

The Record

January 15, 2010

<http://record.horacemann.org>

Volume 107, Issue 15

Film Explores Racial Identity, Acceptance

PAMELA MISHKIN
Staff Writer

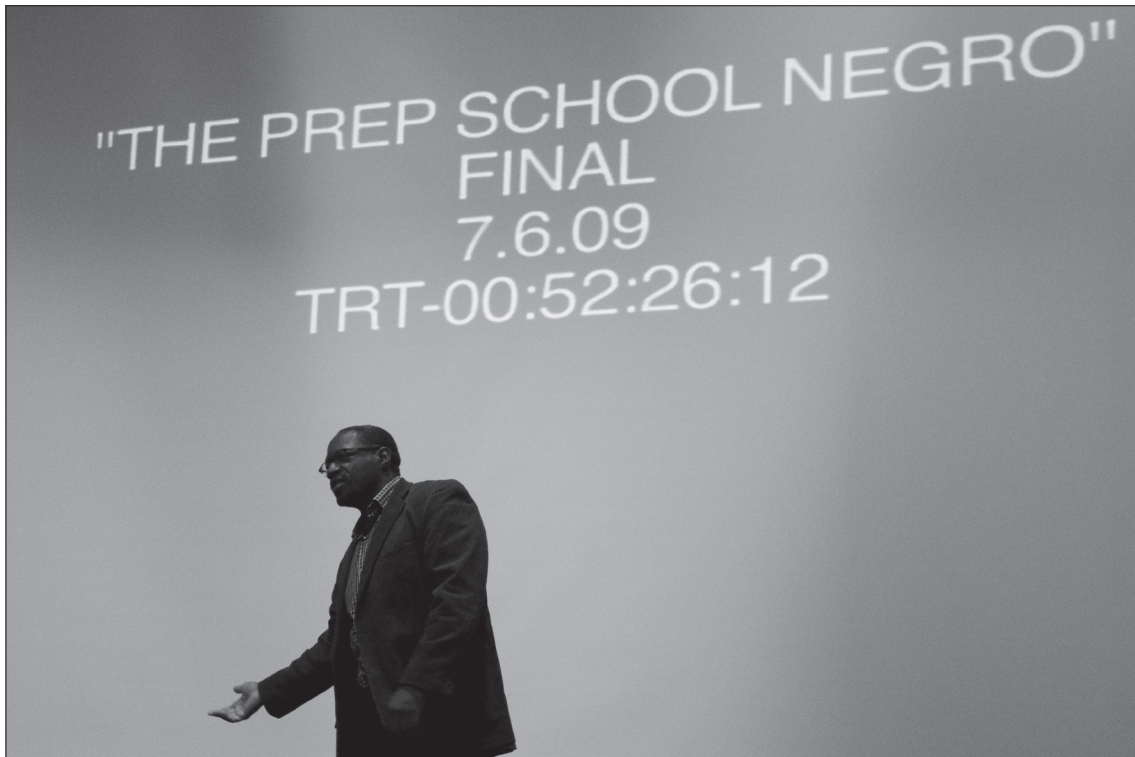
"That's not my brother, that's somebody else," André Robert Lee's sister said of her brother's transformation following his entrance to an elite independent school. This Tuesday, the school viewed Lee's experience after attending a private school in his documentary film *The Prep School Negro*, and then engaged in a question and answer session.

The film focused on Lee's experience as a minority student at the Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia as well as those of students in similar situations today. Lee documents what he calls "psychological homelessness, when you don't fit into the majority."

Drawing heavily on Lee's own experiences, the film explored how blacks entering prep schools from poor neighborhoods can find themselves caught between two worlds, that of the school and that of their home environment.

"In this community I'm considered a real black," one student in the film explained. "In my neighborhood I'm considered a white boy."

Special Assistant to the Head of School for Diversity Rodney Burford and 11th Grade Dean Alicia Hines pushed to show the film to the whole student body after seeing it at the People of Color conference in Denver



Jacob Salzman/Staff Photographer

André Lee, director of *The Prep School Negro*, fielded questions about attending a private school as an ethnic minority. The film concentrated on the dynamic between minorities and racially or socioeconomically disparate majorities.

in early December.

"The film is really important because too often we think of people of color as the subject, whereas this film shifts the focus to the community," Burford said.

Reactions to the film were mixed. Wilfredo Gomez (11), who attended the December conference but had not seen the film until Tuesday, felt

that many of the issues raised in the film correlated with his personal experience coming to Horace Mann.

"The school changes you in ways that you feel like you have to change to adapt to the environment," Gomez said. "You start feeling resentment for your family's behavior."

Looking forward, many students and administrators expressed hope

that the conversation sparked by the assembly would continue.

"I hope the film gets people to see that there's an issue and to talk about diversity more," Reuben Dizengoff (11), who also attended the conference, said. Besides an increase in dialogue, Gomez said that he hoped for an increase in racial and socioeconomic diversity at HM.

BioChem, Biology Classes Visit *Body Worlds* Exhibit

ANTONIA ANTONOVA &
JENNA SPITZER
Staff Writers

Frozen in perfect running form, balancing on the sole of his left foot with each one of his lean muscles stripped off, fanned out, and hanging

along the attached bone, the skinless "Runner Man" was one of over 200 preserved human specimens that students observed in a field trip to the *Body Worlds* exhibit last Friday.

"To get a better understanding of what they will be carrying inside their bodies for the rest of their lives," students in three Biology and

BioChemistry classes traveled to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Science teacher Dr. Kathleen Howard, who originally proposed the trip, said.

Students took notes and toured through five galleries displaying entire cadavers, individual organs, and transparent body slices. Each body part was preserved by plastination, a process invented by an anatomist and founder of the exhibit that allows scientists to replace human organic matter with special plastics that prevent decomposition.

While the exhibit presented and compared muscles, nerves, and blood vessels of individual organs, both healthy and diseased, its focus was the display of life-like body plastinates frozen in different poses of daily activity, Science Department Head Russell Hatch, a chaperone on the trip, said.

Upon viewing the bodies, students and faculty chaperones said they experienced a broad spectrum of emotions, ranging from fascination to repulsion.

BioChem student Rebecca Matteson (10) "found the experience really traumatizing," she said. "I was actually in tears by the end of it. I found myself trying to make some kind of human connection to the displays, but at the same time not being able to connect to anything."

Edgar Legaspi (10) said that the

exhibit was "haunting because of its ethical implications." He said that "some of the human bodies were arranged in poses that didn't give any common respect to the dead."

Legaspi was particularly uncomfortable with a display named "The Angel," in which a woman's deltoids, or back and shoulder muscles, were expanded outward into a wing-shaped configuration. "I felt like it was more of an experimental art form than a form of scientific research," he said.

"The exhibit was extremely artistic," Gideon Broshy (10) said. "That's part of the reason why I thought it was more of a celebration of the human body as opposed to an exploitation of it."

Many students said that moral standards were upheld at the exhibition since the people on display had chosen to donate their bodies before their deaths.

see **BODIES**, page 5

Stomach Virus Plagues School

JESSICA SKOCZYLAS
Staff Writer

Last Friday at around 6 p.m., Robinson Strong (11) was rushed to the hospital by ambulance for exhibiting extreme symptoms of a norovirus, or stomach virus. His case was one of the most severe among those of approximately 110 students and 21 faculty and staff in the Nursery through Upper Divisions who were affected by the virus in the past week, Head of School Dr. Tom Kelly said.

The sickness first arose early last week among Maintenance personnel, and then spread rapidly in the Middle and Upper Divisions on Friday, Kelly said. Another UD student and Strong were sent to the hospital Friday evening and Kelly sent six others home in cars because they were too ill to take public transportation, he said.

Head Nurse Patricia D'Avanzo saw an especially large increase in visits to her office on Friday, with complaints of vomiting and nausea, she said.

While symptoms of the norovirus are similar to those of food poisoning, the illness is not related to food. Rather, it is an annual illness with no treatment, D'Avanzo said. Those infected with the illness are advised by the New York City Department of Health to rest at home and stay hydrated until fully recovered.

The school has consulted the Department of Health, which said that a growing number of schools in the area are facing the norovirus, Kelly said. Symptoms of the virus include vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, stomach cramps, fever, chills, and fatigue, usually lasting for one to two days, D'Avanzo said. "It is a fast-moving virus."

Students and faculty infected by the norovirus described experiencing a similar chronology of symptoms, beginning with "excruciating" stomach pain that led to vomiting spells and a fever, Mykel Yizar (12) said.

While Yizar "couldn't eat anything from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning," Strong stayed in the hospital until 4 a.m. last Saturday morning, where "it took about five bags of fluid through an IV to get me re-hydrated to a safe level," he said.

The virus has required numerous faculty members to stay at home as well. "Three of my six teachers weren't

see **VIRUS**, page 5



Jacob Salzman/Staff Photographer

Science teacher Dr. Kathleen Howard discusses human anatomy in her 10th grade BioChem class. The class attended the *Body Worlds* exhibit last week.

The Record
231 West 246th Street
Bronx, NY 10471

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
US Postage PAID
Bronx, NY
Permit #185