



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

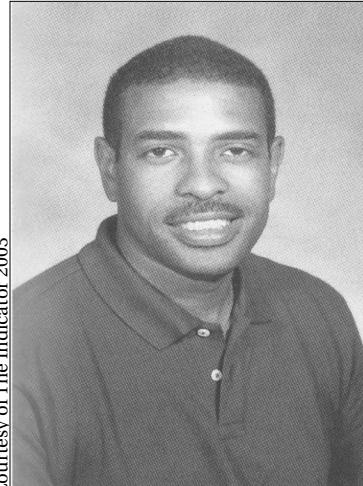
*"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"*

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Former Music Teacher Arrested in Undercover Weapons Sting



Courtesy of The Indicator 2003

Former Music teacher Theophilis Burroughs

By CHESTER DUBOV

A former Stuyvesant High School Music teacher was arrested on charges of illegal gun sales, tax evasion, conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal possession and sale of marijuana, and money laundering on Tuesday, September 14, according to legal documents obtained by *The Spectator* from the Bronx County District Attorney's office. The former teacher, Theophilis Burroughs, currently on unpaid medical leave from the Department of Education, was indicted, along with twelve others, in the culmination of a year-long un-

dercover investigation into the trafficking of illegal guns and untaxed cigarettes.

According to a press release from the Bronx County District Attorney's office, Burroughs was arrested at a warehouse in the Westchester Square neighborhood of the Bronx, where he and the other defendants in the case had been procuring illegal cartons of untaxed cigarettes, for re-selling the contraband at significant markups. Burroughs also sold over ten illegal firearms to undercover law enforcement agents, including several handguns, two Norinco SKS Assault Rifles and one Kalashnikov AK-47. Burroughs directed his undercover customers to a warehouse storage facility in Spartanburg, South Carolina, to pick up the weapons. Out of the 84 counts leveled against Burroughs in the indictment, four are class B felonies, punishable by up to 25 years in a state penitentiary.

The New York Post reported on the case on Wednesday, September 15, alleging that Burroughs praised radical Islamic groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah while engaging in price negotiations with undercover officers over the weapons sales. Burroughs is not, however, being indicted on terrorism-related charges, and his case will remain in the New York State criminal justice system as opposed to federal court,

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New Cut Policy Instated with Mixed Reception

By BRIAN KIM

A new cut policy states that after a student's first unexcused absence in a class, the teacher of the class must call the student's parent; after the second, the assistant principal of the department must call home and after the third, the cuts must be reported to the student's guidance counselor.

This policy works alongside last year's cut policy, under which any student with more than three unexcused class absences may not receive a grade higher than a 90 for the marking period in the class, with six unexcused absences, no higher than an 80 and with ten unexcused absences, no higher than a 65.

"What I want to know is, is this student excessively cutting just one class or multiple classes?" Principal Stanley Teitel said. "If the student is cutting just one class, then that's for the assistant principal of that department to handle, but if he cuts multiple classes, I've got to find out what's going on."

If a student excessively cuts multiple classes, Teitel will speak with him to find out why he is not attending his classes. Teitel will then take the appropriate administrative measures to make sure that the student starts attending his classes.

Teitel decided to implement the policy on his own. "We need to stop students from cutting in general. There's no reason to wait to

take action," he said.

The faculty and administration support the new policy. "It'd be better by letting the parents know by the first cut," math teacher Ashvin Jaishankar said. "Hopefully it'll prevent rampant cutting by trying to nip it at the bud before it becomes a serious problem."

"We are simply passing along information to the parents," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said. "As a result, there is increased communication between the parents and school, which is always a good thing."

Students, however, are divided. "A call home after just one cut is acting a bit too fast," senior David Huang said.

Sophomore Jane Handorf agreed. "It'd be more appropriate to call from the second [cut]," she said.

Other students feel that the new policy will be beneficial. "If the parents find out, they can do something," freshman Tyler Chan said.

However, implementing the policy may be easier said than done. "I've already cut like four classes in the past two days, and nobody's called my parents," said a senior who wished to remain anonymous.

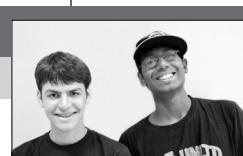
"I'll make a phone call. But I'm not playing phone tag. If [the student's parents] don't pick up on the first call, I'm not going to keep calling back to make sure they get the message," math teacher Dawn Vollaro said.

Opinions

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Contemplating Cordoba

Park51 or The Ground Zero Mosque: Stuyvesant students join the debate.



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Arts & Entertainment

A Brief History of the Big Sib T-shirt

The history behind the Big Sib T-Shirts--more than just pop culture references.

DOE Now Charging Hefty Price to Keep School Buildings Open After Hours

By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

The end of the school day often does not mean the emptying of the school building.

Some days one may find the Coral Reef Club cleaning tanks until 7 p.m., the Stuyvesant Theater Community (STC) tech crew building sets until 8 p.m., the fencing team participating in matches against an away team in the gymnasium until 7 p.m. or the Speech and Debate team staying in school until 9 p.m. to prepare for a tournament.

Students and faculty alike are used to staying in the building well past official school hours. However, this may not be the case any longer.

The new Department of Education (DOE) building regulation mandates that principals of New York City public schools allot \$400 from their school budget for every hour they open their school building beyond the instructional school day, which spans from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

"[In previous years] I could use [the building] as much as I wanted including days, nights and weekends, as long as I filed a permit saying when we were going to be there," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

"Now, with that permit, there is going to be a bill."

Teitel received an e-mail in July informing him of the extended building use fee.

On Friday, September 17, Teitel spoke to a correspondent from the DOE. They came to an agreement that he could use the building for free from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Teitel then chose to pay the extended use fee to open the building for an extra half hour in the morning, so that the building could be open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"This isn't small money here," Teitel said. "We're talking about a large cost, and that's just in the morning."

According to Teitel, opening the school one extra hour for every day of the 180-day fiscal year would cost over \$4,000.

Social studies teacher Anthony Valentin, who has a long commute to Stuyvesant from Orange County, New York, reflected on how he would be affected by the policy. "In the morning, my train gets me to Stuyvesant at around 6:25 a.m. The problem is finding a place within several blocks of Stuyvesant to stay in before the doors open," Valentin said. "After school, I usually grade papers, input grades, or write exams. [With this new policy], I

would have to leave the building at 6, get to the train station and wait around there for an hour."

Though the cost of keeping the building open before 8 a.m. is covered, Teitel is unsure of what he will have to pay to accommodate after-school activities. "[The additional funds the DOE gave us] don't seem to be anywhere near what we might need. Money is going to be deducted from Stuyvesant's budget to cover the charge," Teitel said.

DOE Deputy Press Secretary Marge Feinberg said, "Principals were given allocations this year above and beyond their school budgets to support significant usage of the buildings for school activities after 6 p.m. and on weekends. They are being asked to operate within this additional allocation as opposed to the previous policy of allowing unlimited use for school activities."

According to Teitel, Stuyvesant received approximately 130,000 dollars for its extended time use allotment. The amount of money each school received was based solely on student population. While Teitel conceded that this was the fairest way to distribute funds,

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Freshmen Required to Attend Four Workshops to Help Them Succeed

By NABANITA HOSSAIN and KATIE LEMBRIKOVA

In accordance with a new administrative decree, every member of this year's incoming freshmen class is required to attend four Guidance Counselor workshops geared towards fostering academic success at Stuyvesant. Three of the workshops focus on time management, study habits, note taking and textbook reading, and will meet over the course of late September and early October. One session has already met. The final workshop, taking place on December 6th, 7th, and 8th, will prepare students for future programming decisions regarding the fulfillment of graduation requirements.

The workshops were instituted at the request of Principal Stanley Teitel, who urged the guidance department to develop programs for freshmen to ease their transition to Stuyvesant. "Since the ninth graders come from different middle schools, it is important to really facilitate a smooth transition for freshmen," guidance counselor Ronnie Parnes said. "We didn't have funding for this program previously."

A group of guidance counselors began developing the workshops' curricula over the summer, and once the school year began, the entire guidance department got together in order to finalize the program's operational details. As the program is currently structured, freshmen attend workshops in groups with their homerooms, and are taught by their homeroom's guidance counselor. Guidance



Freshmen are required to attend all four orientation workshops conducted by their guidance counselors.

counselors run two afternoon sessions a week for the program's four week duration.

At the first workshop, held on Monday, September 20, students were given an informational packet outlining time management strategies, as well as ways to overcome procrastination and improve study habits.

Students in the workshop were required to complete various worksheets designed to help them assess their own time management skills, and find areas in need of improvement.

"We filled out quizzes and checklists about procrastination and study spaces, and I got to know where I needed to improve when it came to time management," freshman Thomas Bajko said. "I now know where I can work where distractions are minimal and where I

won't be enticed by computers and other electronics."

Following the first session, however, some students remained skeptical about the workshops' utility.

"I don't really think they [the workshops] are going to help me since I know what works for me," freshman Othilla Wlodarczyk said.

The guidance department has high hopes for the workshops. "We hope that it will be helpful and give [freshmen] some tools," guidance counselor Jennifer Engler said.

Some students offered a somewhat ironic critique of the workshop from a time-management perspective.

"It'd be better if they were during the day," freshman Danielle Polin said. "[The workshops] affect your extracurriculars."

Arts & Entertainment

A Brief History of the Big Sib T-shirt

The history behind the Big Sib T-Shirts--more than just pop culture references.

Mostafa Elmabdoly / The Spectator

News

Big Time Crushed

By ANIKA RASTGIR
and ISAREE THATCHAICHAWALIT

Junior Ahlam Rafita spent a summer afternoon sending over 1,000 text messages. She wasn't text messaging her friends, though. Instead, she was voting in a contest to win a performance for Stuyvesant by the band Big Time Rush.

Thanks to her votes, Stuyvesant won the concert. However, Principal Stanley Teitel declined the contest prize.

"I went to The Spectator journalism class to get a sense of who this group is, but no one had heard of them before," Teitel said. "I went on Google and found that they are for the younger set. They are not appropriate for our group."

The band was created for the Nickelodeon television series "Big Time Rush," which, according to The Associated Press, is targeted at six- to 14-year-olds. The series, which incorporates the band's original music, portrays an average group of high school friends whose lives change when they move to Los Angeles and form a successful boy band. The band members include Logan Henderson, James Maslow, Carlos Pena, Jr. and Kendall Schmidt, all of whom are close to age 20.

"The boys in the band are cute," Rafita said. "Their music is not like most boy band music."

The performance by Big Time Rush was the prize for the Walgreens School Spirit Contest, which was administrated by CBS Radio Inc. and sponsored by Walgreens.

According to the contest's official rules, only primary or secondary schools in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston-Galveston, Los Angeles, New York, Orlando, Phoenix, St. Louis and San Francisco were able to enter the contest.

To enter the contest, which lasted from Monday, August 2, to Sunday, August 22, students 13 or older had to either text or go online to vote for their school. At the end of the voting period, the school with the most votes in each city won a concert by Big Time Rush.

Teitel was informed that Stuyvesant had won when he received a phone call from Julie Ibrahim, Activation Manager at CBS Radio Altitude Group, on Monday, September 20.

Several Big Time Rush fans were distraught because of Teitel's decision.

"[Teitel] did not give us an option and automatically assumed our opinion," Rafita said. "I literally spent my whole day [voting]."

"I am disappointed that even though we did win, that we didn't get the concert," said junior Hema Lochan, who also voted in the contest several times.

Rafita asked Teitel if it were possible to reclaim the performance, but Teitel said no, as he had already declined to hold the concert.

Teitel did not receive any other comments from Big Time Rush fans, "although there might be more after people read this article," he said.

Other students remained indifferent about declining the performance.

"I have really no opinion, because I never heard about the situation or the band before, so it doesn't really make a difference," junior Tiffany Tang said.

"It's like a Nick[elodeon] band right? I don't know much about them," said sophomore Derrick Choe, regarding Big Time Rush. "I wouldn't mind them doing a concert, but I agree [with Teitel's decision]. It would be better for elementary or middle school for sure."

As Stuyvesant did not accept the concert, the contest's official rules state that CBS Radio Inc. will select another school based on the number of votes.

According to Teitel, Stuyvesant has never won a contest of this nature before. He said he would be open to having the concert "if everyone said they knew [the band] and [it was] appropriate."

In this scenario, he felt it was pointless to invite the group to perform. "We would probably have to beg people to come," Teitel said. "If it had been Jay-Z or Eminem, I could have filled the whole theater, no problem."

According to Teitel, Stuyvesant has never won a contest of this nature before. He said he would be open to having the concert "if everyone said they knew [the band] and [it was] appropriate."

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DOE Now Charging Hefty Price to Keep School Buildings Open After Hours

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he noted that it must also be taken into account that schools do not run the same after-school activities.

"I don't know quite how it will work here. I'm in flux," Teitel said.

Several after-school activities could be affected by this new policy, including student extracurricular activities, SING!, Public School Athletic League (PSAL) games and parent-teacher conferences.

Major Stuyvesant clubs, such as the STC and Speech and Debate team, may find it difficult to deal with the limited time.

"The STC already has a very difficult job of putting on entirely student-run productions in a very short period of time," senior and STC Communications Director Willa Beckman said. "We will have to work very hard to make sure no rehearsal time is wasted and find other vicinities that we can use for rehearsals. Hopefully the shows themselves won't suffer."

According to senior and Speech president Omika Jikaria, the large Speech and Debate team needs extra time to practice and prepare before tournaments to see that everything runs smoothly, which would mean staying well past 6 p.m.

"We have different coaches coming in every day of the week and [...] we have to work around their personal schedules and work something out that goes well for everyone," Jikaria said. "The last thing we need is an issue with time constraints."

Faculty members also voiced concerns regarding the extended use fee. "It's a challenge to get out early," Biology teacher and faculty advisor of Coral Reef Club Stephen McClellan said. "Taking care of living organisms and coral reefs is hard work because they need water changes and certain things that are time-consuming. We'll have to figure out how to reschedule our maintenance program, but I'm hoping everything will work out for the best."

Teitel also acknowledged that because SING! rehearsals typically run as late as 8 p.m. and various crews often use the school building during the weekends or mid-winter recess, rehearsal hours may have to be cut down. "We'll have to trim it to certain hours because that's all we can afford," he said.

The PSAL has also declared that if a sports game runs past 6 p.m., the principal must pay for the extended time use of the gymnasiums.

"If teams come late, then games

do not start on time and that can be a problem. Games themselves can run long and it takes half an hour to clean up equipment, so ending at 6 won't be easy," Assistant Principal Physical Education and Health Larry Barth said. "All I can hope for is flexibility on everyone's part. We wouldn't want a game to end before the buzzer sounds."

"Away teams usually arrive around 4 to 4:30 [...] and unforeseen equipment failures inevitably happen. All this put together makes it very hard, if not impossible, for us to vacate the building on time," senior and fencing team captain Andrei Tapai said. "[The PSAL] should foot the bill or find some alternate solution for completing games in a timely fashion."

Teitel will also have to pay to use the building for the evening session of parent-teacher conferences. Chancellor of the DOE Joel Klein mandates that schools hold open school nights so that parents can meet their child's teachers. However, Teitel said that if the DOE's extended building use policy upholds, he will not pay for it and will hold two afternoon open school sessions instead.

Due to questions raised regarding the effectiveness and reasoning behind this policy, it is under reconsideration by the DOE.

Former Music Teacher Arrested in Undercover Weapons Sting

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which adjudicates cases concerning national security.

Burroughs taught at Stuyvesant from 2002 to 2003, after being placed in the school by the Board of Education to fill a vacancy in the music department. "We had no idea who we were getting," Assistant Principal of Music, Fine Arts and Technology Dr. Raymond Wheeler said. "We had nothing to do with it. We had to take him."

According to Dr. Wheeler, Burroughs did not assimilate well into the department. "In some other institution, he would have done very well with his knowledge and skills,"

Dr. Wheeler said. "He was very much into Marching Band."

Burroughs taught several courses at Stuyvesant, including Jazz Band (AUJJZ) and Music Appreciation (AUA1). During his time at the school, several complaints were leveled against him by both students and parents for inappropriate classroom decorum—but nothing that would warrant his removal from the school. He was, however, ultimately encouraged to leave Stuyvesant. "Our concern was the caliber of musician we like to keep on here," Dr. Wheeler said. "He was simply not the quality we were looking for."

Despite the complaints that tainted Burroughs's tenure at Stuyvesant, he displayed no out-

ward signs of criminality or terrorist sympathies. "It shocked everybody," Dr. Wheeler said. "He was not a felon when he got here."

Students and faculty have expressed outrage over the way the story was portrayed in the media, emphasizing Burroughs's Stuyvesant connection—the New York Post's article was titled "Ex-Stuy Teacher Slapped With 84 Count Indictment In Weapons Case."

"I don't understand why he's called a 'Stuy' teacher," junior Julian Michaels said. "He taught at a bunch of other schools longer."

"The guy [Burroughs] hasn't been here for seven years," Dr. Wheeler said. "He didn't even fit in in the first place."

Changes in the Deanery

By SOULIN HAQUE
and SADIQ RAHMAN

This year, students can look forward to having four deans instead of three. Physical education teacher Vincent Miller and math teacher Gary Rubinstein have joined last year's deans—social studies teacher Daniel Tillman and technology teacher Robert Rosen—on hallway patrol.

Social studies teacher Joel Sklaroff, who also acted as a dean last year, opted to relinquish his position as dean in favor of teaching more economics classes.

According to Principal Stanley Teitel, the school was able to make the change because there was "a little extra money" in the budget. Teitel felt the step was necessary in order to maintain student discipline during and after school hours. Last year, each dean worked for three periods, leaving one period in which students were unattended. This year, the four deans are able to cover all the periods and supervise students until 4:15.

Wong and Zamansky plan on upgrading the e-mail system after beginning-of-semester scheduling is complete. The renovated system will be run through Google Apps. "We'll keep using our old domain, stuy.edu, and instead of using our old mail server, we'll use [Google's]," Wong said.

Miller and Rubinstein applied for the job last spring by writing several essays detailing their qualifications, their reasons for applying and the skills they possess that will help them succeed in the position.

Rubinstein believes his new job will enable him to help a larger range of students than just those in his classes. "Since I teach math, a lot of time I'm dealing with the top students in the school," Rubinstein said. "I feel I can [also] really help out the students who are struggling academically and start to skip class."

The other deans declined to comment for this article.

As a result of their appointment, Miller and Rubinstein will each teach three classes instead of the usual five and spend three periods a day as active deans.

An added benefit of the change is that there are enough deans for each one to be assigned to a specific grade. Rubinstein is the dean for freshmen, Miller for sophomores, Tillman for juniors and Rosen for seniors.

"This way there are 800 students that I really get to see and give the most attention to, whereas before it was as if everyone was sharing all the people," Rubinstein said. "There's a lot more coverage [this way]."

According to Teitel, the deans were assigned in a way that each one can be in charge of the same students for four years. Each dean's term is four years, and "each dean will move with their grade," Teitel said. "By the time the grade graduates, [the dean's] term will be over."

However, some students feel the change is inconsequential. Senior Jackson Sheng, who claims he has not noticed a difference from last year, when there were fewer deans, said, "I don't see a benefit in having an extra dean. [...] They always have security guards patrolling the floors." He admitted that they may have other roles he is unaware of.

Rubinstein asserted that deans play an important part in maintaining, and also improving, the overall school atmosphere. "It's important to me that the level of the whole school is brought up by helping with some of the chronic problems, and keeping the school safe. It just helps everybody have a better experience," he said.

Rosen will end his term as dean in February, and Teitel stated that the administration will open up the position to other teachers, but only if a fourth dean can fit into the budget in the following school year.

Stuyvesant E-mail System Temporarily Disabled

By ALLIE BURNS
with additional reporting by SHARON CHO

The official stuy.edu school e-mail system has been temporarily disabled due to the compounded effect of maintenance problems and hackers. It stopped working at the end of June, when the infrastructure was hacked and fell into disrepair.

"Someone was using our e-mail server to try to hack into other systems," Assistant Principal Technology Edward Wong said. "[The e-mail system] got blacklisted and other e-mail systems weren't accepting e-mail from us."

According to Computer Science Coordinator Mike Zamansky, who set up the original e-mail server, this is partially a result of a faulty setup. The school had hired a computer specialist to help set up the server's security system, and Zamansky had provided her with detailed instructions regarding the security settings of the system. However, the temporary employee never followed his directions. "There have been definite security holes from day one," Zamansky said.

Aside from being hacked into, the system was not being maintained properly. "We don't have an administrator who's actively taking care of the system. Everything hadn't been updated, like the servers and the program," Zamansky said.

This is a direct result of the Department of Education's regulations, which state that Stuyvesant is unable to pay a technology assistant more than a certain previously set, unpublicized salary. The salary is insufficient to hire a full-time,

Features

By TEN-YOUNG GUH

Nine years ago, on September 11, 19 suicide bombers from Al-Qaeda, an Islamic terrorist organization, hijacked planes and crashed them into both the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. With the towers located only a few blocks from Stuyvesant, many students were witnesses to the attacks.

"I think it's a gesture of peace, in fact, to build a mosque that close to Ground Zero," —Jeff Orlowski ('02)

"We and America lost our sense of innocence and of invincibility. But we also gained a

Stuyvesant Students Join Park51 Debate

sense of unity that will last far longer than it will take to clean up and rebuild Lower Manhattan," wrote the editors in the September 11 commemorative issue of The Spectator.

Now, a controversy is brewing as an Islamic community center, Park51, is planned to be built two blocks from Ground Zero, the site of the Twin Tower attacks. According to the Park51 Web site, the center will have an interfaith component called Cordoba House and a separate prayer space. Many other amenities are planned, including a September 11 memorial, athletic facilities, a culinary school and cultural exhibits. It will also provide a number of services, including a senior center, childcare programs, domestic violence counseling for immigrants and supportive services for at-risk youth.

The question of whether or not Park51 should be built at its planned location has been a highly divisive issue for New York residents. A survey done by the New York Daily News shows that 51 percent of New Yorkers do not support the community center being built while 41 percent do.

A recent survey of 417 Stuyvesant students done by The Spectator, however, reveals a different sentiment within the school. According to the survey, 40.9 percent of students believe that Park51 should be built at its intended location, 33.4 per-

cent believe that it should not and 25 percent are unsure of what should be done.

"I feel that [Park51] is actually an attempt to reach out, to help educate people about Islam and prevent any misconceptions," junior Muhammad Chowdhury said.

"I don't think it should be prevented. I think preventing it would be un-American."

Junior Linda Pei, who has many Muslim friends, is an advocate of freedom of religion. Pei also believes, however, that the planned location is somewhat insensitive. "If you visit Ground Zero, you'll see it, and it's a bit too close," Pei said.

A common argument against Park51's location is that Ground Zero is sacred ground and that building the center so close to the site would desecrate it. Some people, however, believe that although ground zero is sacred ground, the construction of Park51 should not be stopped. "Ground Zero is sacred ground for all religions. Many people died that day, and they all had different beliefs," said Alvin So ('02), who was a senior at the time of the attack.

Furthermore, there are people, including the head imam of Park51 himself, Feisal Abdul Rauf, who reject the notion of Ground Zero being sacred ground at all, calling the idea "completely disingenuous," according to the Associated Press. Reuf also points out the fact

that within the same distance to ground zero are both a strip club and a betting parlor.

Whether or not it is sensitivity or Islamophobia that dominates the opposition to Park51 is also a debatable issue. "[The people behind Park51] should care about the victims' families a bit more," Pei said. "[Islamophobia] is the culprit behind all of it, masked by the aforementioned reasons as excuses."

"It needs to be made explicitly clear we're not in a war against Islam," said Jeff Orlowski ('02), the former Editor-in-Chief of The Spectator and senior during 9/11. "Islam is perfectly fine as a religion, and people should be allowed to practice their religion wherever it's appropriate. [...] I think it's a gesture of peace, in fact, to build a mosque that close to Ground Zero."

The tension created by the dispute over Park51 exists not only in this city, but also all over the country. Stuyvesant, too, is divided on some aspects of the debate. On the issue of whether Park51 should change locations, 42.2 percent of students think that it should, compared to 37.9 percent who disagree and 19.7 percent who are unsure. Neither side received a significant majority. On the matter of whether or not Park51 should exist at all, however, the survey revealed a landslide, with only 7.2 percent of students believing that Park51 should not exist in any form while an overwhelming 77.2 percent believing that it should.

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Stuyvesant, too, is divided on some aspects of the debate.

Junior Dripto Debroy agrees. "It was the site of an attack," Debroy said. "It should be respected as a commemoration of the people who died, but we shouldn't not be able to put anything near it."

The Tools They Need

By CONNOR JUSTICE

We all remember having our first meeting with our guidance counselors as freshmen, listening as they told us about the importance of keeping up our grades and staying out of trouble, while we grumbled about having to stay late after school.

"The freshmen need help."
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

However, along with the new batch of freshmen this year came a new way of getting students ready for their career at Stuyvesant. Principal Stanley Teitel and the guidance counselors have split what used to be one meeting with a counselor into four different lessons, each of which covers a different topic to help the freshmen work as efficiently as possible.

Every year, the school is required to submit its Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), detailing the steps it will take to improve the education of its students. This year, Teitel decided to dedicate more time and resources to help freshmen

become more organized and studious. One of the biggest steps towards this goal is the four-part workshop course. The four topics covered by these workshops include note taking methods, study habits, organization and graduation requirements.

Both Teitel and the guidance department feel strongly about the necessity of these workshops. "In the past, the guidance department has seen many freshmen struggle with the transition to Stuyvesant in terms of studying, organizing and keeping up with the fast pace of the work," guidance counselor Holly Richmond said.

"The freshman need to be more organized than they have been," said Teitel, when asked why the administration switched to a four-part workshop. "We have to submit our CEP in October, and we needed to cover these topics. I had the guidance department work on them over the summer."

With the importance of these workshops, one might expect there to be a great deal of information available to the freshmen. At the moment, however, many freshmen do not know very much about these workshops. "I think they will give us some methods of studying and tell us how to divide our time," freshman Delilah Marto said.

But others don't know anything about the workshops. In fact, freshman Ethan Schwab said that he had "never heard of them."

Beyond this lack of information, many freshmen feel as if they shouldn't need to go at all.

"I just don't have enough time. I heard they last a long time, and they seem pointless," freshman Choi Bak said.

But others, like Marto, might consider going. "If I had enough time, I might go. I might actually learn something helpful, even though we've been drilled

"I think they will give us some methods of studying and tell us how to divide our time."
—Delilah Marto, freshman

on this since getting homework for the first time," Marto said.

With all of these conflicting expectations and views of the new workshops, a general consensus has yet to be reached regarding the importance of the change. However, with the first workshop held on September 20th, and the others soon to follow, it won't be long until everyone finally finds out if the classes are going to be an essential part of being a freshman at Stuyvesant.

Tumblr: The Blogging Sensation that's on a Roll

By JENNY FUNG

Xanga, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter...Tumblr? It seems as though Stuyvesant students have left the Farmville craze and jumped onto the next big thing.

Tumblr is a social networking Web site that allows users to post texts, music, videos, audio, links and quotes on their "Tumblogs." Bloggers have a dashboard, which is essentially a newsfeed that displays the posts of the people they "follow." A heart-shaped 'Love' button%the equivalent of Facebook's 'Like' option%allows users to show their appreciation of a post. A directory also helps bloggers to navigate around the network and find blogs that consider topics they are interested in.

"I follow a lot of my friends' blogs, fashion blogs, cross country blogs and dining blogs," senior Vanessa Yuan said.

The variety of blogs and nifty features has attracted many Stuyvesant students and has prompted them to register for a Tumblr blog. Most of the students use Tumblr as an online journal.

"It's a way to express my feelings, so that I don't get stressed. When I read other people's posts, I feel better about my own problems," sophomore Linda Luu said.

Although many feel that they like to speak about their emotions on Tumblr, some are still hesitant to fully expose themselves because of the fact that Tumblr is still a public site, where anyone can read their posts. Many students who first started a Tumblr thought of it as a personal blog, but now with 7,911,058 users of the site, they are wary of what they post.

"I kind of don't want more people getting it [Tumblr] because it is a personal site," Luu said.

Aside from being a virtual diary, Tumblr helps people to connect and network. People can view their friends' blogs and get to know more about their interests and thoughts. Tumblr allows people to learn things about their friends they normally wouldn't speak of in real life. There is even an "ask" option that echoes Formspring's trademark.

"I see a different side of them [my friends] and the things that they post are not what they usually talk about%things you never knew about," Luu said.

Unlike Facebook, it is generally socially acceptable to "follow" strangers' Tumblogs and befriend them. There is no need to worry about being deemed as a stalker.

"It's a great way to meet new people," Luu said.

For others, Tumblr is just another distraction from their workload. Many humorous photos and interesting bits of information circle around the site via "reblogging." The idea behind reblogging is to give credit to an original source, thereby helping to obviate online plagiarism.

"I like to reblog things on the internet, such as news and music," Yuan said.

Tumblr's popularity has no doubt increased, enabling people around the world to communicate. But that's not to say that its users see it as a substitute for face-to-face interaction.

"For many people, it's a place to express their feelings. But it is not the same as actually getting to know the person," Yuan said.

Features

Learning From the Start

By MADHURIMA CHOWDHURY, BEBE LEGARDEUR and GEORGIANA YANG

Walking quickly through maze-like hallways, getting pushed by little people with large book bags, looking at each room number to find the correct one and carrying coffee in one hand while clutching notebooks in the other are all experiences that a first-year teacher at Stuyvesant High School has during his or her first day at school.



Christina Bogdan / The Spectator

Maya Zabar (English)

At one point in her life, Maya Zabar held being a teacher as one of the farthest thoughts from her mind. "I didn't know what I wanted to be in high school and college. I felt as

if somehow, I was out of the loop," Zabar said.

When she started attending New York University (NYU), she decided to study anthropology. "I imagined myself in Africa working with gorillas. I was very imaginative," Zabar

said. However, she later fell in love with philosophy and switched majors.

After graduating from NYU, Zabar tried her hand at several jobs as a secretary and several jobs as a graphic designer before realizing that she wanted to be a teacher. "I loved reading and giving instructions to other people when people had questions at work," Zabar said. "I just kind of put the two together, and I went back to school." She then received her second bachelor's degree in English.

Her favorite part about teaching is when students grasp something they have difficulties with. "I like when [students] have an A-ha! moment and everything comes together, and they get it," Zabar said. "That's the best feeling in the world."

Although her experience in Stuyvesant has been brief, Zabar likes what she sees so far. "People are excited to be in school," Zabar said. "They want to learn, and they are enthusiastic in the classroom. And they laugh at my jokes."



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

Christopher Brown (Math)

May Herrera (Math)

May Herrera was a math teacher at Townsend Harris High School before she transferred to Stuyvesant High School for the start of the new school year. She got into teaching because she loves math and wants to share her passion with her students.

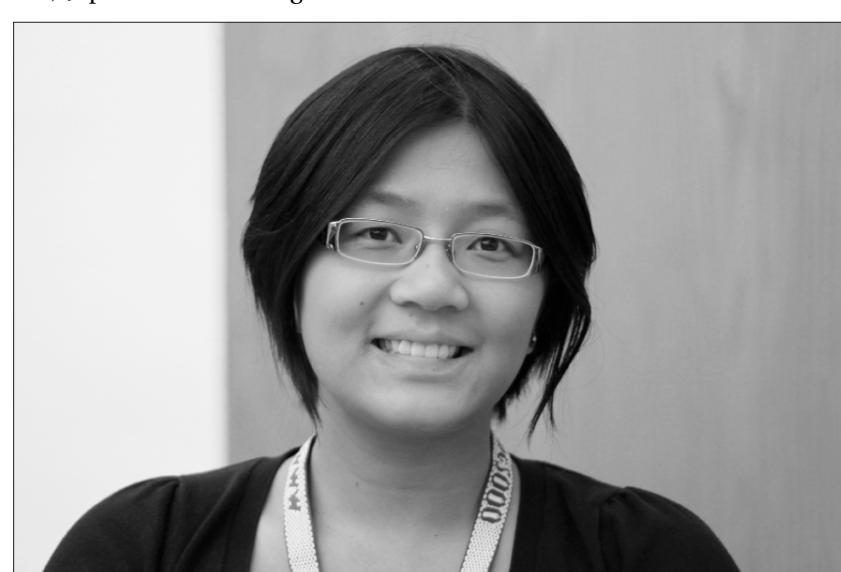
"I want my students to see that math is everywhere and it's fun," Herrera said. "I love teaching and interacting with students, [...] especially helping the students connect the different concepts in math."

Herrera has been enjoying her time in Stuyvesant thus far. "It's been a great experience," she said. "In Stuy, the students will search for deeper meaning in mathematics and question more because they all love math."

Besides her love of math, Herrera has a passion for languages. In fact,

besides English, Herrera can speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Shanghainese. "I

love learning different cultures languages," Herrera said.



Joann Lee / The Spectator

Christopher Brown, a teacher of both math and computer science, started his teaching career as a tutor for college students. "While working as a tutor at the University of Georgia, I realized I quite like this line of work. It's rewarding," he said.

Before his time at Stuyvesant, he taught at Middle School 203 in the Bronx.

Brown's favorite aspect of math is that "it is the language of nature," he said.

His favorite part of computer science is its little quirks. "I think it's the little things—acronyms like GNU—that bring the zing," said Brown, referring to the recursive acronym for the computer operating system Gnu's Not Unix.



Christina Bogdan / The Spectator

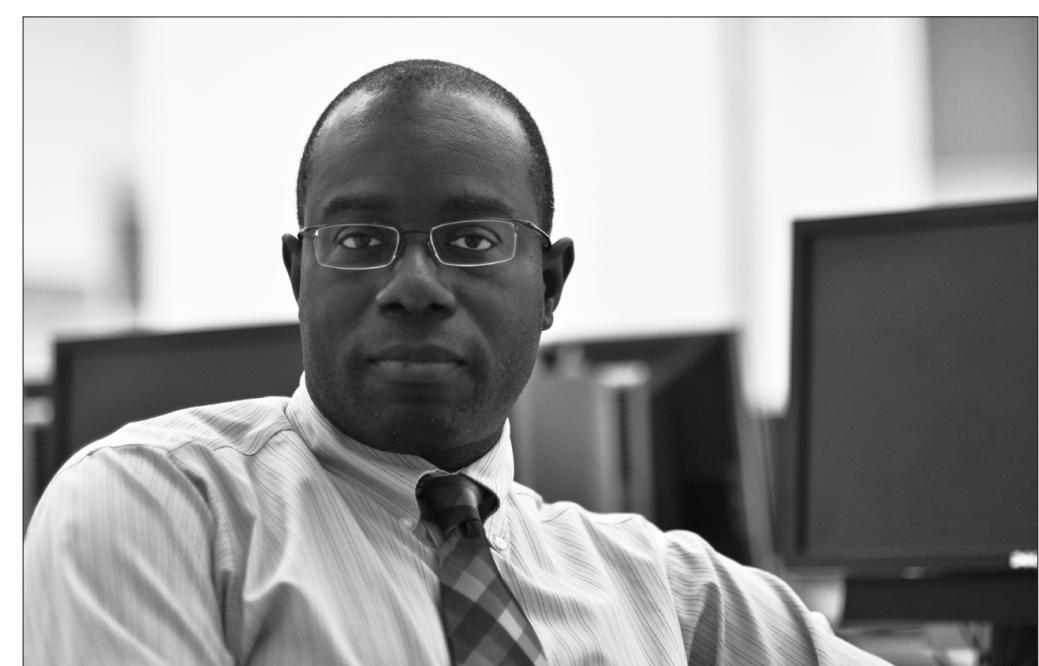
David Mandler (English)

Dr. David Mandler began studying English in 10th grade and hasn't stopped since then. His favorite thing about the subject is that it allows a reader to have the experience of "vicariously entering someone's life through literature," Dr. Mandler said.

Before coming to Stuyvesant, he taught at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education in Queens. So far, he likes Stuyvesant but admits that he is still adjusting. "I have to get used to it, especially since it is ten times larger than the Baccalaureate School," Dr. Mandler said.

He started teaching because of his own love for learning, and he believes that teaching is merely an embodiment of his thirst for knowledge.

Apart from teaching English, Dr. Mandler enjoys playing the piano and studying 19th century literature. In fact, he received his doctorate in Victorian literature.



Harry Poppick / The Spectator

**Arthur Griffith
(Technical Drawing)**

Arthur Griffith is extremely accomplished and has two technical degrees—one in computers and one in general industry. Despite the significant difference in salary, Griffith decided to become a teacher instead of working in an industrial field because he wanted to educate children.

"It would be more of a challenge for me if I were to train other children to do the thing that I love

to do," Griffith said.

Before transferring to Stuyvesant, Arthur Griffith taught at the junior high school I.S. 204 in Long Island City.

One of the best things about his job, according to Griffith, is watching the children learn. "Sometimes they get frustrated when they see an object that they find difficult to draw, but you see their faces light up when they find the technique on how to get it done, because like everything in life, it's all about technique," Griff-

fith said.

So far, Griffith has had a pretty good experience at Stuyvesant. "The students are attentive. They are having some challenges, but they are doing fine," Griffith said.

Griffith tries to help his students overcome these challenges by incorporating real life situations into his lessons. "I like to show kids things that they will most likely encounter when they leave, so when they leave, they won't be shell-shocked" he said.

Features

Learning From the Start



Eric Weil (History)

Before coming to teach history at Stuyvesant, Eric Weil taught criminology and criminal justice at Canarsie High School in Brooklyn. Weil got into teaching as a second career after closing a women's clothing sales organization that he managed with his father.

It was then that a friend suggested that he should try teaching since he was good with kids.

"The thing I like most about teaching isn't the subject so much as it is the people that I spend my time with, the kids," Weil said. "They keep me young."

Weil's experience at Stuyvesant has been fantastic and exciting so far. "The staff has been overwhelmingly helpful and the students are extraordinary," Weil said. "I am not only enjoying being able to challenge them but being challenged by them. The thrill that I had when I first became a teacher, walking in and dealing with history and the kids is back. This has been an extraordinary experience, and I'm enjoying every minute of it."

When he isn't teaching, Weil enjoys the outdoors. "I sometimes go winter camping up in the Adirondacks, around Lake George or further up north to go skiing," Weil said.



Peter Martens (Physics)

If you are ever in need of someone who speaks Peter Stuyvesant's 17th century dialect of Dutch, look no farther than Peter Martens, the newest member of the Stuyvesant physics department.

Before arriving at Stuyvesant, Martens worked as a research and development engineer, but his love of working with people led him to teaching. Martens previously taught at the Bronx High School of Science and Brooklyn Technical High School, now earning him the coveted Specialized High School "Triple Crown" award.

Martens's favorite aspect of physics is that it is "not just cramming stuff in your head, it's developing your brain," he said.

Martens has also taught fencing for 15 years.



Marissa Maggio (Biology)

Do you love Crybabies, Sour Patch Kids and the newest problems of Serena, Blair, Nate and Dan? Well, look no further than the 7th floor. Marissa Maggio can keep you in the loop of the latest episode of Gossip Girl and just about every other TV show, while sharing her love of sour candies with you.

Marissa Maggio has been a teacher for the last ten years. Before coming to Stuyvesant High School, however, she taught at the High School for Environmental Studies. After finishing her Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) at the University of South Florida, Master of Arts (M.A.) at New York University and M.A. in biology at Queens College,

Maggio didn't want to go to medical school.

"At that time I was not excited about four more years of school," Maggio said. However, she still wanted to stay in the science field. While helping her brother and his friends study before their tests, she discovered she would make a good teacher.

During her first few weeks on the job, Maggio has had a great experience at Stuyvesant. "It's been wonderful. Everyone has been really nice. My students are super studious," Maggio said.

Her favorite part about her job is getting to know her students and their different quirks. She enjoys finding out different ways to teach different groups of students.

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Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Programming Predicament

Games of chance can be fun and exciting to play, but as minors, we are banned from participating in most of them. We can't bet on horse races, enter the lottery or walk inside a casino. However, we can throw the dice twice a year in the crapshoot that is the programming process, which has its own rules and a unique set of gamblers' fallacies.

Programming is a complicated, multi-faceted and often confusing process. For this fall term, it began much earlier than most students realize. In February 2010, Mr. Teitel learned that there were 840 students in the Stuyvesant Class of 2014. Due to the strict graduation requirements in our school, teachers first had to be assigned to required courses. A large incoming class might have meant that Biology teacher Stephen McClellan would have to teach several sections of freshman Biology, and because citywide contracts cap the number of periods every teacher can teach, this might have prevented McClellan from teaching his popular Oceanography or Environmental Studies courses. As budgetary concerns further shape the electives that the school is able to offer, two key trends emerge. Our school has been getting more crowded while losing funding, which severely limits our choices.

With this in mind, the programming office has students submit requests for spots in Advanced Placement (AP) and other elective courses at the end of the Spring term. The number of AP courses students can take is determined by their overall grade point average (GPA), and their eligibility in a specific department's AP classes is determined by their GPA in that subject. Though waivers from guidance counselors and assistant principals can circumvent these restrictions, students who do not meet the requirements from the outset are less likely to be selected. After the system has received a student's request for the next term, it creates a request file for the Program Office to view. Contrary to popular belief, the latest request submitted is treated the same as the first, so furtively using an iPhone to log on as soon as possible will not increase one's chances of getting into Creative Nonfiction.

When the AP selection closes, the programming office tallies up the total requests, and the assistant principals make the final decisions about how many spots will be available for each course. Finally, the Program Office is ready to sift through requests and make decisions. Whether or not an applicant gets his or her request is based on a number of subjective factors. Seniors are given first priority, since they will never have another chance to take classes at Stuyvesant, and in the case of science classes, they are required to have two terms worth of electives in order to graduate. Poor marks in a preceding course can severely hurt a student's chances, even if there is no grade requirement. A perceived intent to take more advanced courses in the discipline can work in an applicant's

favor. Most importantly, the Program Office believes that it is fairest if no one student gets too many of the most popular courses. Placement in one highly coveted class decreases the chances of getting another, particularly one within the same department.

Though this system is confusing, many students have figured out how to work it to their advantage. Some talk to teachers who are in a good position to help them. Others speak to department chairs who they know well. Many go right to the horse's mouth—the Program Office—to unlock their dream schedule, sometimes even before the process begins. While these students may be envied for their savvy in manipulating the powers-that-be, their actions are undoubtedly self-serving and further cripple an already faulty mechanism.

Scheming will not settle our programming problems. We need a comprehensive solution that produces a more equitable system for doling out popular electives and AP courses. However, we must first acknowledge that while we strive to make the system fairer, we can never satisfy everyone. The main issue with programming is that it is a zero-sum game; if someone receives a class he or she wants, someone else is probably not going to have that same course on his schedule. There is a tremendous demand for classes that are not graduation requirements, and there is a preciously low supply of seats in those classes. Ultimately, we need more funding for electives—something that does not seem likely—so that the system produces fewer losers and feels less like a crapshoot. Until then, we have to work with what we have. There are many innovative ideas that could be implemented—and that already exist—that would streamline the process and make it less stressful for students.

We have a number of proposals that we believe would help. The first entails more teacher involvement in selecting students for AP courses. Rather than using the current procedure, the administration could make admission to these classes contingent on teacher recommendations and fill seats in the order of the highest grade in that particular subject area. Though some teachers are easier graders than others are, we think that this is fairer than a lottery. Last year, everyone, except those with technology averages of 99 or above, had to win such lotteries to be placed into AP Computer Science. To account for different grading standards, teachers' written comments would be taken into account.

One major obstacle that prevents students from exploring their interests is the number of classes that they must take to graduate with a Stuyvesant diploma. There are so many required courses they have to pass, from Pre-Calculus to Drafting, that there is little room for them to delve into the fields of study they might truly like to pursue. In many cases, students are bumped from electives they signed up for because

they have a scheduling conflict with a mandatory class. This is an unfortunate situation that could be remedied swiftly if the administration would budge on graduation requirements.

The simplest, yet most vexing, issue to resolve is the way the process of program corrections is buried in red tape, burdened by bureaucracy and made near impossible by incredibly time-consuming waits to see department chairs. Students have to brave hours on line, just so they can get assistant principals to sign off on the most superficial program changes. If a pupil has to change his schedule, he must have his alterations approved by all the administrators whose departments are involved. This creates a giant bottleneck in the system that could be eased by establishing greater communication between departments, limiting involvement of assistant principals in program changes and allowing guidance counselors and Program Office staff to make more of the changes.

Finally, we can harness the power of the marketplace to deliver students the schedules they desire. A forum called the Trading Floor—where pupils can find schoolmates who want to exchange classes with them—already exists online. After discovering a match, two people go to the Program Office to formalize the switch, which is usually granted. The Program Office officials make sure to advise the students to consider the change with their guidance counselor. This system is smart, and it helps the school save time and energy. Rather than having guidance counselors hunt for open spaces in courses, students largely take care of themselves, and staff members are left to act as facilitators.

Many students have tried to create trading floors—whether through Facebook notes or clever programming—and if the administration were to endorse or create a trading floor of its own, then the entire student body could get involved. The school could incorporate the marketplace into its Web site and use it as a public square where many program corrections could be arranged. Instead of requiring people to drop into the Program Office to finalize alterations, the administration could enable a function that allows certain changes to go into effect instantaneously. This would be a great convenience for both students and staff, eliminating mountains of paperwork and eons of waiting on line.

In the end, the aim of a school is to help those who attend it to grow intellectually and develop into better human beings. Students' schedules are a large part of this mission; they can nourish minds or starve them and can keep pupils engaged or leave them mired in boredom. We all look forward to the day when our anxiety about registration dissipates, when we are eager to see how our course requests fared and when we can revel in our perfect programs.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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of the
Student
Body"

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FOR THE RECORD

- Chester Dubov wrote the "Teacher Summer Studies" article, but his name was not printed correctly in the byline.
- Benjamin Koatz's name was not printed in the byline of his piece, "The Rica-New York Connection."

Opinions

A Fast Track to Trouble



By DANIEL SOLOMON

Trains are the lifeblood of our city and our school. Their routes stretch out all over the municipality; they are the veins and arteries of New York, transporting students and workers to and from sleepy suburban hamlets and the heart of the city, the bustling metropolis of Manhattan. The transit system is a marvel of modern technology: it moves over six million people a day, which is no easy task. Though it functions smoothly in many regards, like the human body it has its faults and its slip-ups. Sometimes, clogged arteries and slow circulation annoy and delay commuters, and with budget cuts plaguing the Metropolitan Transit Authority

(MTA), it has become more difficult to find the proper medicine to cure these ailments.

Traveling on the trains can be tiring and trying, especially when one cannot find a seat. People push and shove, and the wait on subway platforms can take chunks out of one's day. Some stations are incredibly dirty, a situation that has only been exacerbated by MTA cut-backs, which have forced the authority to lay off thousands of token clerks and cleaners. I live on the edge of the city—Belle Harbor, Queens—and my day-to-day experiences with the transit system lack any consistency. The length of my travel time can vary from an hour to two hours each way, and depending on the date, my commute is either hellish or relaxing. I'm not the only one at Stuyvesant who has to brave buses and trains to arrive here—most of us make frequent use of our student MetroCards.

Through last year's stimulus package, President Barack Obama allocated \$153.4 billion to transportation and infrastruc-

ture spending, and has recently proposed that another \$50 billion be used for these programs. Undoubtedly, many of these dollars and jobs would flow to New York, where the government could expand our transportation options while bettering the existing system. Ideas that have existed for years on paper could become reality. Indeed, in New York, we have seen tangible results of this legislation, with groundbreakings of the Second Avenue Subway and a new tunnel between New Jersey and New York. Stimulus money has also assisted the MTA in making up for its budget shortfall and continuing repairs on the subway.

But in these lean times, the federal government must do more than it has done already to help America build new infrastructure and maintain its old roads and rails. One proposal waiting to spring from the page and onto the pavement is a network of light-rail trains. Light-rail is a form of rapid transportation that runs on city streets and has a lower passenger capacity, a

higher speed and more comfort than a subway car does. It is the modern-day descendant of the trolley and it is used in many cities across the country; it is particularly popular in Boston and Los Angeles. If we could find funding, light-rail could vastly improve commute times and make travel less stressful.

Another improvement to our daily commute involves ferries. Long before trains existed, people transported products and themselves on boats. The ferry was how everyone commuted in the past, and it could be the wave of the future. Sea travel is much more pleasant than train travel is. Imagine that instead of concluding your school day on a fetid subway car you could end it aboard a sailing vessel, sitting outside, breathing in crisp, clean air and enjoying panoramic views of New York Harbor. For two years, I found my way home taking the Rockaway ferry from Wall Street to Riis Landing, which is two miles from my house. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, this service was canceled earlier

in the year, but it is not dead yet; there is a strong possibility that it will be resurrected as part of the mayor's initiative to increase commuting by ferry. With money from Washington, the New York Water Taxi—the private operator that runs boats in New York—could not only revive the route to Rockaway, but could also make new ones that go to other locations, like the Bronx, northern Queens and Brooklyn. I'm sure many people would prefer riding on the East River to riding on the E train.

With more funding and changes in commuting routes, a light-rail and increased ferry transportation would transform our city and make it a much more livable place. The underground arteries and veins that feed into and away from New York's heart would be less choked and circulation would be quicker and easier. But it's not only the MTA that will benefit; with the fresh air and cool breeze on a New York Water Taxi, individual students can have happier and healthier commutes as well.

Beyond Numbers: A Call to Stuyvesant Teachers



By SHARON CRUZ

The summer before junior year, I did not have a moment to myself, what with dance classes, an internship at the Kings County District Attorney's office, a job at a dermatologist's office, piano lessons, a job as a piano teacher and SAT prep. All of these commitments were to help me build up my college application and to help me stand out in a sea of applicants. In hindsight, all of it seems pointless because this summer, I had to add one more thing to my long, impressive, college-ready list of plans: summer school at Brooklyn Technical High School.

After a successful first term junior year, I just stopped. I was unable to complete the work, unable to continue working at the pace I had been previously and unable to continue sleeping two to three hours a night. I stopped going to class, stopped doing my work and stopped caring. My parents didn't understand what was going on, and my teachers and the administration were too preoccupied to care. They treated me like a delinquent. Only one teacher, my Spanish teacher, made the effort to try to help me. Even when I brought in doctor's notes, my teachers dismissed me as an apathetic student without realizing I was going through an extremely rough time and was unable to do the work. It was the lack of support and the lack of understanding that made everything so much worse.

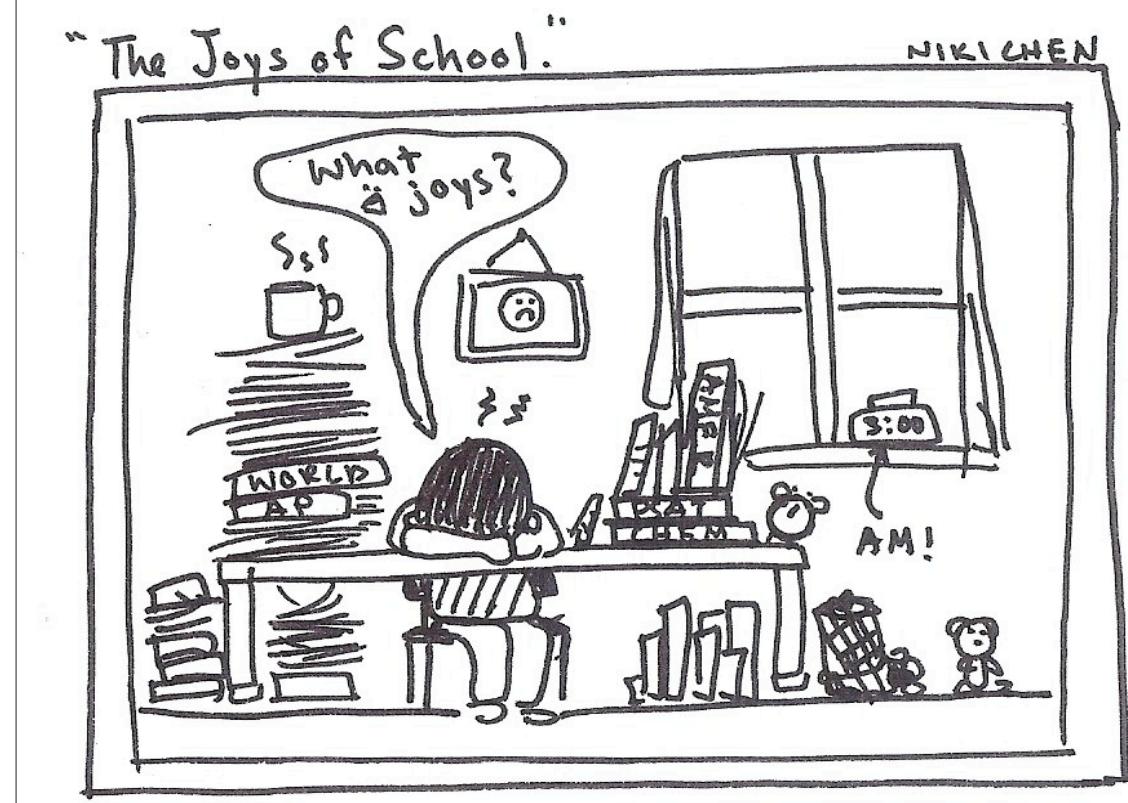
I know that I picked the worst possible time to have a breakdown, second term junior year,

when I should've been focusing on college and studying for the SATs, finals and AP tests. It seemed that my teachers were so obsessed with grades that they didn't notice a good student suddenly losing her drive. And if they did notice, why did they not react? Stuyvesant fosters an obsession with numbers and grades in its students. Maybe the school impacts teachers in the same way. Teachers can forget that students are not in fact numbers in roll call and that they have lives outside the classroom.

Students at other specialized high schools agree. Teachers' neglect of students' rough personal situations is present elsewhere as well. According to Brooklyn Technical High School senior Andrew Slootsky, "Because of how concerned teachers and the administration are with numbers—how many kids score above a 90 on the Regents, how many kids score above a 4 on the AP and how many kids score above a 2000 on their SATs—they seem to forget about the individual and stop caring about the student."

Although teachers are often swamped with over 200 students, in such a large school it is sometimes necessary for someone to hold your hand and guide you 3/4 just once. If I had gotten that little bit of support, maybe my second term of junior year would have been focused on the right things and would have ended on a successful note. Instead, I suffered a breakdown. I ended the year with a sealed letter which said that over the summer, I must attend summer school.

OP-ARTS



Opinions

Contemplating Cordoba

Polina Rozina / The Spectator



By JOSEPH FRANKEL
and DEBANJAN
ROYCHOWDHURY

Any American who has turned on his or her television, or opened up a major newspaper anywhere in the country in the past four months has witnessed one of the most divisive conflicts in current events. Yet, the issue that has been engulfing the nation's media has nothing to do with the greater problems the nation is facing, such as the suffering job market, and it has no tangible effect beyond 100,000 square feet.

Since the plans for its construction were announced on May 5, 2010, the proposed Cordoba House Islamic Community Center (also known as Park51 and sometimes referred to as the "World

Trade Center Mosque") has been the source of heated opinion from individuals across the country. Opposition from both

ends of the political spectrum have declared the mosque insensitive to the memory of the victims of the World Trade Center tragedy, and criticism of the mosque from the right has opened up a flood of anti-Islamic sentiment throughout the country. The more radical opponents of the mosque have grounded their opinion in the idea that the views of the terrorists who committed the 9/11 attacks and the leaders of the Cordoba Initiative are one in the same. Some have gone on to criticize politicians who have defended the Park51 project of allowing Muslims to "build a trophy building there on holy ground," an angry e-mail to Mayor Michael Bloomberg said. More famously, Florida pastor Terry Jones made plans to burn a copy of the Quran in protest of the Cordoba House until the federal government interfered. While the list of criticisms and opponents of the Cordoba project seems end-

less, the rationale behind them remains quite foggy.

One argument that demonstrates not only a lack of rational thought, but of information as well, is that of conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh, who compared the construction of a mosque near Ground Zero to building a Shinto shrine near Pearl Harbor (although originally, he called the shrine "Hindu"). While there are several flaws in this analogy, the most glaring is that there is in fact a Shinto shrine within five minutes of Pearl Harbor. The Kotohira Jinsha Shinto Shrine, while originally founded in 1920, was rebuilt and reopened in 1952 with no incident. Clearly, religious centers somewhat tied to national tragedies can peacefully exist not far from the site of the tragedy.

And even then, the case of the Cordoba Center differs from that of a Shinto shrine near Pearl Harbor. A place in which diverse groups of people can intermingle under a unified space is necessary for Islam to better integrate itself into New York and American culture. As Daisy Khan, executive director and co-founder of the American Society for Muslim Advancement, said in a recent interview with National Public Radio's 'Democracy, Now!', "The evolution or trajectory of Americanizing a religion happens primarily with institution building and [...] once you go from a place of worship to an institute that serves the general public is when that faith becomes Americanized. And so, establishing something like a YMCA or the equivalent of a JCC

or a 92nd Street Y, which would be the Muslim equivalent, would be necessary for the Muslim community to do in order to integrate itself and call itself an American religion."

While the building of the Cordoba Center has been a national concern reflecting the paranoia caused by the tragedy of 9/11, the aftermaths of the attack on the World Trade Center weighed most heavily on New Yorkers. The destruction and reconstruction of a great part of TriBeCa, along with the absence of the Twin Towers from the skyline, has been something that New Yorkers have had to deal with on a daily basis. This is a fact that much of the Stuyvesant faculty knows all too well, having been there themselves during the attack and its aftermath. Likewise, it is New York that will most strongly be affected by whatever outcome is reached in the issue surrounding the Cordoba Center. The bottom line is that despite the good intentions and strong emotions of those who are against the Cordoba House throughout the United States, its existence is something that mainly New Yorkers will see the effect of, and as such, it should be treated as a local issue. Indeed, those from outside of New York, who seem most vehemently against the center, seem to have very little understanding of the people who would be most directly affected by the mosque's presence—the people who live around it.

Junior and Events Coordinator of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) Farzana Yeasmin

voiced her support of the center, as she feels it will mirror the MSA's goals of "trying to create an atmosphere in which people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, both in and outside Stuy, can freely talk about their faiths, learn about the aspects of Islam, and promote understanding and tolerance," she said.

Senior and Marketing director of Stuyvesant's Muslim Student Association (MSA), Hossam Gomea, expressed his annoyance at the fact that many of those opposed to the project "wrongly label the [Cordoba] center as the 'Ground Zero Mosque,' when it's really more of a community center," he said. This point has been emphasized by those involved in the building of the center, since the Cordoba house would include, aside from a prayer area, a swimming pool, basketball court, theater, bookstore, food court, performing arts center, art studio and even a 9/11 memorial.

Stuyvesant itself represents the diversity in New York City, directly contradicting the assumption that preventing the Cordoba Center from being built will maintain some kind of a separation. We know all too well that neither our school, nor New York City, is filled homogeneously with the same type of "American" that Sarah Palin and Terry Jones wish to see protected from the consequences they see in the construction of an Islamic Community Center in New York City. But this is not an issue of national security—it is one of separation and ignorance.

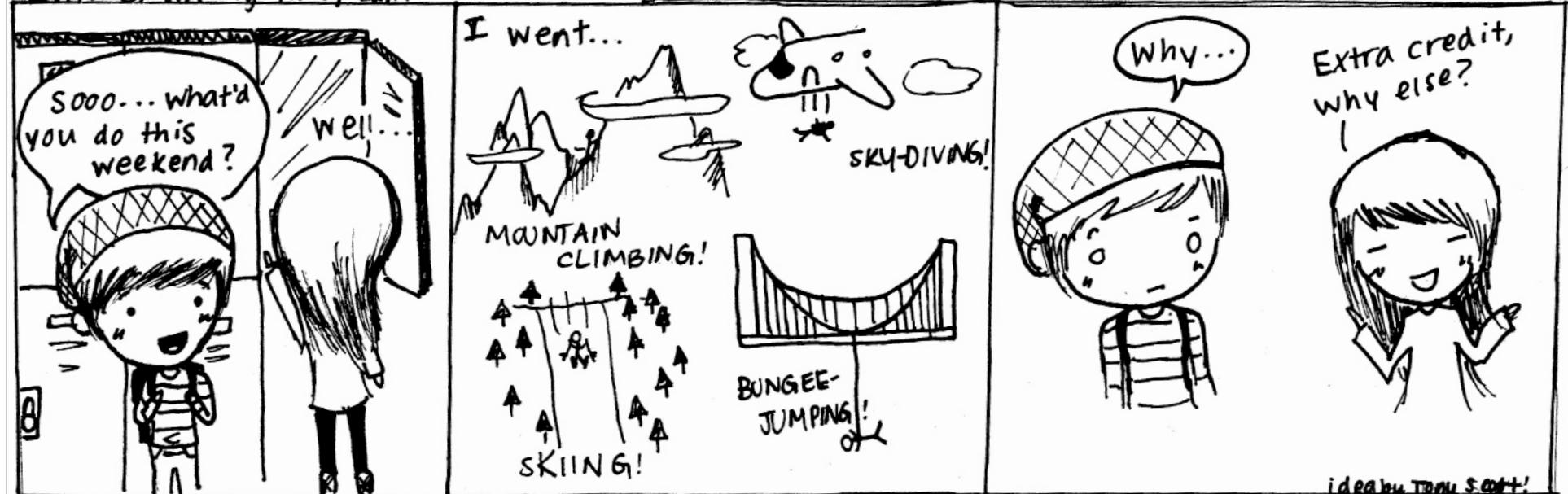
Cartoons

IT HAS STARTED



Jasmine Kyon

Extra Credit by Tracy Lum



Extra credit,
why else?

i idea by Tony Scott!

Humor

Weapons Depot Found in Music Department

By CHESTER DUBOV and SAM FURNIVAL

In an unprecedented collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the School

sives and anti-Israel pamphlets, apparently had gone unnoticed since Burroughs's departure from Stuyvesant in 2003. "I always assumed there was another chorus or something in that room," Assistant Principal Fine Arts Gregor Winkel said. "It's a good thing that no one ever took AP [Advanced Placement] Music Theory, or they could have been in serious danger."

Experts responded with pessimism to the discovery of the weapons, which included enough Soviet made PM-43 mortars and PTRD-41 anti-tank rifles to pose a serious threat to even Mathletes.

"The music department is a well known hotbed of terrorist activity," Federal Bureau of Investigation Agent and terrorism specialist Bob Holley said. "Many of the teachers are foreign nationals, radicalizing impressionable students with teachings of Tchaikovsky and Brahms. It's a veritable madrassa."

The dynamic partnership of counterterrorism agencies almost didn't happen. "At first I was hesitant to join the task force. While I was investigating downstairs, students might have been able to sit quietly and do homework on the third floor," School Safety Officer Ubilla said, shuddering. "Once DHS convinced me they had a reliable informant in the insular world of music education, I knew this could be our one shot at disrupting a major terrorist/jazz fusion ensemble."

Safety Officers of Stuyvesant High School, a large cache of weapons and munitions was found in a seemingly abandoned first floor music classroom. The stockpile is believed to be linked to former Music Teacher Theophilus Burroughs.

The stockpile, which contained weapons grade explo-

natives and anti-Israel pamphlets, apparently had gone unnoticed since Burroughs's departure from Stuyvesant in 2003. "I always assumed there was another chorus or something in that room," Assistant Principal Fine Arts Gregor Winkel said. "It's a good thing that no one ever took AP [Advanced Placement] Music Theory, or they could have been in serious danger."

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Stuyvesant Accused of Defrauding Federal Government

By CHESTER DUBOV and SAM FURNIVAL

According to an article from the New York Daily News on Thursday, September 23, Stuyvesant High School is now officially under indictment from the Manhattan District Attorney's Office amid accusations that the school has falsified employment records in an elaborate scheme to defraud the federal government.

According to the text of the indictment, Stuyvesant has been claiming to employ fictitious faculty members for five years in its budget request forms sent annually to the Department of Education (DOE). The fake teachers—"Gordon Zola", "K Bob", and "Feo Codlet" among others—were listed on the form as "Lunch Instructors", and drew salaries of up to 100,000 dollars a year. The New York Daily News article reported that sources close to the administration said the money was directed towards "the installation of new security cameras right next to the locations of the old ones."

"These accusations are utterly and completely baseless. This is nothing more than slander and libel on the part of the DOE," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

"I've worked with Mr. Codlet for the better part of 15 years. He's one of the best Lunch Instructors in the city. When he gets back from his 10 year sabbatical, I intend to help him file an anti-defamation suit."

Students were shocked by the indictment. "I always just thought that the names on our programs [for our lunch period's teacher] were dumb puns on the part of the program office," senior Jack Zurier said. "I had no idea it was something this criminal."

Teitel also spoke in defense of the "Lunch Instructor" position. "This is Stuyvesant," he said. "Every class is rigorous. And that includes Lunch."

According to the Daily News, the suspected "mastermind" of the nefarious scheme is none other than Assistant Principal Technology Edward Wong. Wong declined to comment for this article, however, a statement released to the press by the program office argues for Wong's innocence. "It is impossible that Mr. Wong could have conceived of this level of fraud," the statement read. "Mr. Wong is, after all, a Stuyvesant Alumni, and it is a well known fact that Stuyvesant students never, ever cheat."

"These accusations are utterly and completely baseless. This is nothing more than slander and libel on the part of the DOE," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Tenth Period To Be Held Below Tribeca Bridge

By CHESTER DUBOV

Due to an obscure clause in the new Department of Education budget regulations, which require schools to pay for the

day as "the period of class between 8:00 am and 2:45pm", meaning that if classes are in session after this period, the school will have to pay \$500 for every additional half-hour, something the school has refused to do. The schedule changes were announced by Principal Stanley Teitel at the Student Leadership Team (SLT) meeting on Tuesday, September 21.

"Don't take this to mean we aren't having a 10th period," Teitel said at the start of the session, addressing the two, presumably lost, students in attendance. "We just have to get creative."

Sure enough, on Wednesday, September 22 at 2:45 pm, students found themselves gathered for class in a brand new location: beneath the Tribeca Bridge. After being shepherded out of the building by security guards following the ninth period end bell, students huddled together in unorganized clumps in the bridge's shadow, watching as their tenth period teachers struggled to be heard over the roar of traffic emanating from the Westside Highway. "This feels like I'm back at Tech," junior Denis Stepanenko, who transferred

into Stuyvesant as an incoming sophomore from Brooklyn Technical High School, said. "It's got a similar vibe."

Some students, however, were pleased by the new 10th

"Now I won't be marked as 'cutting'."
—Anonymous junior in the Alcove

period location. "Now I won't be marked as 'cutting,'" a junior lounging in the alcove, who requested anonymity, said. "They really could not have made this more convenient for me to... well...you know."

Stuyvesant Web site Praised

By SAM FURNIVAL

In a stunning announcement from the American Design Award Foundation, The Stuyvesant High School website (www.stuy.edu) has received the prestigious graphic "Golden Backslash" award for

use of their buildings after the end of the instructional day, Stuyvesant High School is now shutting its doors at 2:45 pm—the end of ninth period. The clause in question, found on page 34 of the amended regulations, defines an instructional

students."

Students reacted to the award with a degree of humility. "Why can't I see my new program? I keep getting error messages! I DON'T KNOW WHAT CLASSES I AM IN," said senior Simon Ayzman, in an email exchange that was cut short by technical difficulties.

"I guess it goes to show you, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. [And if it is broken, fixing it is really optional. Not a big deal if it doesn't get done. Really]."
—Eddie Wong, Assistant Principal Technology

excellence and innovation in web design. The Stuyvesant site was widely considered to be a dark horse candidate, as an educational institution's page has never been nominated.

However, the Stuyvesant site

"When you think school, you normally think students, but www. stuy.edu. boldly refuses to show any human beings in classrooms, labs, or the underused swimming pool," Javid said.

—Kevin Javid, American Design Award executive Vice President

Other school officials and students were contacted for comment, but emails sent to their @stuy.edu accounts went unanswered as of press time.

All articles are works of fiction. All quotes are slander and libel.

Arts and Entertainment

A Brief History of the Big Sib T-shirt

By BENJAMIN KOATZ

Throughout our school days, we see many things considered "typical" of Stuyvesant: escalators being broken, students sleeping on benches and desks and sophomores staggering under the weight of textbooks for senior-level Calculus. However, there are few things more recognizably "Stuy" than the widely loved and extremely successful Big Sibs program, run this year by seniors and Chairs Colin O'Connor, Tiana Stute, Sadie Bergen, Kathy Lin and Oren Bukspan. And there are few things more recognizably "Big Sibs" than the Big Sibs T-shirt.

The Big Sibs T-shirt has been a staple at Stuyvesant ever since the program's inception decades ago. With an inspiring quote and the words "Big Sibs" somewhere to be found on the front or back, the shirts help to identify friendly team members to any Stuyvesant student seeking assistance.

The process of choosing the quote, designing the shirt, printing and shipping and getting all of the 150 Big Sibs to wear the shirts is an ordeal, to say the least. The history of the Big Sibs shirt, and its place in the pop-culture of Stuyvesant High School, is one filled with concerned Chairs, thoughtful deliberations, revisions and childhood nostalgia.

It's obvious that this year's Big Sibs T-shirt theme is the classic Pixar movie series "Toy Story." The series is widely beloved and recognizable, and the fact that the Big Sibs Chairs chose this childhood throwback for the theme is not an isolated incident.

Old school, youthful themes are "fun and, in a way, reliable," former

Big Sibs Chair J.J. Russo ('09) said. His year's theme was the Yellow Submarine with the Beatles' quote "I get by with a little help from my friends" on the back. "We usually go with an old school or kiddy theme to help us be approachable," Russo said.

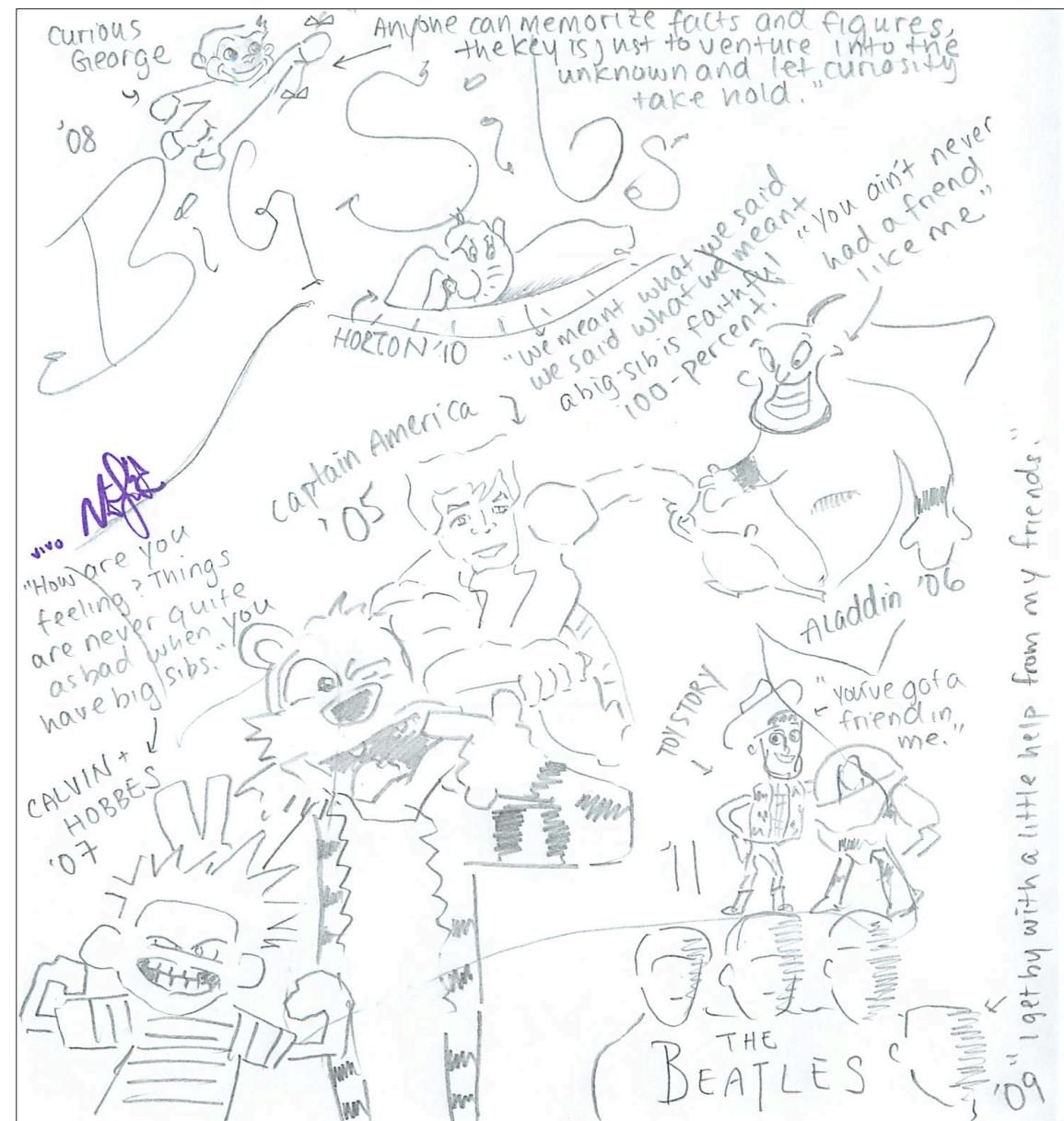
"The goal of the Big Sibs program is to be fun and light and jovial in what can sometimes be a not so jovial time," said former Big Sibs Chair Allison Weiner ('08), whose chosen theme was the lovable animated monkey, Curious George.

John Connuck ('10), also a former Big Sibs Chair, mirrored this sentiment. "We chose Dr. Seuss because it's fun and zany and ... it's a theme everyone can relate to and enjoyed as a child," he said.

"We wanted a cool shirt to wear," O'Connor said, "And [one that's] recognizably our own." This sentiment was shared among the Chairs, who were striving to make a shirt that Big Sibs would voluntarily display and that would identify them to Little Sibs who were lost or in need of help.

Even some unexpected sources want a Big Sibs T-shirt when the theme is an especially likable one. "We might order more because some teachers want them for their kids and themselves," O'Connor said.

Each Chair has his or her own nostalgic reasons and motives for choosing the theme of the Big Sibs T-shirt. However, what is common, from 2005's Captain Planet to 2007's Calvin and Hobbes shirt, is that the shirts are the lovable products of an organization that professes complete dedication to surrogate siblings...to infinity and beyond.



Pan Latin Closes

By KRISTINA MANI

Once again, the declining economy has taken a toll on the daily lives of New York citizens. It has even affected the Tribeca community by shutting down one of its staple eateries. Pan Latin, located at the corner of Chambers Street and River Terrace, had been losing business over time and permanently closed at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 15.

Owner and Chef Sandy Kraehling, a Colombian American, opened Pan Latin about seven years ago, making her vision of a Latin café a reality in downtown Manhattan. For breakfast, lunch and dinner, foods, breads, coffees and specialty items from every corner of the Latin world were served. Whether customers had eaten one of the numerous empanadas, sweet desserts or chicken cheese avocado quesadillas—a favorite among Stuy students—they were always satisfied after a meal at the eatery. The nutritious organic foods and beverages served at Pan Latin brought a little Latin spice to the neighborhood.

Many Stuyvesant students will dearly miss the incredible food, convenience and atmosphere of Pan Latin. "I am devastated by the loss of a go-to lunch destination," senior Daniel Frankel said. "I'm going to miss the student specials." The welcoming staff catered to students' needs and kept students like Frankel returning each day. The comfortable couches and the unique atmosphere that made everyone feel like family also certainly contributed to the eatery's success.

Though its restaurant in Tribeca is closing, Pan Latin will continue its online catering. Still, students feel that it is an irreplaceable venue. The delightful food served was unique to Pan Latin. "Along with being delicious and reasonably priced, the

Latin food was a healthier and more interesting alternative for lunch," junior Marina Shneerson said. "With plenty of new dishes to try, I never got bored."

"There is nothing else in the general vicinity of Stuy west of Greenwich [Street] with good food," Frankel said.

Pan Latin slowed down during its final few days in business. The displays were removed, food was given away free or at discounted prices and everything was packed away in boxes. Although the owner and workers were very busy and declined to comment on the closing, they seemed just as disappointed as their customers did. The loss of such a neighborhood favorite has

"I am devastated by the loss of a go to lunch destination."
—Daniel Frankel, senior

caused quite an upset. Still, some are handling the news better than others. Junior Liza Gribkova said, "It was nice to eat there for a change of pace, but I won't mind eating somewhere else."

Unfortunately, this may be the best attitude for Stuyvesant students to adopt as they look for new lunch spots and say "adios" to Pan Latin.

Just Kick, Push



A new skate park can be found at Pier 62 at Chelsea Piers.

Rebecca Zandborg/The Spectator

By SHAH ALAM

We've already witnessed the phenomenon on the street, in empty parking lots and on TV, but now it has arrived mere minutes from Stuyvesant. Skating has been a significant part of New York City culture for years, but with very few places to skate, skaters have been forced to scour the streets, searching for their own makeshift parks—until now. With the construction of the new Pier 62 Skate Park, skaters from across New York City now have a place to call home.

The skate park, located on West 22nd St., is a welcome new addition to a series of already existing parks in the Hudson River Park system bordering West Side Highway. In the past, there were several temporary skate parks in the area, including one in Tribeca and another in Chelsea Piers, but soon enough, they all met their demise. The idea of a new, permanent skate park had

been around for quite some time before the Hudson River Park system decided to create a free, public park in the same location as the previous Chelsea Piers Park. But it wasn't until May 2010, after months of construction, that a new haven for skaters was born.

Even though the design by California Skateparks/Site Design Group is quite cozy—only 15,000 sq. ft.—it implements the use of structural foam on top of a pile-supported platform, giving the park surface a smooth, earthlike feel. Composed of many elaborate obstacles, including ledges ranging from 2 to 24 ft. and a beginner's Ollie Zone, the park has more than enough variety for skateboarders, roller bladers and inline skaters alike. "[Skate] bowls. That's what so great about Pier 62. It is to skating what a nice big track is to running," junior Tanjhid Choudhury said. "It's smooth, big, empty and full of turns to keep you from getting bored."

The park, open from 8 a.m. to sunset, is always teeming with skaters. And while the park itself is more than enough reason to plan a visit, the welcoming community is the icing on the cake. "We just come here to skate. Doesn't matter who you are, as long as you got wheels and a passion," skater James Brandt said.

According to other frequent park goers, newcomers have become regularities. "Everyone wants in on the skate scene nowadays," skater Jonathan Ibanez said. "Now, with this park at arm's length, more and more heads keep coming through."

Though the park is a much needed and welcomed improvement to the park system, the approval is not unanimous. Some feel that the park has become a nuisance, attracting reckless teens who disturb the once peaceful environment. "I used to jog through here every day and take a seat by the water to relax," said a local, who wished to remain anonymous. "Now, I can't jog in peace with all the recent ruckus. Instead, I have to dodge skaters left and right for my own safety."

Pier 62 Skate Park is a new place for people to just kick back and skate. The park acknowledges and welcomes everyone, regardless of skill. Surely, with more wheels hitting the streets every day, this is just the beginning of a tidal wave of new skate parks to hit New York. While there hasn't been any official news about other parks, skaters remain hopeful. So, if you ever need a quick jolt, just grab some wheels, take a helmet and try an Ollie by the waterside. Just kick, push.

Arts and Entertainment

The Little Park That Could

By MOLLIE FORMAN

The last thing a New Yorker expects to see in Midtown is grass, but if one visits 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, grass is exactly what one will find. Placed halfway between Times Square and Grand Central Station, Bryant Park and the adjacent main branch of the New York Public Library provide a small bit of peace in the hustle and bustle of Midtown. However, the Park is more than just a pretty patch of lawn; summer events, winter ice-skating sessions and international activities are just a few of the attractions of this Manhattan gem.

The park's long history as a public area began in 1823 when the park was made a potter's field, which is a graveyard for the poor. The site did not receive recognition until the

ace was destroyed by a fire, the location was turned into a simple public park, until the 1930s, when it was lavishly redesigned in the French style. The New York Public Library, which was built next door in 1911, opened the outdoor Reading Room to relieve the gloom of the Great Depression.

In 1974, Bryant Park was named a scenic landmark, which is ironic, because five years later a report described it as a deplorable den of drug dealers. The 90s ushered in a new era for this historic site due to the introduction of massive reforms. Food kiosks were built, public events were planned and crime was reduced by 92%, producing the enjoyable park we have today.

Bryant Park remains a hub of culture and community, offering 100% free events year round. In the winter, the rich grass transforms into an ice skating rink, serving as a frugal alternative to Central Park's expensive Wollman Rink, which charges admission on top of skate and locker rentals. Bryant Park rents skates for \$12, but admission is free.

"[Ice skating] was fun, but it was kind of crowded," sophomore Anita Yau said. "I liked all the shops outside, where they have souvenirs or clothes."

However, Bryant Park is really in its element during the warmer months. HBO hosts free movie screenings every week during the summer; the 2010 season included films such as "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," "Rosemary's Baby" and "Bonnie and Clyde." The weekly Broadway in Bryant Park show, where songs are performed from the hottest Broadway musicals, is also held during the summer. The only payment necessary is the time required to get to the park early enough to catch a seat, since the lawn fills up fast.

But the fun does not end with summer. The 2010 Fall Festival ran from September 13 to 20 and provided New Yorkers with eight free music and dance shows. New York Fashion Week was another dependable event that had been held at Bryant Park every year since 1994, until this year, when it moved to the larger and more upscale venue of Lincoln Center. "You'd go [to the park during Fashion Week]

and see the big white tents and all the celebrities," junior Cecilia Kim said. "That was really cool."

The park provides constant entertainment, even when there are no performances; areas are laid out for people to play chess, backgammon, ping-pong and the French ball game of petanque. Yoga and tai chi sessions are held every few mornings, and a whimsical carousel serves to entertain children, keeping parents happy at only \$2 a ride. "In the summer, a lot of people have yoga classes there and tourists come," Kim said. "But if you get there early enough, it's really nice."

There are few places in Man-

**There are
few places in
Manhattan that
can boast the
kind of cultural
prowess that
Bryant Park can.**

hattan that can boast the kind of cultural prowess that Bryant Park can. Where else could one do tai chi while divas belt out Broadway tunes? Although not as famous as Central Park, Bryant Park has just as rich a history, and like its uptown cousin, provides welcome moments of peace in a busy world. "It's a nice place right in the middle of Midtown," said Kim. "It's almost like Central Park, a place to step away from the hectic day and chill."

**Bryant Park re-
mains a hub of
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year round.**

New York Crystal Palace was built there in 1853 for an expo inspired by London's Great Exhibition of 1851. There were numerous exhibits featuring new inventions, international artwork and the then-largest crocodile ever captured. The showcase was a huge success, initiating one of New York's first tourism booms with over one million visitors. After the Pal-



Bryant Park lies in the heart midtown Manhattan

Beyond Marvel

By HYEMIN YI



of the superhero concept and a blend of sci-fi and political satire, "Watchmen" delves into ideas that are far from comical. Moore takes himself rather seriously, and for a first time comic book reader, it can be a rather intimidating piece of work.

Comics further garnered the public attention with Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer-Prize winning memoir "Maus: A Survivor's Tale," a Holocaust survivor story told through Spiegelman's father. The Jews are, as the title suggests, depicted as mice. As simple and clean as the lines of the art were, the Holocaust was quite the opposite, and the public needed to reevaluate popularized and demeaning notions previously held of comics.

Even within non-fiction comics, there are subdivisions, including journalism. Joe Sacco documents his experiences in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from December 1991 to January 1992 in "Palestine." While Sacco is present throughout the comic, he allows the groups and individuals of his experiences to tell their stories uninterrupted and devotes panels to refugee camps and Jerusalem.

Chris Ware's "Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth," previously serialized in Acme Novelty Library, is massive and sublime for its own reasons. Its central character is the cheerless middle-aged Jimmy Corrigan, a reoccurring character in Ware's work. Instead of keeping to even nine panels within a page, Ware has an affinity for complex and parallel storylines, played out in teeny panels running along the page. He makes interesting use of the gutter—the space separating consecutive panels—by jumping around in time within a larger setting of the page. Although many pages are devoid of text, the first page of Jimmy Corrigan makes extensive use of small text.

There are two common misconceptions surrounding readers who have picked up one or two comics. The first is that the medium is in a kind of limbo between the written word and visual art, and the second is that comics are a precursor to films. But while comics certainly draw from a variety of different art forms, just like film, no other art form spatially creates time and requires reader participation in filling-in the details between the panels. In his comics essay, "Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art," Scott McCloud creates a kind of grammar for talking about the medium.

Today, Alan Moore's "Watchmen" is acclaimed as a seminal work of the comic book. The story takes place in an alternative history where superheroes emerged to help win the Vietnam War, but were later outlawed from society. A somewhat apocalyptic critique

Creating comics is a legitimate craft that should not need terms like "graphic novel" to verify the value of the medium itself. Much of good storytelling is a fusion of concept and form. Comics can push the boundaries of storytelling, too.

Arts and Entertainment

Kick the Couch Potato Bug: Cheap Entertainment for Fall



549 W 52nd St.

By MIRYAM COPPERSMITH

Although the summer's music festivals and Shakespeare in the Park performances have ended, do not despair culture-lovers! There is still quality entertainment to be found for cheaper than the price of a movie ticket. While it may be high time to hit the books for our new load of classes, why not see some stimulating art on your down time instead of sitting at home watching "Glee" reruns? If these events do not interest you, magazines like "Time Out New York" have weekly listings of cheap entertainment, and organizations such as "High Five Tickets to the Arts" provide discounted tickets for teens.

Octoberfest 2010 at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, September 20 - October 16

Now before you get all excited, I am not suggesting that you partake in the 16-day German beer festival, Oktoberfest. However, though legal for all, EST's Octoberfest sounds just as crazy. The theater company will perform readings of 53 new full-length plays in a span of 27 days. The festival is a rare opportunity to see plays like "Shakespeare in Vegas" in their beginning stages. Plus all of the readings are free!

Dance New Amsterdam

280 Broadway

A great modern dance performance is not only beautiful, but it also makes you think about the world in a new way. Dance New Amsterdam's (DNA) new season does just that by exploring a wide range of themes. It includes a series choreographed by Tom Pear-

son dealing with Native American cultural identity (plus an accompanying art exhibit) and "100 Beginnings" by Artist in Residence Nicole Walcott, who explores personal struggle in both poignant and comedic ways. DNA is close to Stuyvesant, so you don't have to go out of your way to try something new, and tickets are only \$14 for students.

Brooklyn Public Library

1 Grand Army Plaza

The Brooklyn Public Library, besides being a great place to read and research, hosts year-round cultural events. While these include classical concerts and black-and-white French films, this is not your grandmother's library entertainment. On October 7, the a capella group Sonos will be performing its covers of Radiohead, Fleet Foxes and Bjork. The most intriguing event

lined up for fall is the director's cut of the Russian cyber-thriller "Na Igre (Game)," screening on October 13.

Barnes and Noble

97 Warren Street and 33 East 17th Street

Frequenting chains like Barnes and Nobles does have its perks, like being able to hear amazing speakers. At the TriBeCa branch, on Tuesday, September 21, Tim Gunn of "Project Runway" will be sharing tips on how to "make it work." On Wednesday, September 22, one of the funniest ladies alive, "Flight of the Conchords'"s Kristen Schall, will be discussing her new book. If you want to schlep all the way out to Union Square, you can see Jon Stewart, Neil Gaiman and Condoleezza Rice, all for the same No Purchase Necessary policy that makes B & N our favorite place to go to the bathroom.

The Apple Store

103 Prince Street

The tech-wizards that brought you the iPod really do know their music. The SoHo branch of the Apple Store hosts free concerts in its comfortable, if small, upstairs concert space. Usually the bands are promoting new albums, so it's a great place to hear bands perform new material live. Concerts are usually 45 minutes to an hour long and they are free. Make sure to get there early to ensure a good seat, because you never know what shenanigans you might catch. When Dr. Dog was promoting its new album, "Promises, Promises," their lead guitarist came with three green

apples, which he proceeded to juggle and munch on throughout the show. Check the Apple Web site for show dates.

Yoshimoto Nara: Nobody's Fool at Asia Society

725 Park Avenue

Japanese Neo-Pop has become one of the most popular styles of contemporary art. The Asia Society's exhibition pays homage to a master of this form, Yoshimoto Nara. Nara's whimsical style and bright colors delight

"There is still quality entertainment to be found for cheaper than the price of a movie ticket."

the eye while the darker themes of his work stimulate the gray cells. The exhibition is separated into three parts: Isolation, Rebellion and Music which speak to Nara's growth as an artist. The exhibition is \$5 for students and free for people under 16. Knock yourselves out, underclassmen!

Idiots Wake Up Broadway with a Fistful of Punk

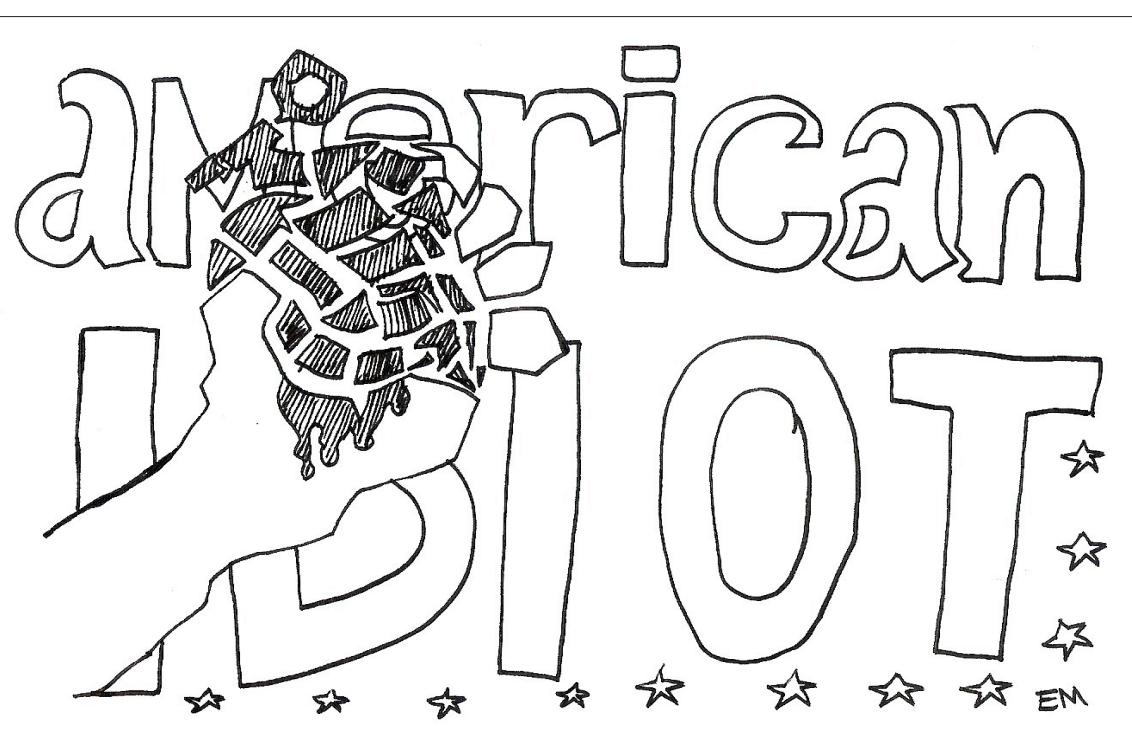
By EMMALINA GLINSKIS

"To live and not to breathe, is to die in tragedy. To run, to run away, to fight what you believe," sings character Johnny (aka Jesus of Suburbia) about leaving his suburban wasteland in the new rock opera Broadway sensation, "American Idiot." The powerful lyrics guide the audience on a trip filled with emotions from love to

they desire. However, leaving home is never easy to do. Will discovers that his girlfriend is pregnant and decides not to leave, reluctantly choosing impending fatherhood instead, and Tunny is persuaded by propaganda to fight in Iraq. Johnny, alone in the city, fights a war between his love for Whatsername (Rebecca Naomi Jones) and the dark drug-filled influences of Goth character St. Jimmy (Tony Vincent). After falling into his specific dilemma, each character tries to balance love and rage in the chaotic way of a restless youth facing the reality of adulthood.

Many themes throughout the rock opera portray confusion and frustration, as the teenagers find no easy path to fulfillment because they have little faith in themselves. Despite all the dark influences of sex, drugs and rock n' roll, there is still humor hidden in the juvenile, yet damaged, characters. The play pokes fun at cheery patriotism when a handsome man in only underwear, surrounded by girls in red, white and blue sequined dresses, persuades Tunny to join him and become a soldier. Another humorous moment is when Johnny brags about holding up a store to get money for his bus ticket, only to later sheepishly admit his mom lent him the cash.

Overall, the play is an adrenaline roller coaster, with the cast almost destroying the award-winning and ever changing bright set. The high walls are covered in flyers and posters, as they are in any messy teenager's room, and TVs are present everywhere, displaying political figureheads, advertisements, celebrities and atom bombs. The music, featur-



ing songs from "American Idiot," and "21st Century Breakdown," ranges from temper-tantrum punk jams to emotional rock ballads, all sung by a phenomenal cast. "The show was filled with passionate 'rocking out,' amazing guitar-playing, a lot of head-bopping and a very engaging story," sophomore Eliza Mitnick said. However, with almost no dialogue, characters' mood swings can be hard to follow. The show's chaos is seen through the busyness of the scenes. Many things happen on stage at once; Will sits off to the side on a couch with beer in hand

throughout most of the play, while musicians stand and play scattered about. A whole string section adds an unusual flavor to a few of Green Day's songs, while cast members clad in torn, dyed, dark skinny jeans and combat boots stomp around the stage. While the dancing is full of movements one would typically see at a rock concert, such as bobbing heads, angry fist pumps and crazy body convulsions, it is choreographed creatively, overall, to bind with the music and energetic mood. In an especially good arrangement, after Whatsername breaks up with Johnny for going

overboard with drugs, she sings "Letterbomb" with all the female cast members, as they powerfully dance on a rising platform, pointing fingers at the accused Johnny.

"American Idiot" is a surge of emotions about a state where happiness and desolation get confused in the process of youths' looking toward the future. It breaks boundaries on Broadway and is the perfect mix of rock music, energy, chaos and just a dash of cynical humor. It plays in the St. James Theatre and is ongoing now.

hated to the confusion that most teenagers feel every day.

Based on Green Day's album of the same title, the musical follows three confused teenagers on their quest to escape the dull suburban lives they see before them. The three main characters, Johnny (John Gallagher, Jr.), Tunny (Stark Sands) and Will (Michael Esper) all decide to leave for New York City and pursue whatever

Arts and Entertainment

The Best of T.V.: 2010-2011 Season

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY and
CHRISTINE LEE

With the return of school comes the start of a new season of primetime television. Grueling assignments and a constant flurry of tests and after school activities begin to define Stuyvesant students. As they tackle colossal workloads, forced to remain home for the little time there is after a long school day, members of the Stuyvesant community need a chance to unwind. Watching television provides this opportunity. Whether it is to take a break from homework or to reward oneself for timely completion, watching TV provides a warm, comedic and sometimes dramatic element to the end of a hard day's work.

Monday

"How I Met Your Mother" (8:00-8:30 p.m., CBS, premieres September 20)

A comedic depiction of the New York metropolitan lifestyle, "How I Met Your Mother" tells the story of a man who searches for true love while working as an architect. The show features five close-knit friends who deal with professional, romantic and oftentimes ridiculous conflicts, all the while entertaining the audience with witty retorts, amusing situations and clever running gags. Spontaneous comedy without the weight of overbearing drama allows "How I Met Your Mother" to maintain a light-hearted and cheerful tone. Inside jokes and situational irony ensure repeated laughs, but the luminous characters give the show depth. Their endearing natures and quick wits appeal to all. With uninhibited comedy as a constant presence, "How I Met Your Mother" remains an impressive and uplifting program after five successful seasons.

Tuesday

"Raising Hope"
(9:00-9:30 p.m., FOX, premieres September 21)

Teenage pregnancy is a hot topic for the entertainment industry. "Raising Hope," a new drama, succeeds in differing from the many titles of this "genre," as it focuses on a single father. Jimmy Chance (Lucas Neff) is a 23 year old who suffers the consequences of a one-night stand by learning how to care for his newly born daughter after the mother of the child (Bijou Phillips) goes to jail. Chance and his incredibly dysfunctional family must learn to take care of the child, while dealing with several mishaps along the way. A more adult version of Disney's "Good Luck Charlie," this new show is gaining popularity for its unique plot line and great cast.

Wednesday

"Cougar Town"
(9:30-10:00 p.m., ABC, premieres September 22)

Starring Courtney Cox as real estate

agent Jules Cobb, "Cougar Town" is the tale of a recently divorced mother in her early forties as she searches for companionship while taking care of her teenage son, Travis (Dan Byrd). While the show originally comes across as a typical dry sitcom, its passive humor and warm sentiment wash over the viewer in a steady deluge. The characters sport delightful, yet at times clashing, personalities. Their cozy dialogue and playful interactions invigorate "Cougar Town" with boundless energy. Grayson Ellis (Josh Hopkins), Jules's estranged neighbor and love interest, is abrasive yet charming, while Laurie Keller (Busy Phillips) enriches the show with her fervent and audaciously blunt persona. The cast brightens the show with funny remarks and the glowing familial essence of the show leaves audiences happy.

Thursday

"The Office"
(9:00-9:30 p.m., NBC, premieres September 23)

Exploring the mockumentary genre, reminiscent of cult classics such as "Arrested Development," "The Office" portrays the lives of office workers at a mid-size paper company. "The Office" touches upon the mundane occurrences of everyday life while incorporating subtle humor and composing a spectrum of various archetypes with its large ensemble cast. Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) and Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) are the beloved couple whose relationship has developed since Season 1. Michael Scott (Steve Carell) adds an unmatched randomness through the absurdity of his dialogue and actions, providing an amusing caricature of an idiotic, yet lovable boss. Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) entertains the audience through his ridiculous paranoia and weird, overly enthusiastic nature. Together, the entire cast creates a hilarious portrait of the commonplace events that constitute office life.

Friday

"Medium" (8:00-9:00 p.m., CBS, premieres September 24)

Uniting the stirring suspense of a mystery thriller and the fantastical allure of a supernatural drama, "Medium" delves into an outlandish world of manipulative phantoms, evil specters and lingering ghosts. The show stars Allison DuBois (Patricia Arquette) as a paralegal endowed with the power to act as a conduit between the realm of the deceased and the world of the living. With her abilities as a medium, she solves intense and otherwise inscrutable murders by using her gift, aided by the resources of the district attorney. "Medium" also focuses on Allison's husband and three daughters, mixing vivacious and captivating horror with a nuclear family dynamic. It is the combination of the exhilarating plots and the warmth of an earnest family enduring hardship that makes the show a unique, exciting and heart-warming experience for everyone.

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Morning Munchies

By TONG NIU

When it comes to breakfast, we are more creative than college students on a budget are. From cold cereal in a cup to leathery bacon from the school cafeteria, we either eat what is available or nothing at all. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, eating breakfast promotes learning, helps control weight gain and prevents those morning stomachaches, which are usually hunger pangs. So here are some simple, healthy recipes to combat those morning munchies:

Banana breakfasts are high in potassium and carbohydrates and will give you some extra energy. Another perk is the sweetness of these breakfasts. Make them Sunday night, pop them in the freezer, and you'll have something to last you through the week.

Banana Nut Muffins

Time: 35 minutes to prepare and cook

1/2 cup butter, unsalted, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
4 ripe bananas, mashed
1 1/4 cup flour, white
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup walnuts, chopped (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Combine the sugar and butter and beat until light and fluffy.

3. Add the eggs, and after beating thoroughly, stir in bananas and chopped walnuts.

4. Put flour and baking soda into the creamed mixture and stir until ingredients are moistened.

5. Pour mixture into baking cups/pans (fill up to 2/3 full). Let mixture rest for 3-5 minutes before putting in the oven.

6. Bake for 25 minutes at 350 degrees.

Yield: 18 small servings.

For something a bit sweeter, you can replace the walnuts with chocolate chips. Also, try experimenting with cinnamon and nutmeg. Depending on your taste, you can supplement the walnuts with anything.

Calorie Count: 172.8 per serving.

Banana Cookies

Time: 45 minutes to prepare and cook

3 ripe bananas
2 cups rolled oats
1 cup dates, pitted and chopped
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. In a large bowl, mash the bananas and then stir in the rest of the ingredients.

3. Let mixture sit for 15 minutes before dropping onto an ungreased cookie sheet.

4. Bake for around 20 minutes, or until lightly browned, at 350 degrees.

5. Let it cool for 20-25 minutes before eating.

Yield: 36 small servings.

The dates can be replaced with dried fruit, chocolate chips, apricots, raisins or nuts. You can also replace vegetable oil with chunky applesauce. These cookies are delicious right out of the oven or the refrigerator.

Calorie count: 44 per serving.

Banana Fruit Smoothie

Time: 10 minutes

4 large strawberries, fresh or frozen
1 cup milk or yogurt
1 ripe banana
4 - 5 ice cubes
1 1/2 tsp. sugar (optional)

1. Mix strawberries, bananas, sugar and milk/yogurt and blend.

2. Add ice one cube at a time. Blend until smooth.

3. Pour and enjoy!

Yield: 1 serving.

For those who don't have an appetite in the morning, this smoothie is the perfect breakfast. It is the simplest to make and you can experiment with different fruit combinations. When using frozen strawberries, it would be best to add in some sugar or sweetener. You can also add a spoonful of vanilla ice cream for a creamier texture and a sweeter taste. The milk can also be replaced with different types of fruit juices—such as orange juice or apple juice—for a more flavorful drink.

Calorie count: 28 per serving.

All recipes used in this article were found in the following Web sites:

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Healthy-Banana-Cookies/Detail.aspx>

<http://recipes.sparkpeople.com/recipe-detail.asp?recipe=307866>

<http://cookeatshare.com/recipes/strawberry-banana-smoothie-193695>

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Sports

SPORTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 29

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens
vs.

Washington Irving High School

4:30 PM
Stuyvesant HS Gym

Boys' Soccer

Stuyvesant FC
vs.
Julia Richmond Educational Center

4:00 PM
Randall's Island Field 83

Thursday, September 30

Girls' Golf

Birdies
vs.
Bronx High School of Science

4:00 PM
Moshulu Golf Course

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas
vs.
Fiorello H. Laguardia High School

4:00 PM
East River Park B

Girls' Swimming

Penguins
vs.
Bronx High School of Science

4:30 PM
Stuyvesant HS Pool

Friday, October 1

Boys' Varsity Football

Peglegs
vs.
Franklin K. Lane Campus

6:00 PM
Pier 40

Saturday, October 2

Boys' and Girls' Cross Country

Mayor's Cup Championships
8:30 AM
Van Cortlandt Park

Wednesday, October 6

Girls' Swimming

Penguins
vs.
A. Philip Randolph High School

4:30 PM
Stuyvesant HS Pool

Sports

Girls' Volleyball

Vixen's Vie for Twelfth Straight Season of Perfection



Abe Levitan / The Spectator

The Vixens beat Bard in 2 sets on Tuesday.

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no one wants to be here when the streak ends," Fisher said. "And while the streak is nice, the more important part is the playoffs; the big picture is how

we are going to be at the end."

As for the team as a whole, the players are close-knit and comfortable together. "We are really just one big family," junior and second year player

Ana Slade said. "We got a lot of new girls, and they are fitting in perfectly."

With the loss of so many seniors and the arrival of so many younger players, it is im-

portant to have a strong figure leading the team. Fisher, in his 11th year as head coach of the Vixens, fits this profile perfectly. "Coach Fisher is really experienced and definitely a

"We are just as athletic as last year, even though we lost a lot of experience."
—Philip Fisher, coach and physical education teacher

great coach. He can definitely lead us to success in the playoffs," Weldon said.

Despite spotless performances over the past 11 seasons and high hopes for a good seed in the playoffs, the team understands what is most important at the end of the day. The ultimate goal for the Vixens is to advance further in the playoffs than they have in the past two years. "We want to keep the streak going, but

Girls' Cross Country

Stuyvesant Girls Cross Country Goes Hard

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we're pushing hard to reach and pass their levels," Yuan said.

Their improvement stems from a rigorous practice regimen. The Greycliffs work out by Stuyvesant along the West Side Highway and in Central Park or Prospect Park when they have harder workouts with cardio and hill exercises. In the summer at Winged Foot XC camp, many of the girls had

Yuan said.

However, camp was valued not only for the training, but also for the downtime in

"We are shooting for a top ten finish."

—Kristyn Pluchino, chemistry teacher and coach

"We lost the fastest, but we're pushing hard to reach and pass their levels."

—Vanessa Yuan, senior and captain

the opportunity to run extra long-distances, which peaked at eight miles for some runners.

"Camp really encouraged them to push the extra mile,"

which the girls were able to relax and spend time with the boys' team, which was also attending camp.

"It was a great bonding experience," senior Lindsay Bauer said.

The Greycliffs' 47-man roster is well balanced among each grade. This season, there are 11 seniors and 14 juniors making up the core of the team, with a strong underclassmen group as well. Last year, the team came in fourth in the Borough Championships. However, the ambitions of the Greycliffs do not stop

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counterpart. The most popular sport in the country at the professional and amateur levels combined, football is a game of strength, speed and brute force. In essence, it is very similar to rugby, which is far more popular worldwide than it is here.

There is a line from the 2009 film "Invictus" that goes, "Football [meaning soccer] is a gentleman's game played by hooligans. Rugby is a hooligan's game played by gentleman." By the same standards, American football is a hooligan's game played by hooligans. However, this kind of sport is exactly what Americans seem to want.

Americans value toughness, power and determination more than they value grace and elegance. While soccer truly incorporates all of these characteristics, Americans will never perceive its true nature as long as toughness is masked by over-dramatization when it comes to diving and fouling.

Until soccer either be-

Fakin' It

continued from page 16

cope with their shortcomings by emphasizing snaps on both ends of the ball and by keeping their talent maximized with key two-way contributors such as Li, whose one sack and seven tackles through the first

Slimming Down Outside the Weight Room

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two games put him among the team leaders in both categories.

"Every year we have a few students that really step up and fill the roles we need them to," Strasser said. "Their unselfish acts go unnoticed by the fans, but for the team, they are essential." Strasser also cited seniors Smith, William Huang and captain Mohit Kumar as two-way players who have greatly helped the team this year.

"One positive result of the smaller roster is our camaraderie," Strasser said. "We traveled to Camp Scatico this preseason, and it has really brought our team together." Having such unity has accounted for a more dynamic approach to games, where the defense has been making stops and skill players such as seniors Michael Bucaoto and Vlad Deshkovich have been given the ability to use their speed.

The Peglegs do not have

"Our attitude this year is to hate to lose more than we love to win."

—Ming Li, senior and captain

as many blue uniforms sitting on the bench this season, but what they have lost in manpower they have made up for with intangibles. There

"One positive result of the smaller roster is our camaraderie."
—Mark Strasser, coach

is a new confidence to the Peglegs, and Li, Smith and the other seniors look to use their slimmed-down roster to strengthen their weak links.

"Despite our size, the game plan for us remains the same this year," Li said. "Play with

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Girls' Cross Country

Stuyvesant Girls Cross Country Goes Hard



The Girls Cross Country team practicing in Central Park.

Stacy Wang / The Spectator

By ELIEZER HANFT

Ask anyone on the girls' cross country team, recently renamed the Greyclucks, how her season is going and her answer will most likely be, "We go hard." What started as a small joke at Winged Foot Cross Country Camp this summer has turned into the team's new motto. Whether the team members are running up hills, doing tempo workouts along the Hudson or going on long-runs, they are always going

hard.

After placing 15th in last year's Public School Athletic League (PSAL) City Championship, the girls began to train intensely. They have continued to train since the summer, and as Chemistry teacher and coach Kristyn Pluchino said, "We are shooting for a top ten finish."

The Greyclucks have a good chance of building on last season's successes. After graduating only five seniors, the remaining core team, led

by seniors and co-captains Hannah O'Grady and Vanessa Yuan, is more experienced. While Vanessa Ventola ('10) finished highest individually for Stuyvesant at the PSAL City Championships by placing 44th, Yuan finished 78th and showed promise in this final meet. Many of the other girls have also showed promising racing times as Yuan has.

"We lost the fastest, but

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Girls' Volleyball

Vixen's Vie for Twelfth Straight Season of Perfection

By NICK HEIM

The last time the Vixens, Stuyvesant's girls' varsity volleyball team, lost a regular season game, the four sophomores who are on the current team had been looking forward to their first day of kindergarten. For more than a decade—the last 11 seasons—the Vixens have been untouchable in the regular season, losing only two sets in the past four years. The playoffs, however, have been a different story. After garnering a third and fourth seed in the playoffs in the 2009 and 2010 seasons, respectively, the Vixens only managed quarterfinal appearances in both years, falling to McKee/Staten Island Tech in 2009 and Midwood in 2010.

The team graduated six seniors this year, including four starters, which are not easy spots to fill. Veteran coach and physical education teacher Philip Fisher is not worried, though. "Everyone's gotta step up," Fisher said. "We are just

as athletic as last year, even though we lost a lot of experience." The entire team does serious volleyball preparation over the summer to prepare for the season, including in-school practices and training sessions at a volleyball camp that the team attends.

At first, it seems like the Vixens might face a lack of leadership since the team has only one returning senior. Yet Fisher looks at it differently. "Everyone has to lead by example. The quietest player on the court can do the right thing and be a leader," he said.

The team's captain, senior Dorothy Weldon, in her third season with the Vixens, agreed. "We have a great team," Weldon said. "We work hard, and we are here to play well."

With a string of dominance—the likes of which Stuyvesant varsity athletics teams rarely show—it is always a challenge to keep a team motivated. "Honestly,

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Slimming Down Outside the Weight Room

By JACK ZURIER

When the Stuyvesant football team works out at Pier 40 along the Hudson River, there is a different feel to practices. The drills are run the same way, there is no change in the coaching staff and the members of the team seem fairly similar to those in previous squads. The only exception is size, though not individual size senior captain and line-man Ming Li stands at 6 feet and weighs 260 pounds. It is the roster for the Peglegs that has slimmed down from 34 players to a mere 21, going into hell week during the pre-season. Now at 31 strong, the team still looks to fill the positional needs created by lack of depth and experience.

"We still have enough depth where we don't have 11 guys going both ways, but as a team we are still small enough to all have a close relationship with each other," senior and captain Patrick Smith said.

There was no one reason for the reduced number of players heading into camp, and any number of factors could have accounted for the decline. "Our roster is reflective of the trend in high school football programs," Coach Mark Strasser said. "More and more, football programs have a decreased participation rate. You can look at many different factors. More choices in extracurricular activities, more academic pressure placed on students, less parental support for the sport or less exposure to football at an early age."

"Two big reasons are the

fact that we have a very dedicated core group of seniors who have really stuck together and that may have led to some of our less dedicated players quitting," Smith added. "The other reason is that we have so many athletes in our grade and many of them want to focus on their main sport."

Other schools have experienced the same phenomenon, though to a greater extent in certain cases. A. Philip Randolph High School, a team in the Peglegs' division, had to forfeit all of its games this season because it did not have enough players to field a team.

Another critical issue with a lack of depth is the forcing of players to stay on the field, which can lead to injury. "We have a lot of two-way starters. More chances of injuries and more players being gassed throughout the game," Li said. "It also means very little depth behind each position. Injuries happen all the time. There really isn't a way to prevent it. But when an injury does occur, the second string has to step it up and do their job."

Recovering from a thumb injury, junior quarterback Caelin Kaplan has no backup, and as a quarterback who will run more often than throw, he is more prone to injury. Because of this, the Peglegs run a risk of losing their talent, and consequently, games at the end of the season.

Despite the loss of depth, the Peglegs have looked to

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Fakin' It



Maggie Wu / The Spectator

By CORY BEHROOZI

Football. Fútbol. Soccer. Different cultures have different names for the sport, but around the globe, it's known as "the beautiful game." Played at the highest level, it is unmatched in its unique grace and elegance. There are few things more beautiful to the seasoned fan than a long pass placed neatly on the foot of a teammate, or a crisp, clean finish from a striker's boot into the upper corner of the net. It is exhilarating to appreciate a diving goalkeeper fully stretching

out to nudge a powerfully struck ball just a few inches off course, sending it skidding to safety beyond the goal post. There is the comical elegance of a striker tumbling to the ground after a slight bump from a defender, writhing in fabricated agony while clutching a body part the defender clearly did not touch and springing to his feet to calmly trot back to position only once the call has gone his way.

Well, maybe that last part is not so elegant. "Diving," "flopping," or in more lenient terms, "embellishing," is a very apparent smudge of classlessness on the otherwise pristine face of the sport of soccer. Many American soccer critics cite this phenomenon as a reason for soccer's lack of popularity in the United States. Unfortunately, it seems to be even more common that people unfamiliar with soccer will write off the sport as soon as they see a few flops.

I'd love to argue that flopping isn't as big a part of soccer as many Americans think, but sadly, it has grown into something of an "art." Perhaps it has even become a new

element of the soccer skill-set. There is, of course, no innate attachment between soccer and flopping, but it has become hard to separate the two. Fantastic amounts of skill and finesse were on display at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa this summer, but several teams put on displays of dramatic embellishment that were no less impressive.

Often, a foul looks more like a dive when the team one is rooting for commits it. As a fan of the Netherlands, I don't doubt that the team deserved more of its nine yellow cards against Spain than the two I felt were legitimate. But the Spanish certainly proved their acting talent during the final match of the Cup, as well.

Perhaps diving really is one of the reasons that soccer has gained such little support as a professional sport in the United States. Many people I know have been offended or bored by the slow pace that is created by too much diving, fouling and yellow-carding.

American football, as it is known everywhere else, is essentially soccer's American

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