked the audience. Take B.T for instance, he is a die hard rock fan.

He said that the concept of every Black man only liking rap music was something he never quite caught on to. He was always only interested in his favorite band, KISS.

The most powerful part of the overall performance was the point when the audience was given the opportunity to, "Ask a Black man anything." This allows the audience to anonymously ask the comedians questions that they may have always been afraid to ask.

Some of the questions were relatively simple and straight to the point, while others were completely based on stereotypes.



Vince, B.T, Billy, & Lou

Courtesy of:
Myspace.com

There were questions like, "What is your favorite kind of Kool-Aid?"

To which Vince simply responded saying that he didn't drink Kool-Aid because it has red dye 40 in it and that is not good for you.

Another question that was asked was why do black people not "talk" English correctly. The best answer of the night came from Billy, who told the audience that first and foremost we do not talk English, we speak it, so maybe individuals should take English classes before they ask questions.

This comedy show was one of the best that I have seen in awhile at CSU. They allowed for their audience members to get a laugh but at the same time understand that the concepts and stereotypes that people believe exist in the Black community, can oftentimes be wrong.

They closed the show by stating one simple fact that is so true to the world we live in today, "Be yourself, everyone else is taken."

El Grito de la Independencia: Celebrando el Orgullo Mexicano *(The Cry for Independence: Celebrating Mexican Pride)*

Mayra Granados (Guest Writer)

La Raza, as well as El Centro, and Campus Activities, hosted an event this year in an effort to gain awareness of the Independence and the pride of Mexico.

This year was the first year that this event was done for National Hispanic Heritage Month, recognizing the date of Mexican independence, September 16th.

It is really important for La Raza to bring awareness to our Mexican culture, history and struggles especially at this moment with the negative stigma around immigration.

The main purpose of this event was to educate the CSU and Fort Collins Communities on the history behind “El Grito” also known as the battle cry of the Mexican War of Independence.

La Raza had someone read the actual script from the original Grito from Hidalgo, which kicked off the celebration.

The Grito was followed by the Mexican national anthem, spoken word, and other speakers. After the speakers there was a

special presentation by Ballet Folklórico Raíces de Mexico (folk roots of Mexico)

The night ended with special guests Banda La Revuelta, a Mexican regional band, which started off with a special tribute song after a moment of silence in honor of those who have left their motherland and migrated to the U.S. in hopes for a better life.

The tribute was followed by activities for kids, snacks, and live music with a dance area for guests.

This event was important not just for La Raza, but for CSU because it helps us get closer to reaching our goal of promoting diversity.

There are many misconceptions about the Latinos in the U.S. currently, especially with the broken immigration system and issues other issues surrounding that.

This event shed light on some history and traditions that differentiate the many Latin countries that are often generalized.

I believe that the special moment of silence not only gave us the chance to honor, but also united everyone in attendance.

Personally I believe that the most important aspect of this event and other cultural events put on around campus is that it gives us the opportunity to stay connected with and celebrate our heritage.

It is really important for students of diverse and minority backgrounds to stay connected and be empowered by their various identities.

If we are given the opportunity to participate in these kinds of events, it will make us feel more comfortable and welcome in the college setting which will help increase retention of minority students, all while bringing awareness to majority populations.



Mexican Independence
Courtesy of:
www.google.com

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Brittany Sango

Most people do not stop to really think how privileged they are. Most people take for granted they are able-bodied, male or can see.

But how many people actually stop to consider that just being able to use the bathroom is also a privilege? Not many. The GLBTQ community is often faced with just this problem, or rather the lack of gender neutral bathrooms.

There are not many gender neutral bathrooms on Colorado State University's campus, forcing some students and faculty to wonder around for a bathroom they feel comfortable using.

I asked Foula Dimopoulos, director of the Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Queer Office how many gender neutral bathrooms were on campus.

Ze admitted that ze was unable to give an exact number, but is currently working with some students to identify where the gender neutral bathrooms are.

"We are actually working with some students across campus to determine exactly how many gender inclusive restrooms."

"There are, I can tell you of four or five that I know of. There is one in the Lory Student Center on the second floor on the north side across from the north ballroom."

"The Rec Center has a number of gender inclusive restrooms as well as a changing room, which makes it very unique for... and then there is one in the general services building where Office of Women's Programs and

Studies is. And those are the ones that I can name off the top of my head."

"Oh, and in the new behavioral sciences building. There are a few over there," said Dimopoulos.

Although gender inclusive restrooms are considered a main concern in the GLBTQ community, not everyone may realize why.

Dimopoulos stated that there are people on campus and across the country that do not feel comfortable walking into a gender designated bathroom.

"Some of the folks actually identify as transgender in terms of not fitting neatly into binary boxes of men and women and some folks identify as gender queer. And some folks have done and have been able to do some things to alter not only their expression of gender but also their bodies to more closely match their gender identity," said Dimopoulos.

Often times the GLBTQ community risks violence and harassment from other people when entering a bathroom.

"I think that one of the main pieces is the threat of violence and the threat of harm, and that's everywhere. If you're in NYC and you're trying to find the right restroom or if in Colorado, Ze said"

"Some of the other pieces really are very fundamental in that if you don't feel safe when you go to a restroom, it's not uncommon to find students who will wait until they get to a restroom they feel comfortable with. So imagine waiting four hours and trying to be in class and trying to concentrate and that not actually being able to happen because you have

to go to the bathroom," Dimopoulos stated.

Judy Munchow, director of the recreation center, has taken what it means to be a GLBTQ advocate and have a gender inclusive campus to a new level.

Recently, gender inclusive bathrooms and locker rooms were built as part of the new recreation center. CSU's recreation is now unique in that it one of very few recreation centers to include this.

"There's not really another place where that happens. It's one of the few in the country I think and I think that her passion and her sense of justice and inclusion make it possible for that to happen with the input of students, staff and faculty she was trying to serve," Dimopoulos said.

Ze believes that part of being an advocate for the GLBTQ community is being conscious that restrooms are one of the places people tend to take for granted even though restrooms are not always a safe place.

"For other folks it's that awareness that's one of the first steps. And then being able to educate yourself whether it's reading some of the campus climate assessments or reading firsthand accounts in books," Ze said.

Real Talk Series— Gender and Racial Slurs

Brittany Sango

I want you to sit back for a few minutes and close your eyes. Now think back to any point in your life when you encountered a racial slur.

How did it make you feel? What did you decide to do about it?

During a real talk session, students joined in the B/AACC office to discuss their experiences. Everything from the "N" word to the experiences students faced on campus were expressed.

The "N" Word in particular came up several times during discussion. I realized that as I've gotten older the word is more frequently used by black people as a term of endearment, now the word is used by more than just black people.

Another topic was how to be politically correct. One student said that being politically correct may be offensive to some people while ok for others.

Terms such as Hispanic or Asian tend to lump groups together when they are actually from different places.

One student felt the best way to honor someone's ethnicity was simply by asking them how they identify, and I agree.

Yes, some black people may prefer the term African-American or black, and some people may prefer Latino(a) to Hispanic.

I think the most important thing to consider and take away from this real talk is how important it is to be aware of racial slurs and respect how other people identify themselves.

Real Talks are held every Tuesday at 4p.m. in the Black/African American Cultural Center. Everyone is welcome to attend!



Experiences

Joe Goings

After working for the GRIOT for the first three years of my college career, it was time for me to call it quits after my junior year.

I served as both reporter and editor for the newsletter, and enjoyed the experience that working for the office gave me.

I came to CSU wanting to be a journalist, and the GRIOT gave me my first opportunity to practice writing.

It started off very slow; I had never written for a publication before college. But as my first year progressed I became better and better.

Going into my second year at CSU I was given the title of Editor of the GRIOT, a position I held for the final two years of my employment in the office. Being the editor meant that all of the responsibility was on me.

I had to write the stories, assign the stories, take and receive pictures of events, compile the stories, edit the stories and, finally, format all of the pictures



Joe Goings
Courtesy of:
www.facebook.com

and stories so that they fit perfectly into the GRIOT.

I learned better time management due to the amount of responsibilities the editor's position entailed.

It taught me how to apportion my time so that everything would get done when it was supposed to be done.

That particular skill has helped me into my senior year, as I become more involved out of the office and find new ways to grow as a college student and as an individual.

I greatly enjoyed the time I spent in the B/AACC office, and I would like to spend more time in there now but my schedule won't allow it. I wish the GRIOT staff and everyone working and visiting the office the very best as my collegiate career comes to a close.

I will never forget what I learned and experienced as a member of the B/AACC team.

What the Griot is Teaching Me

Brittany Sango

As part of my student staff responsibilities and experience working for the Black African American Cultural Center, I have been assigned the task of being the second editor of the Griot.

My experience thus far has been much like working for a magazine or a newspaper. It consists of four to five stories per edition, countless interviews and finding the perfect words for stories.

This is my fifth year as a double major in technical journalism and communication studies with a women's studies minor, and I have not had an internship.

However, I have to say that it is truly a blessing to be an editor for the Griot. My professors have always told me that it takes passion, dedication and perseverance to work in the world of journalism.

These are qualities that I am most proud to say I possess and will always have. Journalism doesn't pay me much, but it is definitely something worthwhile to hold on to.



Brittany Sango
Courtesy of:
www.facebook.com

Even though the Griot is not an internship, I feel that it has enabled me to gain the experience of something similar to working in the real world for a magazine, which is my ideal career and then on to owning my own young women's multicultural magazine.

I admit that I am often nervous when deadlines approach and stress easily creeps up on me because I want people to believe that I am a great writer.

It is true I need improvement, but that is what gaining the experience of writing is all about for me. I just hope I can meet the expectations demanded of me like those who have worked for the Griot before.

What I hope to gain from working for the Griot is more background knowledge into how publications function and improve my writing.

The articles I produce should say something about me as a person, journalist and future career woman. Hopefully, all my articles will speak volumes.

Overcoming Domestic Violence

Anonymous

It was a beautiful spring day, the sun was blaring down as I walked through the apartment complex.

Through the sun I heard echoing screams of terror. Help me! Help. Then quiet sobbing. In the background, a man's voice deep and blistering, demanding respect and obedience.

I cringed as I flashed back to old college days. The first year of college, where life was simple yet at the same time complicated and overwhelming.

My first boyfriend, the oldest frat brother on the yard, really past his time but still hanging in there.

He was enchanting because of the respect he garnered and I was drawn to him even though I knew that he was not the kind of person that I would normally associate myself with.

I knew that his character was questionable but he was a delight and treated me like a queen until...

It was a late night and we had been out to a frat party. It was fun but he had been drinking. I was a bit annoyed at his behavior and left him at the party.

Later he came to my dorm room. I had been lucky enough to have my roommate

move out but this night it would not be as advantageous as I once thought.

About midnight a knock came at my door. I was half sleep but still out of habit got up and open the door. It was him.

He was worse than when I left him drunk and not happy. I wanted him to leave and was sorry that I had opened the door.

But I couldn't take it back and it was too late. I told him to leave but he insisted. He grab me and threw me up against the wall.

My head rang with pain as I with disbelief screamed "get out!". It just made him madder. He began to slap me with an open fist. Like the woman I could hear scream now,

I begged for someone to help me. Even though the rooms shared a phone to the point you could hear your phone mates conversation, no one responded.

I was dazed and amazed that no one came to help me. No one responded to my screams, to my sobbing. My blood splattered the walls and I knew I was going to lose consciousness. I gave up, he took what he wanted and left.

The next day everyone saw my bruised swollen face and busted lip. I was so hurt and astonished that no one helped me. I

came back to scream of the woman on the balcony.

As I begin to say we have to call the police. His hand gripped my arm and he said, **It's none of your business. If you don't want the same thing get upstairs.** I look at him, my husband and did what he said.

Abuse is not only sexual or physical but verbal and psychological as well. Not only women suffer but men endure abuse as well.

What I learned was that often we choose the same type of people in our lives, on a constant basis, meaning over and over. It is a tragedy but often something we cannot escape.

My husband wasn't the man in my dorm room but he was just as abusive. To stop the cycle, I learned to look at the warning sign. Aggressiveness is often slight at first but the old saying is true.

If he will hit you once, he will hit you again and again. Verbal abuse is just as toxic. So look at who is in your life and how they treat you. We all deserve respect and love.



Domestic Violence
Courtesy of:
www.google.com

EDITOR'S NOTES

Being True To Yourself

Danielle McConnell

In life the most important thing is being true to yourself. That spans in all arenas, from your job choice, to your relationships. In college it is always hard to see the direction you want to go, especially starting off.

All types of new people and ideas that would have otherwise never been introduced to you are now surrounding you. Oftentimes we get lost, and the way we thought we wanted to live, in no way fits the things that we are seeing, and because of that, we attempt to join the crowd and do what looks "cool".

Speaking from a woman's perspective, we probably have the hardest time when we come to college. It is a whole new world of freedom, boys, parties, and school. We approach it as something we can handle, and that we are more than ready for, but in reality, that is rarely the case.

It only takes one time, to ruin the image, and the standing we as women want to hold. That means, one test, one date, one party, and everything that involves us could look completely different.

I want women to understand that when coming to college the most important thing you can hold onto is what you believe, and what

you know is right for you. At the end of the day that is the only thing that matter, and the only thing you can count on.

Coming from a woman that had to grow from experience, and learn the hard way, believe me, it is so important to be yourself and trust all of your instincts. It is crucial to remember who you are and who you want to be in this crazy world of college.

Each year I see a new group of beautiful young women come to this school, and each year I watch a group of them fall off the map, either by academics, or social misfortune. We have got to hold ourselves to a higher standard, and know that we deserve to be talked to, treated like, and admired like the queens we all are.

That starts by simply looking in the mirror and realizing who you are. **If you can't define yourself, someone else will and it is almost always a definition that is far from the person that you truly are.**

The only hope I have is that as the years progress, and I finish my journey through college, that the women that come in under me, will represent themselves in a way that they can be proud of.

Stressing the Importance of Staying Healthy

Brittany Sango

It's getting colder now. The sun isn't staying out very long, the air nips at everyone's faces and it's time to pull out the winter attire. For those of you enjoying the cold weather, that's great. But it's also cold and flu season, and they brought the meningococcal disease with them.

Lately I've been talking with other students about getting the meningococcal disease vaccine, and I've been wondering if I should get one too. For the past two years it seems like CSU has been scarred with some new outbreak going around campus.

Last year was the swine flu, and this year it is the meningococcal disease.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for everyone to stay as healthy as possible. As students, we have multiple jobs and obligations. We lack serious sleep as if there never was such a thing and adopt unhealthy eating habits that are further increased by the Lory Student Center food court.

Now I know some people may be concerned about getting the meningococcal disease vaccine, but at least consider getting it. I'm not going to tell anyone that they have to get the vaccine because I think it is important to research the disease and the effects of the vaccine.

Last week a friend in class had insomnia for two days and looked like she was going to vomit and faint. Some people just have negative reactions to getting vaccines.

This is why I say research vaccines as much as possible before getting them.

If you do not want to get the vaccine please try to maintain your immune system and even try to improve it. No one can afford to be sick when they have to go to work, write a paper or study for a test.

Please wash your hands after using the bathroom. Carry hand sanitizer. You can even carry some Lysol spray. If you need to, do whatever you have to do in order for you to take care of business.

And I must say that I greatly appreciate Hartshorn and the **Public Safety Team's efforts to ensure that students and faculty have knowledge about the meningococcal disease, including its symptoms and where to go to get the vaccine.** I would also like to thank everyone who is doing their part in keeping healthy and therefore keeping others healthy.

Creative Corner

See Me

Danielle McConnell

I want you to see me simply as me,
The broken, shattered puzzle pieces that make me.
The strength, love, and passion I hold within.
Just see me, only me, just as me.
Know that the face I put on for the world isn't always the face
that really represents me.
It's my wall, to hide the pain, the bruises, and the scars.
Few ever get beyond that wall.
Over the years the wall has been broken down, but also made
thicker, taller and secured.
There has yet to be a person to come through this wall, that
hasn't made me want to make that wall strong.
So I want you to see me.
The woman that just wants her fairytale.
To reach people those have a desire to make it beyond these
walls.
Show me love that few actually take the time to present,
Prove to me that the world I see isn't the world that truly exists.
The real reason people shy away from me,
I stand too tall, I love too strong
And my passion is one that exceeds the limitations of the
average individual.
They shy away because to take all of me on, is a battle few are
properly armored to succeed in.
To really see me takes eyes that an everyday individual does not
possess.
So all I say to you, is know that it takes more than sweet words,
and fake faces to get to the real me,
It's your actions, your passions, and your sense of self that gets
through to me.
It is as simple and as complicated as that.



The next issue of the GRIOT will be published in January 2011.

If you would like to contribute to the GRIOT send articles, drawings, poems or short stories to Danikm@rams.colostate.edu

Visit the Black/African American Cultural Center in 204 Lory Student Center.



Non Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage PAID
 Fort Collins, CO 80523
 Permit No. 19

Office Hours: 8:00 am— 5:00 pm

Colorado State University
 Black/African American Cultural Center
 204 Lory Student Center
 Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-8016
 www.baacc.colostate.edu
 Phone: 970-491-5781
 Fax: 970-491-0492
 Email: bss@lamar.colostate.edu

December 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Tom Woods: How Economic Illiteracy is Dismantling Your Life
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30 GPS Session 3