

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*“The Pulse
of the
Student
Body”*

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Metal Detector Request Denied

By **ARIANNA MOSHARY**

Principal Stanley Teitel’s request for metal detectors from the Department of Education (DOE) for finals week has been denied.

Members of the administra-

tion believe that students have been using cell phones to cheat on their finals. “It’ll be less tempting to cheat because [students] won’t have the apparatus

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New Cut Policy Implemented During Second Marking Period

By **ALEXANDER SHIN
and ZOE WU**

A new cut policy, implemented during the second marking period, states that teachers who wish to give a 90 or higher average to students who cut classes more than five times in the marking period must first consult their departmental Assistant Principal.

This policy does not prevent a student with five or more cuts from receiving an average higher than 90. However, “the teacher

has to have a conversation with the Assistant Principal to explain why [he or she] would give a student such a high grade,” Principal Stanley Teitel said.

The policy applies to all departments, although the Health and Physical Education Department had already been enforcing a policy where students who cut classes twice would fail the class. “When I looked at report cards, I cannot understand how students

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As More Students Attend Sessions, AIS Tutoring Feels Strain

By **ROBERT COLGAN**

This year, students in unprecedented numbers are attending the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) tutoring sessions, especially for help in math and science. According to the attendance sheets Assistant Principal Guidance Eleanor Archie collected, 233 students attended math tutoring, 304 students attended science tutoring, and 61 students attended social studies tutoring in November 2008.

In comparison, over all of last school year, 823 students attended math tutoring (about 91 students per month), 487 attended science tutoring (about 54 students per month) and 470 students attended social studies tutoring (about 52 students per month), according to Stuyvesant High School’s Comprehensive Educational Plan.

More students are attending AIS tutoring sessions because of the policy Principal Stanley Teitel instituted earlier this semester, which requires students who are failing any of their classes to attend mandatory tutoring for those subjects.

This policy, however, doesn’t account for such a drastic increase. For example, the major-

ity of students who are attending AIS tutoring for math are passing their math class. Only 32 freshmen, 49 sophomores, 14 juniors and 18 seniors are failing math this semester.

“There are definitely more people coming this year than there were in past years,” physics teacher Benjamin Dreyfus said. “The room is filling up, and I think the numbers in past years were a lot fewer.”

Students also reported seeing more people at tutoring sessions. “There were three different math classes in the same tutoring session and only one teacher,” junior Alison Roberts said. “Then, you don’t get enough attention, at all.

“Clearly, there are going to be more [students],” Teitel said. “When you fail a subject, if I leave it up to you, you may or may not go. If I mandate it, I didn’t leave it up to you anymore.”

According to Archie, this year, about 200 letters were sent to parents whose children are failing one or more classes. The letters informed the parents that their children must attend mandatory AIS tutoring sessions. The parents had to sign the letters and return them to school. “Most of them returned it back,

which is very good. So, the parents are agreeing with us that AIS is something that will help their child succeed,” Archie said.

While most teachers agreed that the new mandatory tutoring policy is beneficial, others are concerned about the strain it puts on AIS tutoring. “If the numbers are so huge, we need the teachers to meet that need, and I don’t know where the funds are going to come from,” math teacher Dawn Vollaro said. “The next question would be, ‘Why is there this need?’”

Some teachers feel overwhelmed by the large number of students who attend their tutoring sessions. “It is disproportionate,” Vollaro said. “It’s overwhelming, only having one teacher in the room, and it’s just an extraordinary number of students who are coming for help.”

The number of people in attendance at AIS sessions is especially high on the days before tests. “When there’s a lot of kids here, like the day before a test, you don’t get that much attention,” freshman Renata Horowitz said.

Teitel and Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara

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Students to SU: “Talk to Us”

BY **SARAH KAPLAN**

It’s been a little over a month since the winners of the most recent general elections were decided, but already students have been disappointed by their elected officials. A recent Spectator survey of 223 students revealed just how frustrated students have become with the Student Union (SU).

Where Have All the Opinions Gone?

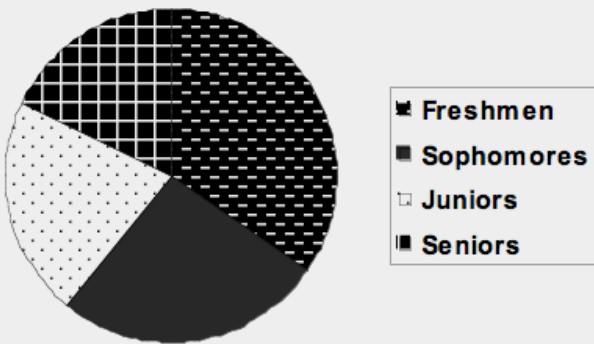
When surveyed about their feelings about the SU, students responded with an extraordinary degree of apathy. More than one third of students said that they had no opinion on the matter when asked if they agreed with a number of statements about the SU.

Freshmen especially seem to have no strong feelings about the SU. When polled, 55 percent of freshmen had no opinion about the statement “The SU effectively promotes the interests of students.” They accounted for the nearly a third of students who gave that reply.

Nearly 40 percent of students had no opinion about the SU’s ability to communicate with students, as well as the statement “The SU upholds its function.”

“I don’t really know anything about the SU,” freshman Breanna Celestin wrote in a survey. “I have no opinion on the matter because I don’t know.”

The chart below shows how many people from each grade responded “no opinion” when asked how they felt about the statement “The SU effectively promotes the interests of students.”



Freshmen responded “no opinion” more often than any other grade and accounted for 35 percent of “no opinion” responses.

Growing Discontent

The survey shows that over time, a lack of knowledge and interest can become apathy and cynicism. While only 17 percent of freshmen disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “The SU upholds its function,” that number increases to 25 percent among sophomores, 34 percent among juniors, and 35 percent among seniors. For freshmen, most negative feelings towards the SU were

caused by a lack of knowledge. But many upperclassmen have little faith in the SU’s ability to promote students’ interests and get things done.

“[The SU] is supposed to be make student life easier, to help students through high school,” junior Bibi Lewis said. “But they’re not very effective. They never really tell us what’s going on, and I never know anything about what the SU is doing. That really gives everyone the

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Speech & Debate Team Wins Villiger

By **SAM LEVINE**

The Speech and Debate Team swept the prestigious Villiger Invitational Tournament, beating Regis High School for first place with a final score of 170 to 124.

The Villiger Invitational is one of the team’s largest tournaments. Senior and president of the Speech and Debate Team Harlan Downs-Tepper said it is only “second to the state competition.”

Two dozen schools from several states attended the tournament, which was hosted by St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia on Saturday, November 22 and Sunday, November 23. Stuyvesant sent 95 members to this year’s event.

“I am extraordinarily proud of my teammates,” Downs-Tepper said. “Our hard work paid off. More than anything, the team is a community, but it’s frosting on the cake when we win.”

There were eight categories: Policy Debate, Duo Interpretation of Literature, Declamation, Student Congress, Original Oratory, Dramatic Interpretation of Literature, Oratorical Interpretation and Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

“Villiger is my favorite tournament of the year, just watching other people compete and supporting your teammates

when they progress” said senior Aparna Gokhale, who wrote an original speech about xenophobia in America for Original Oratory. “It’s a bonding experience for the team.”

“It was fun,” said Amitav Chakraborty, who participated in Student Congress and gave a speech about “sending 20,000 troops from Iraq to Afghanistan.”

The team of senior Daniel Goldstern and junior Anna Gordan achieved first place in Policy Debate, sophomore Elizabeth Litvitskiy won in Declamation, and Downs-Tepper won in Student Congress. Senior Tom Sanford placed second in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and sophomore Hyemin Yi placed second in Declamation. To see the full results, see the chart on page 2.

Stuyvesant has won eight of the past 10 Villiger tournaments.

“Regis is our biggest competition. This tournament we beat them by over 50 speech points, which is unprecedented,” junior and Speech and Debate team member Joseph Puma said. “We won in three categories and had a lot of finalists and semi-finalists. All in all, it was lots of fun.”

“Last year, we didn’t win. This year, we won by a large margin. Many did well, which made Vil-

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Opinions

Article on page 7.

My Holiday Bailout

With the economic crisis, even gift shopping can be a luxury. However, there lies a balance between being frugal and maintaining the holiday spirit.



Article on page 13.

Arts & Entertainment

Tea is for Tasteful

Amanzi, teeming with a variety of caffeinated beverages and pastries, is a spot not to be missed on your way to the subway.

News

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“More than anything, the team is a community, but it’s frosting on the cake when we win.” —Harlan Downs-Tepper, senior and Speech and Debate Team President

Speech & Debate Team Wins Villiger

liger great,” senior and captain of the Speech section Molly Schaeffer said. “I am very proud. “

The Speech and Debate Team is composed of more than 200 members. Members were selected based on an audition process in September. They practice daily and compete every other Saturday in an effort to qualify for the State Championship in Albany.

This year is Director of Forensics Julie Sheinman’s 25th year coaching at Stuyvesant. “The team was terrific,” she said.

Many newcomers to the Stuyvesant team did well individually. “Our novices did a lot better than most upperclassmen. They are a strong foundation for the team,” senior and Speech Novice Director Santiago Mueckay said.

“It was my first away debate and it was very fun,” freshman and public forum debater Sam Saksin said. “I hope I can go on more. I am very glad the team did well.”

Policy Debate: Mingching Kam (E) & Vincent Dao (E) — Octos (8) David Lu (J) & Kai Sam Ng (J) — Quarters (top 8) Sandesh Kataria (J) & Paul Lee (J) — Semis (top 4) Daniel Goldstern (E) & Anna Gordan (J) — 1st	Student Congress: Tousif Ahsan (J) — Finalist (top 24) Joseph Puma (J) — Finalist (top 24) Amitav Chakraborty (E) — Finalist (top 24) Harlan Downs-Tepper (E) — 1st	Hyemin Yi (O) — 2nd Elizabeth Litvitskiy (O) — 1st
Duo Interpretation of Literature: Sari Sharoni (E) & Valeriya Tsi-tron (J) — Semis	Original Oratory: Simmi Kaur (E) — Quarters	Joseph Frankel (F) — Quarters Briana Last (O) — Semis Miryam Coppersmith (O) — Semis Emily Martin (O) — 6th Omika Jikaria (O) — 3rd
Declamation: Mary Emily Ficarra (O) — Quarters Matteo Singer (O) — Quarters Victoria Hallikaar (F) — Quarters Sophia Abbot (O) — Quarters Audrey Fleishner (O) — Semis Jaimie Meyers (O) — 4th Jin Rim (O) — 3rd	Dramatic Interpretation of Literature: Myra Alonso (E) — Quarters	LD: Eli Lipsky (E) — Double-octos (top 32) Taha Ahsin (J) — Double-octos (top 32) Lee Schleifer-Katz (E) — Double-octos (top 32) Georgia Stasinopoulos (E) — Octos (top 16) Jared Dummitt (E) — Quarters (top 8) Tom Sanford (E) — 2nd
In this chart, F indicates freshman, O indicates sophomore, J indicates junior, and E indicates senior.		

As More Students Attend Sessions, AIS Tutoring Feels Strain

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said they were not aware of any problems. “I don’t think it’s way higher,” Ferrara said. “It’s just up some.”

“I don’t think the number is that high,” Teitel said. “I believe Ms. Ferrara came to me about one group, and we made two. That’s the only thing I heard about.” Teitel said that if he became aware of a problem with too many students in a room, he would break the group up into two or more groups. “I don’t want more than about 20 in a room, rough,” he said. “These are students who have not been successful, and I want to make sure they’re taken care of.”

Recently, ARISTA members have started helping teachers at AIS tutoring sessions.

“Many of the math teachers who help with AIS tutoring actually cover anywhere from

three to five courses,” senior and ARISTA VP Tutoring Rammiya Nallainathan wrote in an e-mail

“When there’s a lot of kids here, like the day before a test, you don’t get that much attention.” —Renata Horowitz, freshman

interview. “You can imagine how hard it would be to teach if there are 15 students asking for help in three different courses. So, this is where ARISTA tutors come in.”

“There were a lot of people here, but there were a lot of volunteers, so at first it seemed like we wouldn’t all have something to do, but we definitely did. There were a lot of people that needed help,” said junior and ARISTA member Lily Ostrer, who helped tutor students at a math session

Teachers said the ARISTA tutors have helped them significantly. “They’re taking a big part of the load,” mathematics teacher Jonas Kalish said.

“Once I got student tutors from some of the other classes, it really cut down on the workload for me,” math teacher Ashvin Jaishankar said. “I can focus on a student or two rather than about 12. So it’s been a good experience having the student tutors.”

Metal Detector Request Denied

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with them [...] I understand students text message each other and there is access to the Internet,” Assistant Principal World Languages Arlene Ubieta said in The Spectator article “Metal Detectors To Be Implemented During Finals Week” published on November 17.

In an effort to reduce cheating on Regents and final exams, Teitel proposed the use of metal detectors to prevent students from bringing electronics into Stuyvesant. “We made a request and I was informed that [the metal detec-

tors’] purpose is to respond to schools in which there is a known threat or they have some reason to believe there could be violence in the schools. [The DOE] just wouldn’t give it to us,” Teitel said.

According to Teitel, other actions may be taken to prevent and discourage the use of cell phones for cheating on exams. “One possibility might be to tell the student body that if you are caught using a cell phone during an exam you will fail the course, not the test, the course. That might be a deterrent. We’ll have to see. I don’t have a solution just yet,” he said.

Controversy Over Senior 90s Day

By KRISTY ZHEN

The first ever Senior 90s Day hosted by the senior caucus was held on Tuesday, November 25. Seniors walked around in jerseys, baggy clothes, fitted hats, hoop earrings and sunglasses.

Seniors Christopher Zhao and Nicholas Rozar brought the idea of Senior Ghetto Fabulous Day, the original name of the senior spirit day, to Senior Caucus President Philip Kim’s attention. When Kim received many positive responses to the idea after asking around, he made it an official senior spirit day.

A Facebook event was created, where Zhao and Kim received even more positive feedback and excitement from seniors. However, a couple of people were offended by the event because of the word ghetto, Kim said.

“Their definition of ghetto is twisted,” senior Demi Elder said.

Zhao then spoke directly to Elder and other students who complained. They were “afraid people would use this day as a window of opportunity to promote racial stereotypes and prejudice,” Zhao said. The name of the event was then changed to Senior 90s Day.

“Some people were offended by the idea, the words ghetto fabulous,” Rozar said. “So the day was entirely changed to fit the needs of the 90s population.” Rozar found

the definitions of ‘ghetto fabulous’ on urbandictionary.com and Wikipedia as someone who “dresses out of their income bracket.”

“My intent for the day was not to offend people,” Kim said. The day was supposed to be more about “a type of clothing” and a chance to “wear something fun” similar to Halloween.

Senior Mel Fagan was one student who found the event offensive. “My problem wasn’t with the way people dressed. It was the entire act they were putting on,” Fagan said.

Other students also disapproved of Senior 90s Day. “When people do voices and act differently, it’s offensive,” senior Jack McDermott said referring to the way people changed not just their clothes on that day.

Junior Cheyanne Sinclair said she saw students congregating, saying stereotypical things like ‘Yo what up,’ and pretending they were “from the hood,” she said. She also saw students acting as if they were gang members, she said. “They were just trying to do, like, a real stereotypical, like, way of the ghetto. It wasn’t accurate and it wasn’t even, like, funny,” she said.

Fagan believes that most of the students who participated in the event knew they were being offensive. The proof was in students coming to school and changing into clothes that they would not

normally wear outside. Senior Shayonna Cato said she saw one male student who was wearing baggy jeans with his boxers showing, bandanas hanging out of his back pocket, a du-rag, hat and gold chain.

“If it’s not okay outside the school, it shouldn’t be okay inside the school,” Fagan said.

“They see African-American people outside school and they assume they’re ghetto and they don’t know what ghetto means—it’s actually something very negative,” junior Lorraine Thomas said.

McDermott and Fagan believe that students didn’t recognize the event as offensive because of the lack of diversity in the school. “The races and cultures that they were trying to emulate [...] were not here to defend themselves,” McDermott said.

“It goes to show how much we [African American students at Stuyvesant] are not even considered. No one asked us if it was okay, if it was offensive,” junior Alexis Wint said.

“It’s pretty clear there are people who think that all black people are ‘ghetto,’” junior Avril Coley said.

Kim’s biggest motivation to promote the event was the seniors’ pleas to have a new type of senior spirit day, in addition to traditional ones like Senior Pajama Day and Tie Day. “I wanted to have some-

thing different,” Kim said. “I wanted to try something fresh.” He was further encouraged to promote the event when he received positive remarks when the day was initially publicized.

Kim, Zhao, and Rozar did not intend that the day to offend others. Kim said to Zhao before the event that “if people were still offended after the name change, I probably have to cancel it.”

Senior Jennifer Yeon participated in the event. “I took it as a fun day like any senior day,” Yeon said.

Coley was not offended by the event because she does not consider herself ‘ghetto.’ However, she believes “It was ridiculous, unnecessary. There are other ways to show senior spirit,” she said. Cato was also not offended. She believes, however, that “overall the day was just a display of ignorance in general in our school,” she said. “People kind of took Senior 90s Day and decided that the 90s was a time when people dressed up in basketball jerseys and hats and du-rags and that’s not what the 90s was about.”

Several students felt the name change from Senior Ghetto Fabulous Day to Senior 90s Day was ineffective in attracting more people to participate. “If it was supposed to be a day to make it how you would dress in the 90s then [the creators] would have called it that

from the beginning. The name change showed that they clearly felt they were at fault,” Wint said.

The name change showed that the creators believed “ghetto fabulous and 90s are something that is equivalent” which demonstrated even more ignorance, according to Thomas.

Referring to the word ghetto, Elder said, “The word has a history to it and the way it is used today, it’s a bad thing and they cannot change the connotation whether you add a word, subtract a syllable, or change the spelling.”

According to Fagan, the term ‘ghetto fabulous’ “is not offensive only when it is used in fashion,” she said. She believes that most of the girls who participated applied ‘ghetto fabulous’ to fashion, whereas the guys who participated applied it to culture.

“It wasn’t meant to be offensive,” Rozar said. “I think it was taken to be offensive, like sort of an ‘us versus them’ but it is not at all because we are one grade. And I feel that every spirit day brings the grade together if everyone does it.”

All the juniors who were interviewed said they would not allow for such a spirit day to occur during their senior year. Thomas and Wint said they would bring people together to explain why it’s wrong and why it’s ignorant. “I would just definitely do everything in my power to stop it,” Thomas said.

Changes Made in AP World History Selection Process

By BRIAN KIM
and BRIAN SOU

This school year, a new policy has been implemented for sophomores wishing to take Advanced Placement (AP) World History.

This fall, all sophomores who had not registered for AP European History were automatically placed into AP World History,

“It works out nicely because if you didn’t do well during Global in freshman year, you’re given another chance to get into the AP.”
—Kelvin Lin, sophomore

also known as Global Studies III. Sophomores must achieve at least a 91 overall average by the third marking period of their first term to remain in the course. Those who do not fulfill this requirement will automatically

be registered for second term of Global Studies IV, or non-AP World History.

In September, all sophomores were given a handout from Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri. “All Sophomore students not enrolled in Advanced Placement European History will be enrolled in Global Studies III for the fall 2008 semester,” Suri said in the handout. “The advance placement designation will not appear on the transcript for the fall term; however, the course is an AP course.”

Some students support this policy. “It’s completely fair,” sophomore Kelvin Lin said. “It works out nicely because if you didn’t do well during Global in freshman year, you’re given another chance to get into the AP. However, if you don’t work hard enough the second time around, then you don’t deserve to be in AP [World History].”

This policy is a change from last year’s policy, which placed all sophomores not taking AP European History in the AP World History course for the fall term as well as the spring term, regardless of the grades he or she received. Acceptance into AP European History was based on students’ freshman Global History averages and teacher recommendations. The cut-off grade for AP European History last year was a 94.

Some students oppose the new policy. Sophomore Matthew Boccio said, “91 is too high of a cutoff. It should be lowered into the mid-80.”

Sophomore Ali Afzal said, “The policy is not completely

fair. If a teacher is easy and gives out high grades, then students in his or her class will be placed into AP World. However, students in

Sophomores must achieve at least a 91 overall average by the third marking period of their first term to remain in the course.

a hard grading teacher will have less of a chance to get in.”

For the most part, however, most people like the policy. Freshman Jeffrey Tseng said, “The policy is great because it distinguishes between the hardworking students and the lazy ones.”

Social Studies teacher Joel Sklaroff supports this policy change. “[This policy] is working out okay. Everyone is given a better opportunity to participate in the AP program,” Sklaroff said.

Other teachers agree. AP World History teacher Muriel Olivi said, “Students now actually have to work hard in class, so I think the policy is a good one.”

Absence Note Template Available Online

By CHRIS LEE

An absence note template was posted on the stuy.edu Web site last month. The note, which asks for the student’s name, ID, OSIS, homeroom, reason for absence, date of absence and the signatures of his or her teachers, can be found under the Links page of the Web site.

According to Principal Stanley Teitel, the template was created because many students have submitted incomplete absence notes in the past.

“We wind up with notes and we don’t know who they belong to,” Teitel said.

According to Teitel, the issue “was discussed by the people in the Attendance Office, Ms. Damesek, and Mr. Wong,” he said.

Although it is not required for students to use this new template, “it would make things easier,” Teitel said.

Many students think that a consistent absence note is a good idea and will definitely benefit the administration.

“It’ll be easier for kids to organize and prepare the note. You just have to print it out and fill it in,” sophomore Jackson Sheng said. “Also, it’s helpful for kids who might never have been absent before. All necessary information is there.”

Sophomore President Mohammad Hossain agreed. “It

seems more efficient for both students and teachers,” he said.

Senior Lily Liang agreed. “It sort of saves time so I don’t have to type the other stuff,” she said.

However, there is some concern about the absence note’s location on the website.

“I had no idea where to find it,” Liang said. “I had to Google it and then got the link for it.”

“This absence note accessible through the Stuy homepage is very efficient.”
—Kevin Hua, sophomore

“I don’t think anyone would actually know of the note and where to find it,” Hossain said. “It needs to be placed somewhere where people will find it easily.”

New Cut Policy Implemented During Second Marking Period

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who cut class 12 times can still get a 97,” Teitel said. “We are in school. [Students] are supposed to go to class.”

Teachers receive a list containing the names of students who have cut five or more times. The list specifically states that if teachers want to give a student on the list a grade above 90, they must consult their respective Assistant Principal. Unexcused absences do not count as cuts and do not affect the enforcement of this policy.

“It doesn’t restrict teachers [from giving certain grades] and prompts communication between the teachers, students and administrators.”
—Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman

“Cutting is if you are officially in school, but you are not in class,” Teitel said. The only time a problem occurs, ac-

cording to Teitel, is when students arrive late to school and miss their first period class, in which case they must show their late pass to their first period teachers.

“The policy is totally reasonable and it is important to try to address the issue,” Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said. “It doesn’t restrict teachers [from giving certain grades] and prompts communication between the teachers, students and administrators.” Many students were in favor of this policy. “You have to show up to class in order to do good,” sophomore Lauren Davito said. “It is not fair for the other students [who show up to class and] work hard for their grades.”

Freshman Jacob Tulchinsky agreed. “If students are not going to class, they are showing that they don’t care,” he said. “Participation counts in the average,” sophomore Kawah Wong said. “It is [the students’] responsibility to show up to class. If they don’t show, they cannot participate.”

Junior Adreka Ahmed said that some students who cut class are still capable of understanding the course work. “When students don’t go to class, they do not learn the material,” she said. “For some students, it is still possible.”

Junior Tecla Walter said that there should not be a limit on what a student can get as his or her average. “It should be up to the teacher,” she said. Despite support of the policy, some students doubt whether the policy will discourage students from cutting.

“Kids are aware that they are not supposed to cut,” Ahmed said.

“Once [students] start cutting [classes], it’s hard for them to stop,” Wong said. “Students who cut do not expect to get a 90 average anyway.”

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Features

Students to SU: “Talk to Us”

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impression that they don’t do anything.”

A Communication Break

The results of the survey bring up another question: why do students have so many negative feelings towards the SU? It appears that the SU’s main problem is a failure to communicate, as Lewis said. More than half of students surveyed said that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “The SU communicates effectively with students.”

Junior Ann Ohkawa feels that the SU “needs to reach out more to the students. If people did not tell me about the SU, I would not believe it exists,” she wrote on a survey. “If [the SU] had a weekly or monthly way of informing the student body of what they are up to,” senior Faziah Fatema wrote on a survey, “I’d feel more involved and confident in the SU’s capabilities.” The lack of communication may not be entirely the SU’s fault. According to SU Vice Pres-

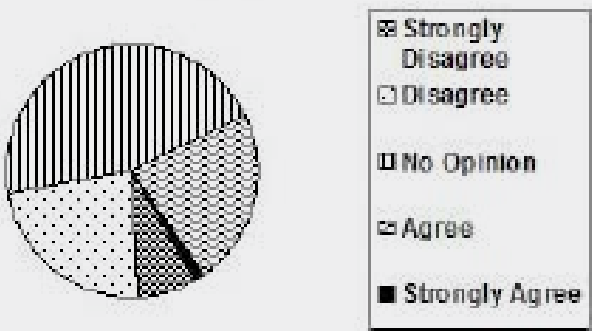
ident Casey Griffin, students are often reticent as well. “No one comes to us with things they want us to do, no one can think of anything they really want changed in the school. How are we supposed to make the school a better place for students if they refuse to let us know what better means to them?” she wrote in an e-mail interview. “If people want their government to work for them, they have to help us a little too.” Still, students hope that the SU will take the initiative to bridge the gap between the student government and the student body. This expectation is most accurately summed up by freshman Terence Tsao. When asked what the SU could do to improve his daily life, Tsao responded with this message: “Dear SU, for the three months I’ve been [at Stuyvesant], I haven’t heard of any SU activity or accomplishments. Some students here have a rather low opinion of you; some say you’re disorganized and inactive. Please communicate with us,” he wrote on a survey. The students have spoken. Now let’s see if the SU will be able to hear them.

The chart below shows the breakdown of responses when students were asked how they felt about the statement “The SU communicates effectively with students” for students from all grades.



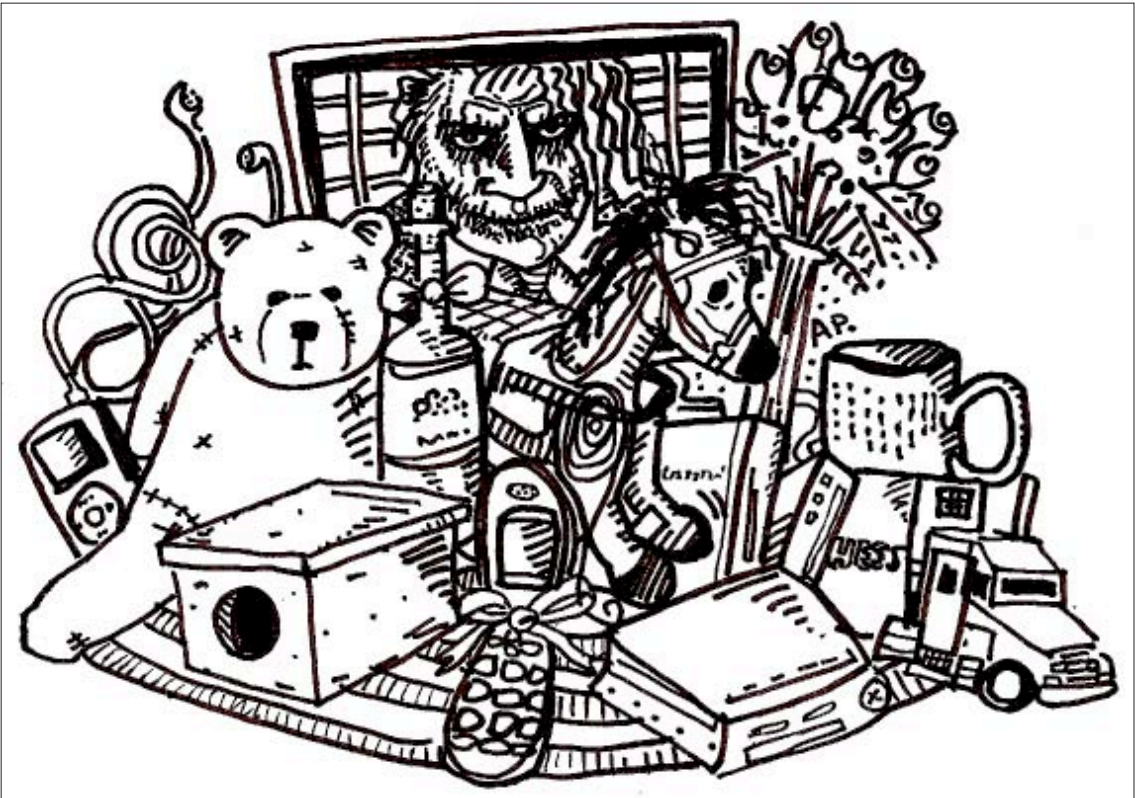
More than half of all students disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 15 percent agreed that the SU communicates effectively with students.

The chart below shows how students responded when asked how they felt about the statement “The SU effectively promotes the interests of students.”



Only 24 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while nearly 50 percent of students had no opinion.

Top 10 Cheap and Chic Holiday Gifts



By DANIELLE OBERDIER

When holiday shopping comes along, you may find yourself suffering from “gift-buyers block.” After all, if you’re spending your money to share the holiday spirit, there’s a bit of unsaid pressure to make it worthwhile. Here are some suggestions to make your time a bit easier and slightly less stressful. Whether you go the route of personal tributes or gift certificates, you can always choose your gifts with style.

1. Mix CD

For those of you looking to be original by giving a gift that could never be found in a store, a mix CD is a great option. No record artist can know your friend’s tastes as well as you do, so put together a set of songs that could only have come from you.

2. A self-written poem or song

To go even more overboard on the individuality, writing a poem or song is priceless in every meaning of the word. No guidelines—it’s all up to inspiration!



These chocolate bars are a true twist off the usual holiday chocolate gift.

3. Chocolate covered Espresso Beans

For the general population of sleepless teenagers, chocolate with a shot of caffeine proves a classy gift to brave inevitable late nights. Bazzini’s, located at 339 Greenwich Street, offers a noble selection for less than 20 dollars.

4. Moleskine Notebook

Classic, black Moleskine notebooks, which can be found in nearly any bookstore, are always useful and are quite the fad. They aren’t the cheapest form of notebook and the price is based on the varying size of the book but the largest one at Barnes and Noble is sold for \$11.50.

5. Vosgues Chocolate Bars

In terms of any gift, holiday or not, you can’t go wrong with chocolate. However, Vosgues chocolate bars take the concept of chocolate to a whole different level by adding elements such as mushrooms, Indian curry, and even bacon to the usual mix of white or dark chocolate. They can be found at any major grocery store such as Balducci’s or Citarella for 7.50 dollars. Though perhaps a bit more on the risky side, these chocolate bars are a true twist off the usual holiday chocolate gift.

6. Magic Scarf

Whereas most fashion elements can be divided into categories such as shirts, skirts, belts and hats, magic scarves can’t be so easily classified, seeing that they serve a variety of functions. These scarves, which can also be transformed into shawls or even hats, are often sold at a price ranging from five to 10 dollars. They can take all forms of fashionable comfort in the winter months.

7. Aztec Hot Chocolate

Hot chocolate is a common craving during the winter months. Aztec Hot Chocolate, sold at Gourmet Garage and Citarella for nine dollars, is a spicy take off the regular brands of hot chocolate, but just as warm and refreshing.



Writing a poem or song is priceless in every meaning of the word.

8. A 2009 Planner

There’s never a better friend than one who helps straighten out your life. As 2009 comes rolling in, a planner may prove a life saver for one or more of your disorganized friends.

9. T-Shirt with a funny slogan

Give your friend an easy excuse to express him or herself. Themed t-shirts with funny slogans can be useful for gym, sleep, or a quirky outfit. Find a white t-shirt at your favorite department store and go all out!

10. Starbucks Gift Certificate

Everyone occasionally succumbs to a Starbucks craving, but they later end up wishing the coffee was a bit cheaper. Help them out. You may feel slightly unoriginal, but you won’t go wrong.

For room 636 on Monday, November 24

709

Total wads of gum under the desks

20.85

Average wads of gum under each desk

9

Least wads of gum under a desk

34

Most wads of gum under a desk

Thanks to: Sophomore Lea Beltramino

Cartoons



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September 14 ~ late February
20 sessions. Sunday 3-6pm.
AMC 10 & AMC 12
Class begins the second week of September.

SAT II – Preparation for the June 2009 SAT II exams
SAT II Biology Starts October 4. Saturday 4-6pm.
SAT II Chemistry Starts October 4. Saturday 2-4pm.
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Starts October 4. Saturday 12-2pm.

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Individual tutoring sessions can be scheduled. Recommended frequency and length is 1 hour per week

SAT I – Saturday classes

SAT I students may come in to take a diagnostic exam any Sunday between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M. They must arrive at the academy between these hours in order to finish the exam – which takes 3 hours and 45 minutes – before the academy closes.

Students must bring their own calculator.

9th-10th: September 13 ~ late January (20 weeks)
11th: Will prepare for the Jan 2009 exam. September 13 ~ late January (20 weeks)
12th: Will prepare for the Dec 2008 exam. September 13 ~ late November (13 weeks)

Saturday Morning – Reading, Writing, and Math
9am-1:30pm. 5 levels (5 classes).

Saturday Evening – Reading, Writing, and Math
3pm-7:30pm. 2 levels (2 classes).

SAT I – Weekday classes

English
Reading and Writing: 6-8 pm
Tuesday/Thursday Group Starts September 16.
Wednesday and Friday Group Starts September 17.

Mathematics
Math A: Starts September 17
Wednesday 4:30-6pm.
Math B: Starts September 17
Friday 4:30-6pm.
SAT I Math: Starts September 17 Friday 8-9:30pm.

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Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Numbers Don’t Add Up

At a school that consistently fills top spots in math competitions, we don’t usually associate the word “struggle” with math. Stuyvesant students are generally expected to have a natural gift in this area and be motivated to devote time to learning high-level math.

Stuyvesant’s current math program uses a placement exam to match students with the correct level math class. Honors classes select the best math students who are able to absorb and apply more advanced mathematics. However, regular math classes have students with a wide range of math skills who may not be prepared for the material. Indeed, 233 students attended Academic Intervention Services (AIS) tutoring for math in November alone.

For students inclined towards math, this high pressure, fast paced system is efficient. But students who need more time to absorb the concepts and to practice often fall behind. These students are constantly told by their teachers and guidance counselors to attend AIS tutoring after school.

However, AIS tutoring for all subjects does not work to its full potential. Stuyvesant teachers aren’t necessarily competent tutors. And since there is no screening process for AIS tutors, the teachers whose students are

struggling the most sometimes become tutors. The high demand for tutoring also means there are crowded classrooms; this makes it difficult for teachers to help everyone. When teachers must cover material for many different grade levels, AIS tutoring’s ineffectiveness becomes particularly pronounced. Some students may need help with graphing for pre-calculus, while others may struggle to understand factoring. It then becomes difficult for the AIS tutor to be effective. To maximize time efficiency, students should come prepared with specific problems they need help with. This will allow teachers to focus in on each individual’s needs.

One-on-one tutoring would be a more effective alternative than AIS tutoring. Students would be able to get individualized attention with the specific problems they do not understand. This would be possible if teachers were available during their daily free periods. If teachers do not encourage students to ask them for help, the number of failing or struggling students will persist.

Some math teachers set up their own peer tutoring systems to help struggling students. While some students may respond better to a teacher’s attention, peer tutoring is a valid option. Students can pair up with each other

during free periods or after school to go over worksheet problems or study for an exam. If teachers cannot provide extra help during their free periods, they should at least organize a reliable peer tutoring system.

ARISTA tutoring is another resource. If meeting with a teacher isn’t possible, students should sign up for peer tutoring after-school. Starting this semester, ARISTA has also been sending tutors to assist AIS. ARISTA members act as teacher aids and work with smaller groups of students. This way, teachers are under less pressure and more students can be helped. ARISTA should work on expanding this cooperative relationship with AIS.

Tutoring is one way to address the needs of struggling math students. However, we can also look at the department’s organization as well. Some math teachers teach only honors or advanced classes. Requiring all teachers to teach at least one lower level math class would distribute teaching talent more equitably.

A change is needed—too many students are struggling with math. Mediocrity in a subject we’re expected to be good at makes us wonder whether we are a school full of competent math students or simply have a few top players who maintain the school’s reputation.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am not too surprised by the fact the budget was cut, but rather by the amount. \$304,000 is a lot for a high school. Harvard lost 22% of its endowment. Dartmouth lost about the same percent of its endowment, going down to \$3.4 billion from about \$4.2 billion (still very high given that it is a very small school and many larger schools have smaller endowments or smaller ones in

relation to their student body size).

Hopefully wealthy alumni can dig into their wallets and donate generously to support Stuy. As Dartmouth President James Wright said, a school’s true endowment is not how much money it has, but the quality of its students, the quality of the faculty, and the integrity of the school as a whole. Hopefully Mr. Teitel will

be able to reduce the budget gap by cutting overhead expenses, but there’s only so much he can do with that. He must remember that classes alone don’t define a school. In order to properly cut expenses, he should listen to the faculty, parents, and most importantly, the students.

—Dennis Ng (’08)

OP-PHOTO

EARLY DECISION

By Sean Gordon-Loebl



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of past issues.

We are looking for issues published before 1995.

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**Do you want to reflect on an article?
Or speak your mind?**

Write a letter to the editor and e-mail it to letters@stuyspectator.com or drop it in The Spectator box in the second-floor mail room.

FOR THE RECORD

- In Issue 7, Maria Gindler and Ben Garner did additional reporting for “Racial Disparity at Stuyvesant.”
- In “Stephen McClellan: Renaissance Man,” the number of cats McClellan has is incorrect. McClellan has one cat and five bikes.
- The byline for “Sleepless in Stuyvesant” was wrong. Antara Afrin and Cassie Moy wrote the article.
- In “Cut it Out,” the amount of money cut from New York City public schools this year and next year was misstated. \$565 million total will be cut.
- In “Culturefest: Dancing and Dining,” the names of Chatham Restaurant and Hanes Sushi were misspelled. The Indian food came mainly from Jhankar Restaurant and some came from Salaam Bombay. Melissa Chan did additional reporting for the article as well.
- In “‘Urine’ing for Success,” the byline was incorrect. Alan Sage also wrote the article.
- In “Penguins Win 2008 Championship, Avenge 2007 Loss Against Reigning Champs,” Townsend Harris won Opens for the last three, not two, seasons.

My Holiday Bailout



By GAVIN HUANG

In an article I wrote for Issue 5 of *The Spectator*, “Perils of the Grade Trade,” I made fun of friends and family who were facing the brunt of the economic crisis. There was the just-out-of-college cousin who worked at Merrill Lynch and the old friend who had stock in AIG. My immediate family had yet to face any consequences of the recession, other than a drastic cut-down on our rice consumption. A week after my article was published, I learned that DHL, the company my father worked for, would be laying off nearly all its workers (including my father). That shut me up.

For a while, I was shocked. How could this happen to an average, honest, hard-working family like mine? We had nothing to do with those Wall Street crooks, and I was furious. I considered calling up the CEO of DHL and shaking up his office with my angry opinions. After some researching though, I found that their headquarters were in Germany, and in these times, long-distance calling is a luxury.

Eventually I realized there was no use whining about it. With all the news about how Wall Street is affecting the daily lives of us little people, I was naïve to think we could escape the clutches of the bear market. I figured it would be better to think of ways to save money than to sift through Chinese classified ads that I couldn’t read. I was finally beginning to realize what all my parents’ lessons of thrift were for. For the first time in high school, I avoided eating at Subway and Terry’s, which was perhaps one of my largest sacrifices.

My mother, like most mothers, is the staunch instigator of frugality. If four family members needed to use our two unlimited-ride Metrocards and one regular Metrocard, she would figure out, through some magical formula,



I figured it would be better to think of ways to save money than to sift through Chinese classified ads that I couldn’t read.

the order each member would have to leave in order to save the most money (about two dollars). Take that, Metropolitan Transit Authority.

So when I told my mom I would attempt to control my spending this holiday season, she was ecstatic. To make things fun and to cut down my wish list by a bit, I made a bet with her. Yes, this family, no matter how hard the times were, would always find a way to gamble. If I could buy all of my gifts with just 50 dollars, she would get me something I actually wanted this year and lay off her usual Old Navy sweaters. She agreed and I left the room with visions of the M*A*S*H: Complete Martinis and Medicine Collection dancing in my head.

Now came the hard part. I

had to compile a list of people and a list of cheap but mildly acceptable gifts. After sending a few free virtual gifts to some of my Facebook friends, I decided to seriously sit down and work on the list. Already, it was tough from the start. I had gotten myself involved in three Secret Santas, one of which required me to pick two people. So right from the get-go, I needed to get four gifts. The maximum was 20 dollars (luckily) and the minimum 5 (which I staunchly protested but to no avail).

With only 30 dollars left to spend on friends, I removed all guys from my shortlist. It would be easier to explain to them why they didn’t get anything than to face glares from eight angry girls. I had already spent seven dollars on one person, leaving 23 dollars for the other seven, one of whom was my sister. She would have to wait until the end of the list.

It would have been a wise decision to shop on Black Friday morning and get through my list, but no. I was a rebel, and I shopped in the afternoon. Searching through the nearest Bath and Body Works, I tried to find something awesome that was cheap and didn’t smell too horribly. All I could find was a four-dollar black sheep keychain.

There was no way I was getting my friends key chains for the holidays. Maybe my mother can be Mrs. Pennywise, but I wasn’t ready to sacrifice holiday cheer to save a few bucks. I threw the pathetic piece of fluff back in the pile and left the store empty-handed.

A week later, after admitting defeat, I took 60 dollars to blow away on gifts at Macy’s. My mother loves shopping there, because there seems to be a “one-day sale” everyday. I browsed around the Girls section and looked at some socks before realizing I was in the Toddlers section. However, I found the perfect one-size-fits-all scarf, the ubiquitous gift that everyone needs.

It was priced at 25 dollars but I had already given up my frugal fight. To my surprise, it turned out to be 15 dollars. When I went back to the shelf, there was a giant red sign that read “One-day sale, 40% off.” Thank you, Macy’s. I didn’t quite reach my 50 dollar budget, but I came close.

Save Me A Seat



By MEGHA CHERIAN

Everyday, my classmates and I partake in a grand-scale race through the school to reach history class. There are no blue ribbons at the end. Rather, as the saying goes, “The last one there gets the rotten egg.” In our case, the rotten egg is the dreaded “broken desk” or even worse, the teacher’s desk.

I’m certain that I am not the only Stuyvesant student that has been in this situation before. The shortage of desks has been a constant problem at Stuyvesant. Most people would assume that one of the best high schools in New York City would have enough desks to accommodate each student, even with decreased funding. However, with our rising student population, there seems to be an insufficient number of them available.

At first glance, this problem doesn’t appear to be detrimental to Stuyvesant’s future. It may sound like a trivial matter, but basic necessities should not be put aside. The simple matter of not having a desk to sit in can affect a student’s daily educational experience.

It is not uncommon to find students sitting on top of radiators because they couldn’t claim a desk in time. One friend of mine had to sit in a small chair in the corner of her math class and use her lap as a desk. Another student I know has to sit at the teacher’s desk. His only other option is to sit on the floor.

Although there is a shortage of desks, there doesn’t seem to be a lack of faulty desks at Stuyvesant. Three desks in my history class are so damaged that the tops are falling inward, an uncomfortable experience for the students who have to use them.

According to Kern Levigion,

the school machinist, at least two teachers ask him for extra desks or to fix broken desks on a weekly basis. Teachers are accountable for the problem since they often try to snatch the best desks from other classrooms without permission and never return them. Of course, students can’t escape blame either. When students don’t sit in their desks properly, the desks can become inverted over time.

In order to provide teachers with enough desks, the school ordered 50 new desks earlier this school year. Levigion dispersed them throughout the school so that each classroom in the school would have exactly 34 desks.



It is not uncommon to walk into a classroom and find students sitting on top of radiators because they couldn’t claim a desk in time.

However, teachers shortly began to request more desks because they and students continued to repeat past mistakes.

Students need to realize that they are hurting themselves and others when they break desks. It may sound silly, but these students just make everyday life more irksome for others who have to sit in those desks and the people who have to spend time to fix them. Since we are the ones that use the desks, we are fully responsible if we damage them.

Desks are not cheap. The school can’t afford to purchase any more desks, especially with impending budget cuts. In order to create a functional (and comfortable) classroom environment, there must be more cooperation between and precaution from the faculty and students.

So if you’re unfortunate enough to get the broken desk in the room or no desk at all, don’t blame the school administration. Remember that we, and our teachers, are the ones who have to make the effort to correct the problem.

Racism Without Racists



By ISAAC LAPIDES

A few friends and I were chatting, when one of them made a racist joke involving Jews. It wasn’t very original, but I laughed anyway. However, the jokes soon turned very offensive. After I put on my best holier-than-thou voice and pointed that out, they truly shocked me. They tried to defend their racism—my jaw dropped. They were unashamed of their ignorance, and tried to justify it by saying “All you Jews are greedy liars anyway, so why should we listen to you?” I don’t understand what made them think it was right

to say that to my face. Only when the joke was turned on me did it become clear—racism is present at Stuyvesant.

The racist jokes didn’t shock me—racism pervades our society. As children, we notice the differences in skin color and facial features. When we grow up we learn about the stereotypes and come to assumptions about other people. Although few people are intentionally racist, racist comments have become accepted. Most comedy movies have a foreign character with an amusing accent. Aside from feces-related and sexual humor on comedy television shows, racist humor is the most common. Also, racism is no longer confined to just your race. We live in such a diverse society that it’s inclusive of race, religion, and even sexual preference. All prejudices can be seen as some type of “racism.”

While some may say these jokes themselves are harmless, they are mistaken. When you say

a racist joke and those around you laugh, you affect their mindset, setting a precedent that condones racism. I hear time and again stinginess referred to with disdain as being a Jew, or striving for perfection as obsessive Asians.



While some racist jokes are funny, all racist jokes are racist.

I’ve heard any sort of boring task or event referred to as gay (not a race, I know, but bigotry nonetheless). These sorts of expressions are obviously untrue, but have become so commonplace that people just accept them.

Regardless of who’s being attacked, racism at Stuyvesant is a disgrace, especially since most Stuyvesant students belong to

minority groups. We’re supposed to be some of the smartest kids in the city, not the most ignorant. So then, at what point did it become acceptable to be racist in school? The New York City Department Of Education Student Bill of Rights states students have a right to “receive courtesy and respect from others regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, and political beliefs.” This not only means that my teachers can’t lower my grade because of my radical political beliefs, but that you, my classmates, can’t be racist towards each other.

Humor is a great way to lighten a situation; people are more relaxed when they’re laughing. However, humor that makes the room thick with racial tension does quite the opposite. When you laugh at people, instead of with them, someone is usually hurt. Different things offend dif-

ferent people; use your common sense as to what is appropriate.

While some racist jokes are funny, all racist jokes are racist. Regardless of whether or not you

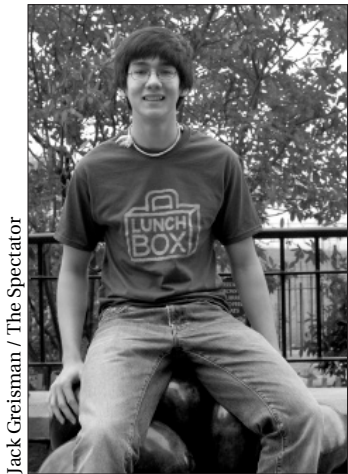


Racism at Stuy is an outrage, especially since most students belong to minority groups

offend someone with them, they are unacceptable. They contribute to an atmosphere of tension and hate, and violate Department of Education policy. Not only that, when you show a lack of respect for an ethnicity, people lose respect for you.

Opinions

The Absent Imperative



Jack Greisman / The Spectator

By RICHARD NELSON-CHOW

While the primary purpose of high school is to give students a good education, great schools go beyond that basic demand. They help students become well rounded people, which means preparing them for life past senior year. Stuyvesant achieves this goal by providing students with a wide variety of extracurricular activities and infusing the curriculum with art and technology classes. However, it is missing a key component in its comprehensiveness: a community

By participating in community service, students put their day-to-day needs and desires in perspective and are taught that giving back is an essential part of belonging to a community. “Community service makes students more aware of the world around them,” guidance counselor Ronnie Parnes said. “It helps them realize how fortunate they are and how much they have been given in life.”

Since community service is so beneficial, and because many students do not make time for it on their own, the school should step in and stop treating it as a choice. Most people will get along fine in life without knowing three different types of science. But can they without being a grounded, caring, compassionate person? That’s a bit harder.

Stuyvesant students are overwhelmed with the wealth of extracurriculars to choose from. There is a Speech and Debate team and a Model United Nations club. There are choruses and orchestras. There is the Student Union, the theater program, and of course sports teams. Most students choose a couple of these extracurriculars, one of which may be a community service club. However, due to the abundance of other options, many students pass over community service, joining other activities they are more interested in instead.

This neglect of community service by some students is in part due to its distinct lack of promotion. I have never seen any efforts to make known the “lists and lists of organizations and three pages of websites” that Parnes said were in the guidance office. This lack of awareness is detrimental to students’ participation: “If community service were advertised more, I would definitely consider doing it,” junior Jeremy Judelson said.

A requirement would be the most effective way of getting more students to try community service. This way, students would

automatically gain exposure to it. The number of required hours would be relatively small and manageable for most students’ schedules—25 hours per year—but it would be enough to emphasize the significance of giving back to the community, the program’s goal. Hopefully, students would enjoy the experience and continue on their own time.

In terms of enforcement, the program would run like any other of its kind. Students could pick activities from the list in the guidance office. Or, if they had another suggestion, they could talk to a counselor to get it approved. After completing their hours, they would get a certificate of completion signed by the supervisor of their activity and show it to the counselor.

One issue with implementing this program is the student body’s general attitude towards community service and having extracurricular requirements. Many students believe they do not have time to do community service every weekend. And still more students do not feel they should be forced into philanthropy. However, both these problems are easily solved. If the requirement was moderate—say an hour every other week on average—it would be hard for them to say they still could not find time. And if students were able to choose any activity, it is very likely they would find something they enjoyed doing.

Of course, community service will not change the lives of everyone who volunteers. There will be many who reluctantly drag themselves through an hour of what they believe to be a pointless activity. But then there will be those who get something more out of it. Those who didn’t think they’d have fun at first but realize they enjoy helping others. Those who look at their life differently afterwards. These are the people who, by requiring community service, we must give everyone a chance to become.

A Commercial Revolution



Stephanie London / The Spectator

By KIRAN SURY

It all started when a surprisingly large amount of my Halloween candy was coated in red and green. Then Christmas carols started playing on the radio a full week before Thanksgiving. When I saw people rushing home with Christmas trees and shopping bags on Black Friday, I knew it had gone too far: Christmas has got to go.

Christmas was originally a day celebrating the birth of Jesus, but now that’s taken a backseat to its current form—a holiday of purchasing. People start their Christmas shopping earlier each year. On Black Friday, a Wal-Mart worker in Long Island was trampled to death so people could give their loved ones cheap stuff on Christmas Day. I’m sure Jesus would disapprove.

Now I’m not going to lie. I participate in the holiday madness just as much as everyone else. As a child, I had a traumatic Secret Santa experience. I went out and bought a ubiquitous box of chocolates for the person I drew. Unfortunately, the person who picked me neglected to tell her parents that I was male when they went to get me a gift. Imagine my surprise when I tore open the gift wrap expecting an action figure, and instead found a baby-blue Roo-Roo bear stationery set, scented tissues and all.

Understandably, that put me off gift-giving for years. But his year, I overcame my fear and got dragged into the obligatory Secret Santas along with everyone else. And I must admit, I rather enjoy them; there’s a thrill to

be had in going to the mall with your friends and looking for the cheapest stuff you can buy that still looks expensive (note: to whoever I have for Secret Santa, I didn’t do that).

However, in a wicked twist that could have only been orchestrated by the Grinch himself, Christmas has become more about buying than giving. The holiday is now represented by commercialization, rather than carols and candy canes. While the economic side of Christmas is important, it has overtaken what it’s all about. Perhaps we can de-monetize Christmas by commercializing other less-celebrated holidays. As British journalist Katharine Whitehorn said, “From a commercial point of view, if Christmas did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it.” Perhaps if we buy more stuff at other times of the year, we can buy less on Christmas.

April Fool’s Day, for example, can become a big selling point. Besides everyone in the world buying me a birthday present (hint hint), stores can make millions by selling practical joke

I’m sure Jesus would disapprove.

kits. Legalize fireworks on Independence Day and we’d have a booming economy. On Veterans Day, we could celebrate by purchasing guns. While this may make holiday shopping less safe, it will definitely make it a lot more fun.

People have forgotten what Christmas is all about. Instead of focusing on purchasing gifts, they should reflect on sharing, caring and...something else. Honestly, I don’t care or remember. There’s a sale at Wal-Mart, and I have to finish my Christmas shopping.

By participating in community service, students put their day-to-day needs and desires in perspective.

service requirement. This is regrettable given the benefits of community service.

Cartoons



METAGIRL

IN... "DENIAL"

STUDY...STUDY, STUDY, STUDY. STUDY!

DON'T INDOCTRINATE ME WITH YOUR CLICHÉS!

IT'S NOT A CLICHÉ, IT'S THE OVERRIDING MANTRA OF YOUR LIFE.

HOW DID YOU KNOW?!

THE ABSENCE NOTE

Here's my absence note for yesterday.

By Anupola Kundu

Dear Sir or Madam,
Please excuse my son for his absence yesterday. He was experiencing a severe case of Senioritis.
Sincerely, mom

From the Archives:

The Spectator presents the cover of the first issue of the 1984 school year.



The Spectator

STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”
—Woody Allen

Vol. CXXVIX No. 1

Friday, September 14, 1984

To All Students & Teachers



An overview of the publications, clubs and other extracurricular activities appear on Pages 4 and 5

Controversy Surrounds School Opening

Early Start Due to Enforcement of State Requirements

By Kathy Law

On August 23, the Board of Education of the City of New York voted unanimously to have schools start four days early on September 6th. The decision followed the realization that the New York public high school calendar did not meet the state's requirement of 180 full instructional days.

The state objected to counting the two days after the semi-annual Regents examinations as instructional days. Non-compliance with the state would have threatened state-aid which comprises slightly less than a third of the city school budget.

Administration and faculty share students' objections to the new calendar because two faculty preparation days were eliminated.

"At Stuyvesant we have a complex program," explains Principal Abraham Baumel. "We offer differentiated classes to meet the high aspirations of our students. Time is needed to make this kind of system work and still be humane."

Junior Alan Chu said, "Bringing students into the classroom as early as possible must only add to the havoc of organizing 2,000-plus students. How effective can that be?"

The instigation of computer programming and ever-present lack of space at Stuyvesant caused anxiety as time to solve these problems was shortened.

Stanley Litow of the Educational Priorities Panel criticized the decision. "To tack these days on at the beginning of the year does not offer an enriched educational program," he said.

Two days taken from the ten day Christmas vacation were among days being considered.

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Computers Modernize School Programming

Benefits Questioned

By Kathy Law and
Melisa Levitt

This fall Stuyvesant entered the Columbia computer programming system. The Board of Education's mainframe computer balanced classes and formulated student's programs. These were then checked over by Esther Blumenfeld, Chairman of Programming, and her two assistants, Mr. Teitel and Ms. Thompson. Ten student monitors also worked during the summer, and may be paid for their assistance, according to one monitor.

The programming work was complicated because Stuyvesant does not have its own terminal at school, making it necessary to travel to Brooklyn to work directly with the computers. Hopefully, there will be a terminal, or RJE (Remote Job Entry), on premises by February.

Stuyvesant had originally hoped to be part of the UAPC system (University Application Processing Center), which serves 53 public high schools including New Dorp High School, Principal Abraham Baumel's previous school. "This year," he said, "out of 4,000 programs at New Dorp, only 15 contained errors." Stuyvesant was turned down by the UAPC system because it could not manage any more participants.

The goal right now of computerization is to make programming more efficient. In the long run, however, Mr. Baumel wants "as



The Columbia computer system at the Board of Education used to program classes

total a computerized administrative package as possible." This would keep track of attendance and lateness (i.e. cutting) as well as the permanent records of students. Mr. Baumel recalled that he had a terminal in his office at New Dorp through which he could summon any of these records and receive a hard copy within minutes. He said,

"Our system doesn't have these capabilities yet, but the Board of Education has promised a lot." Sheets were distributed in homerooms explaining how to read the computer-printed program cards. Teachers received lists of those students programmed for their classes. This will prevent

Continued on Page 5

Reunion Planned for 80th Anniversary Celebration

By Patricia Moy

Stuyvesant's eightieth anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, November 18 in the cafeterias with open admission to all alumni. The celebration has received approximately one thousand responses as of June 1984. These alumni have been contacted by word of mouth and through advertisements in such publications as *The New York Times*.

The anniversary party is sponsored by the Stuyvesant Coalition, an umbrella organization for faculty, parents, and alumni. The two-year-old Stuyvesant Coalition is headed by parent Marilyn Armel.

The Stuyvesant Coalition conceived the idea of an anniversary party after talk began about a new building. The members of the coalition believed that if the school is relocating, it would be helpful to have the support of alumni.

With the cooperation of Dr. Richard Rothenberg, Chairman of

the Mathematics Department, and Physical Science chairman Albert Tarendash, the coalition can gain access to the school's computers. These will be utilized to organize a lengthy mailing list for the eightieth anniversary celebration. Dr. Rothenberg and Mr. Tarendash are both alumni from the classes of '63 and '67, respectively. The coalition plans to set up a post office box to receive further mail responses.

A newsletter will be printed three or four times a year under the supervision of Simone Weissman, class of 1974, and current Parents Association member Myrna Davis.

Hannah Shear, co-president of the Parents' Association this year with Renee Levine and active member of the Stuyvesant Coalition stated, "We're hoping to reach alumni from every walk of life and from as many graduating classes as possible and we hope to make this an unforgettable occasion."

Koch Speaks at Commencement

By Carol Tschudi

The honorable Mayor Edward I. Koch of New York City was the guest speaker at Stuyvesant's 125th commencement exercises held on June 21, 1984 at Avery Fisher Hall. Mr. Koch was greeted by the graduates with applause, foot stamping, and chants of "Eddy, Eddy!"

Mr. Koch began his speech by announcing that he was so overwhelmed with his warm reception that he opted not to read his prepared speech. He congratulated the graduates on taking the "opportunity to excel at Stuyvesant," which he described as "one of the greatest schools of its kind in the United States." He also spoke about work in the government and participation in its program as possibilities for the graduates' futures. He expressed his concern about drug addiction and discussed its effects on the United States, especially New York. He concluded



Mayor Ed Koch addresses the graduates last Spring.

his speech by advising the graduates to "seek to be the best ... (but) never at the expense of your honesty."

Other distinguished speakers included City Councilman Robert Dryfoos and Robert Mastruzzi, the newly appointed Manhattan Superintendent.

The names of the 65 National Merit scholars were announced, as were those of the 13 students who

had written the best senior theses.

After Assistant Principal Harold Lehrman had announced that all the graduates had passed, Principal Abraham Baumel gave a diploma to Senior Caucus President Victor Chu which symbolized the diplomas of the 729 students. The graduates then tossed their caps into the air and marched out of the hall.

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Arts & Entertainment

It’s Fun to Stay at the YM-YWHA



The 92nd Street Y, originally located on the Upper East Side, has opened a new venue in Tribeca which serves as an art gallery, screening room, café and lounge.

By **SARA HASSAN**
with additional reporting by
JENNY CHE

The 92nd Street Y on the Upper East Side recently moved to a new building at 200 Hudson Street in Tribeca. It opened two months ago, on Saturday, October 18th, and now offers an art gallery, a screening room, a cafe and a lounge. Its opening ceremonies, called 18 Nights of Inspiration, lasted until Thursday,

December 18th, and included live theater, music, and special guests.

The name was meant to represent Chai (signifying life and the number 18 in Hebrew), and is a throwback to the Y’s roots as the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Hebrew Association. Performances and presentations included a Purple Rain sing-along for Prince’s 50th birthday (\$13) and a primer on Middle Eastern conflict (\$12). The vari-

ety of shows and seminars available demonstrated how the Y has broadened its appeal since it opened in the 1870s.

A Y membership provides access to many different classes and art exhibitions. There’s an on-screen poetry slam on Saturday, October 20, where contestants submit short videos to be judged by film industry professionals. For only \$8, aspiring filmmakers of all ages can sign up to impress talent scouts and win airline tick-

ets or free film screenings. The Y also accommodates people who would rather stand on the sidelines than participate, with shows like the Brazilian Big Beat Funk Party (\$10), which featured Nation Beat, a band that fuses Brazilian and New Orleans funk, rock and second-line rhythms to create a unique musical experience.

Coming up on Wednesday, January 21 is a set by spoken word poet and performer Rives. The show will begin with prepared pieces at the mic and later move onto improv with audience participation (\$15). Building off of his experience as an annual speaker at the Technology, Entertainment, and Design Conference (TED), Rives will also use slideshows and movie clips to accompany his poetry. Later,



“The prices are perfect for high school students; they cost no more than tickets for shows anywhere else in the city,” — Marissa Carty, Y staff member

he’ll show a sneak preview of his new work, How to Trespass in New York City.

The new Y also has classrooms, which “are versatile

spaces that can house any number of lectures and programs,” according to staff member Marissa Carty. There are courses on cartoon storytelling and the music business in the 21st century. Most instructional art classes are enhanced by the roving art exhibit that rotates through the front gallery every few months. These exhibits are free, and will focus on cartooning, graffiti, and trash-to-treasure.

There are also single-meeting lectures hosted by obscure and unusual guest speakers. Tony Perrotte, who wants to make people more interested in history, gave a lecture on Wednesday, December 17. Perotte is the author of “Napoleon’s Privates: 2,500 Years of History Unzipped” which traverses the mythology that followed Napoleon’s reign and the auction houses that deal with the macabre trade of celebrity body parts.

The Y offers financial assistance for its classes, which can cost anywhere from under 75 to over 300 dollars, depending on availability and the number of sessions. Events at the Tribeca Y are more affordable; functions go from under 10 dollars to no more than 30. “The prices are perfect for high school students. They cost no more than tickets for shows anywhere else in the city,” Carty said.

The new facility is geared towards people in their teens, 20s, and 30s, whereas the original location didn’t focus on a specific age group. Most students can find a course catered to their talents and interests, and getting there only takes about 15 minutes on foot.

Bringing the Rock Montague Downtown

By **STEPHANIE HOM**
and **HYEMIN YI**

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame opened Monday, November 24 on 76 Mercer Street. The venue is a smaller version of the



The exhibit is a bit like the recently closed CBGB’s—“the home of underground rock”—with brick walls on the inside and graffiti décor.

original Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio that covers 150,000 square feet, whereas the annex covers only 25,000 square feet.

The Hall of Fame gallery, the first exhibit, is a dimly lit purple room with an array of silver plaques. Each plaque represents one of the numerous musicians inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame since 1986. On each is the name of an influential artist, his or her signature, and the name of the band he or she played in. Numerous genres are displayed, from jazz singers like Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong and country musicians such as Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams. Of course, legendary stars including Bob



Dylan, the Beatles, the Doors, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, Elton John, the Clash and Bruce Springsteen are not ignored.

Excerpts from the songs of these artists are played over the room’s stereo, lighting up their plaque in red as the song is heard. Elton John’s memorial features “Benny and the Jets,” and Bonnie Raitt’s belts out “Give Them Something to Talk About,” giving a real insight of the performers and their careers. “[The Hall of Fame is] a place where the musicians say hello to you,” said Secretary Fabian Faria.

The plaques are lit up with rainbow lights, until an amazing light show that ends in a black-

out, leaving visitors in darkness as they journey to the next room. The exhibit holds some resemblance to a music club—the Power and Glory Theater. With some wishful thinking, it’s a bit like the recently closed CBGB’s—“the home of underground rock”—with brick walls on the inside and graffiti décor. The seats are black bar stools, stage lights hang from the ceiling and a huge screen is in the front. A montage of artists and their live performances begins to roll, and viewers are surrounded with their concert posters and quotes on the side of the room.

Each guest is given a stereo headphone set by Sennheiser, a

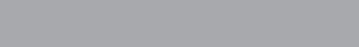
high-end audio company, and wireless technology is used to transmit audio content. Customers are free to wander the galleries and exhibit as they like. There’s video footage and pictures of artists, and of course, their music. Big posters are draped every now and then, almost like curtains. The progression of music through time is displayed in one exhibit where the music of Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, Muddy Water, Rolling Stones, 50 Cent, Snoop Dog and Eminem is shown.

The museum also doesn’t disappoint in terms of its handsome selection of rock memorabilia. Guitars are everywhere in the museum, like “The Green Meanie,” a guitar that virtuoso Steve Vai customized himself by painting it day-gloW green, adding stickers, and using a hammer and screwdriver to effect until the whammy bar—a lever attached to the bridge of an electric guitar that bends the pitch—came off. Letters from the Beatles to their fans early in the career, letters sent between Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel in their teenage years, and hand written lyrics from a variety of artists are also shown.

More extravagant memorabilia are on display like Bruce Springsteen’s tarp-covered 1957 Chevrolet, and John Lennon’s piano. Perhaps the most nostalgic would be the awning from the original “CBGB & OMFUG.”

The last exhibit is dedicated to The Clash. Posters, handbills, video, iconic outfits and backstage passes are all featured. The room is to focus on one artist and will switch to a new musician every six months. Student tickets are \$22 at the box office

as opposed to the \$26 for adults. All tickets are issued for a specific entry time. Because of space concerns in the Power and the Glory Theater, entry times are strictly



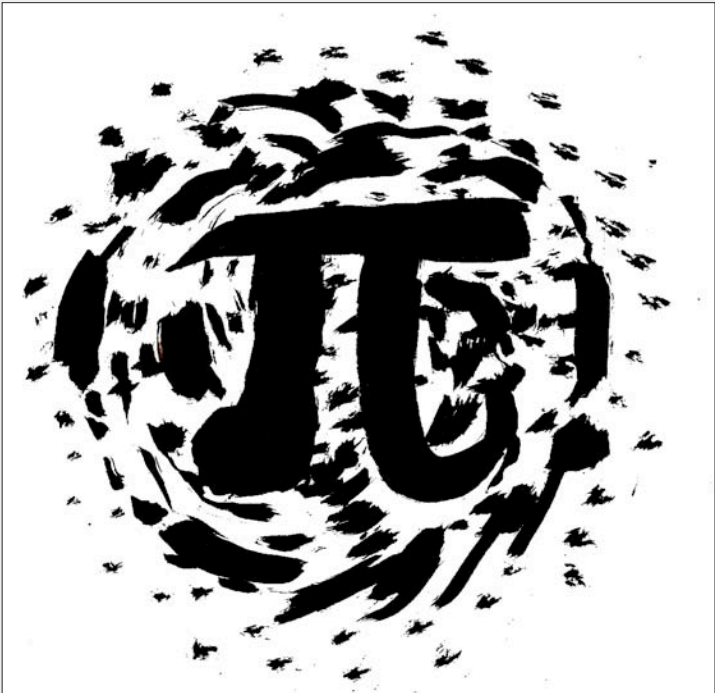
Letters from the Beatles to their fans early in the career, letters sent between Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel in their teenage years, and hand written lyrics from a variety of artists are also shown

enforced. Once past the theater, visitors are free to roam the galleries.

Despite the price, the experience that the Hall of Fame Annex brings is a unique experience to New York. Even for those who do not listen to rock n’ roll, the exhibits bring together a provocative history that demands respect. As Patti Smith, the Godmother of punk said, “Rock n’ roll is dream soup, what’s your brand?”

Arts & Entertainment

The Forgotten Film Reel: An Irrational Film



By ALAN SAGE

Kabbalah and the stock market. Philosophy and illusions on the subway. Ginsberg meets arithmetic. “Pi.”

Protagonist Max Cohen (Sean Gullette) spends the bulk of director and writer Darren Aronofsky’s 1998 black-and-white sci-fi thriller “Pi” searching for a code that explains the stock market’s patterns. After discarding a printout of what appears to be a meaningless, 216 digit-long number, a conversation with his professor, Sol Robeson (Mark Margolis), reveals that Sol has discovered a similar number while researching Pi. While Max tries to recreate the number, the film delves into the philosophical question of whether patterns exist in randomness, hence the tagline “Faith in Chaos.”

The film also includes a conflict between Max and groups who want Max’s number. Vilified Kabbalah practitioners and a Wall Street firm both aggressively pursue Max. At times, however, the conflict seems a bit underdeveloped. The film’s philosophical motifs are the real attraction.

Max’s addiction to pain killers leads him on hallucination-filled vigils through the NYC subway. Lonely montages of empty (F) line stations recur again and again and Max encounters the same hallucinations night after night. A puddle of blood at the 47-50 Streets Station and a singing man with a newspaper plague Max throughout the film. At times, the characters of his hallucinations appear outside of Max’s dreams, making them all the more frightening.

“Requiem for a Dream” (2000), a more recent and better known Aronofsky film, also mixes philosophy and themes of loneliness and addiction. Even locales (one of Max’s subway rides leaves him at Coney Island, where “Requiem for a Dream” takes place) from “Pi” recur in “Requiem for a Dream.” For those who enjoyed “Requiem for a Dream” or “The Wrestler,” which will be coming to theaters in December and January, “Pi” offers a unique view of Aronofsky’s developing style.

Aronofsky succeeds at creating images to represent Max’s philosophies. Lenny Meyer (Ben Shenkman), one of the Kabbalah villains, tries to gain Max’s trust

by explaining his eerily similar view that numbers represent everything in the universe. As Lenny describes the film’s core philosophy, the camera closes in on the Golden Ratio spirals of Lenny’s cigarette smoke and the cream in his coffee.

Gullette is a superb socio-path. While his anger seems a bit contrived during Max’s climactic fight with Sol over whether the code exists, Gullette’s quiet, taciturn looks and gestures add to the film’s tension. When Rabi Cohen (Stephen Pearlman) claims that Max is only a “vessel from our god,” Gullette proves a very convincing Messiah, defending his shaved-head self by claiming that the 216-digit number was meant for him.

The film’s electronica soundtrack offers the audience another layer of angst. The title themes, “Pi R Squared” and “2 Pi R,” both by Clint Mansell, balance a jutting series of machine-like beeps with fast-paced percussion. The tracks reek of chaos and loneliness and contribute to the film’s contrast between the number’s purity and the malicious parties intent on stealing it.

Throughout the film, the image of a tree concealing a gray sky recurs, perhaps echoing Max’s childhood injury—at the age of six, he supposedly looked straight at the sun and has since been plagued by headaches and a resultant addiction to pain killers. This same image ends the film, providing a nice philosophical conclusion full of questions about order and chaos and whether Max’s prized number really is a key to order. Gullette also makes a beautiful transformation from a hyper-aware math maniac before his discovery to a self-actualized and calm character afterwards.

“Ultimately [Sean and I] disagreed on the end and what it means,” Aronofsky wrote in an e-mail interview. “Hopefully that adds complexity and layers to the film.” Aronofsky has his doubts about whether or not such patterns really do exist. “Always liked the tag line but no, I do not,” Aronofsky wrote, when asked whether he himself has “faith in chaos.”

The film is quirky and borders on ridiculous at times. It’s dramatic and frightening, mostly in a philosophical sense. “Pi” is perhaps best labeled a “math”-fi thriller.

A Recession-Friendly Dining Guide

By ERICA SANDS and ZOE LEVIN

Bad economy getting you down? The Spectator’s got you covered. We found four places where you can buy a meal for a dollar or less, without eating fast food.

Sheezaan: Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani



A television hangs on the wall playing Bollywood movies. Behind a glass case is an assortment of food, which is heated in the microwave upon ordering. Sheezaan’s one dollar offerings include samosas, nan and roti. A samosa is a deep fried savory appetizer, slightly similar to dumplings. According to the menu, Sheezaan has both chicken and vegetable samosas, though the former often sell out. Sheezaan’s samosas are filled with potatoes, carrots, lima beans and curry paste. The outside wrapper is soft, but with a slight crunch. Although perhaps too starchy, Sheezaan’s samosas are a filling snack on a budget. When asked why Sheezaan’s prices are so low, Mellal Ahmed, brother of Ohid Ahmed, who owns the restaurant, said, “Business is very slow. One dollar is cheaper.”

183 Church St. between Duane and Reade

Kossar’s Bialys



After 65 years, Kossar’s is practically a landmark of the Lower East Side. Everything is hand-made on premises, using the most traditional processes and the best ingredients. For such high quality, it’s astonishing that Kossar’s can still afford to charge only 90 cents each for Bialys and one dollar each for bagels, mini pletzels (onion disks), mini bulkas (rolls) and sesame sticks. While most bagels are made with brown sugar, according to kossarsbialys.com, Kossar’s uses “real malt to bring authenticity back to the bagel.” The main difference between a bagel and a bialy is the bialy’s rough finish and their lack of a hole. Instead, bialys are indented where the hole usually would be, and then topped with fresh onion paste in the center. Kossar’s proves that simple ingredients, when combined, can make for a delicious breakfast or lunch on the cheap.

367 Grand St. on the corner of Essex.

China North Dumpling

From the street, China North Dumpling looks like a small and unassuming hole in the wall. Once inside, however, you can see the dumplings and other dim sum as they’re being made. Order the right thing and it’s soon clear that you’ve found an inexpensive culinary gem. “I go here three or four times a week, the dumplings taste great and they are the best deal at five for a dollar,” Jordan Trachtman, a freshman at New Explorations in Science and Technology High School, said. For just one dollar, the pork and chive dumplings are juicy, flavorful, and slightly sweet—so juicy, in fact that they

may get a bit messy. The chive pancakes, also one dollar, are dry and rather bland. Other one dollar offerings include vegetable meat buns and spring rolls—while sesame pancakes are only 50 cents, and wonton soup is \$1.25. On the whole, China North Dumpling makes for a cozy (albeit cramped) and delicious experience.

15 Essex Street between Grand and Hester



2 Bros Pizza



2 Bros Pizza looks like any other pizza shop with a long line. Although the pizza is good, it is not the only reason for this restaurant’s popularity. Enter to find mismatched stools and fake tiles and it’s clear that the line

isn’t for the atmosphere either. Unlike other popular pizza places, every food item costs a dollar. As the restaurant’s name suggests, the main attraction is the pizza, which has the perfect ratio of crust, cheese and sauce. There is also fried chicken which is

nicely spiced and not too greasy. As for sides, 2 Bros offers two different types of rice, French fries

Unlike other popular pizza places, at 2 Bros, every food item offered costs a dollar.

and sweet potatoes, all of which lack flavor. 2 Bros Pizza is often packed with students from nearby schools and anyone looking for a good deal.

601 Sixth Ave between 17 and 18 Street

Arts & Entertainment

Miryam Coppersmith: Not a Cookie Cutter Girl



By EMMA POLLACK and ALLEGRA WIPRUD

Next time you're wasting time at imdb.com (International Movie Database), search sophomore Miryam Coppersmith's name. You'd be surprised at what comes up. Coppersmith started acting at the age of three, when she marched right up to producer Ed Koch (not to be confused with the mayor) while at dinner with her family. Koch told her mother that he would love to put her on Broadway and an eager Coppersmith soon had a manager and an acting coach. Her first feature film was "Finding Isabel," and although she had a very small role with no lines, the shoot location was extremely convenient—the student directors used Copper-

smith's creepy attic as a set for the film. Her career got a jump-start while reading a monologue about a Catholic schoolgirl at an agents' symposium—she has since worked with Abrams Artists Agency. Coppersmith has had a variety of different roles in a large range of genres, from TV drama to short film. "Sometimes it's good to be short and normal-sized," Coppersmith said. "I'm not a cookie-cutter girl, you know, blonde, so a lot of the stuff I've done has been very odd." She has played a Red Hook street urchin, as well as the daughter of a member of the mob. When she was nine, Coppersmith joined "The Sopranos" and played Bobby 'Bacala' Baccalieri's daughter Sophia in the fifth and sixth seasons. Coppersmith landed her role on "The Sopra-

nos" just "like any other audition," Coppersmith said. After getting two callbacks, "it was kinda exciting for me [...] because I'd never been at such a huge audition where I was that close to getting it," Coppersmith said. In one episode, Sophia's stepmother gets an assault charge after beating up another mother at Sophia's soccer game. Coppersmith's stint on "The Sopranos" lasted into the beginning of last year, when the show ended its six-season run. In 2003, she was in the short, silent black-and-white film "Off Hour" with actor Adrian Grenier of "Entourage" and "one of my favorite directors of all time, Daniel Frei," Coppersmith said.

"I'm not a cookie-cutter girl, you know, blonde, so a lot of the stuff I've done has been very odd."
— Miryam Coppersmith, sophomore

Coppersmith played a street urchin who bikes around Red

Hook, Brooklyn. This film was more challenging for her because "I had to actually get into character. When you're a child actor, a lot of the time you get cast as you, or just a kid," Coppersmith said. Although Coppersmith has worked with many famous actors, she has never really been starstruck, mainly because she was so young when she worked with them. While filming "Off Hour" she had "no idea who Adrian Grenier was," Coppersmith said. While working on "The Sopranos," Coppersmith was more impressed with the actors' skill than their fame. "Basically I sat back and watched and learned from these really great actors that I got a chance to work with," Coppersmith said. At Stuyvesant, Coppersmith has played Mrs. Peterson in last year's fall musical "Bye Bye Birdie," as well as a minor role in this year's "Urinetown." Last year, she also directed a one-act she had written in eighth grade. "Working with Miryam in plays is a great experience and a lot of fun. She has so much respect and passion for good theater," wrote sophomore Emily Martin, who has been in Stuyvesant Theater Community (STC) productions with Coppersmith, in an e-mail interview. Martin has found it a great experience "to work with someone who has so much talent and thoughtfulness regarding their craft," she wrote. Currently, however, "school comes first," Coppersmith said, which is why Coppersmith chose Stuyvesant over Professional Per-

"I can picture myself going into a Shakespeare company and staying there for a while."
—Miryam Coppersmith, sophomore

forming Arts School, a school in which students are able to continue and strengthen their careers in acting. Though she still goes out for auditions, Coppersmith wants to have a normal high school experience and participate in extracurricular activities. She is clearly having no problems doing this, as she is involved in both the speech team (oral interpretation) and the STC. Coppersmith enjoys acting because she can express herself in different ways, but she has also been able to do this through her creative writing (such as her one-act). "I definitely want to go into acting in the future," Coppersmith said. "I can picture myself going into a Shakespeare company and staying there for a while."

Unearthed from the Slushpile: The Virgins

By JAMES DENNIN

Listening to the Virgins self-titled debut is a little bit like getting lost in a John Hughes movie—scratchy guitar riffs layered over sometimes cheesy synth lines, and just enough bounce to help you relive the last days of disco. The Virgins are by no means a highly original band—however their songs serve as an effective mix of the punk sensibility of the Buzzcocks, the triumphant melodies of the Police and a touch of Williams-

"Teen Lovers" is straight off of Sting's playlist—which features a lively bass line that dances over the song's simple chord progression.

burg chic. Their lyrics are about the kind of New York parties where their music is likely played and while songs of clubbing and drugging don't lend themselves to profundity, they exude a kind of youthful rowdiness. The album starts off with a profane and grainy movie sample—already a little retro, which leads into "She's Expensive," a real glam-rock tune complete with reverberated guitars and a pulsing rhythm section which sets a prime setting for front-



man Donald Cumming's lyrics about over-demanding women. The instrumentation throughout the album is simple; however, the production carefully layers the almost anemic parts on top of each other to create a rich and full sound. The effect is most profound on the band's most popular track, "Rich Girls," an indictment of New York high society's gossip girls. Here the lead and rhythm guitar parts are indistinguishable from each other, preventing the listener's attention from being drawn away from

Cumming's biting cynicism or entrancing falsetto. "Teen Lovers" is straight off of Sting's playlist—which features a lively bass line that dances over the song's simple chord progression, though Cummings is more of a warbler than a singer. "Fernando Pando" is probably the strongest track on the album, although there are some unwelcome changes from the single version, including a misplaced acoustic guitar. However it also plays with volume more, lending itself to the

song's crescendo which soars. By "Radio Christianine" we grow somewhat weary of the lack of diversity among the album's almost primitive drumming—however Cumming's precise humming over his guitar is tuneful and

The instrumentation throughout the album is simple; however the production carefully layers the almost anemic parts on top of each other to create a rich and full sound.

melodic, driving the song, and the album, to a winning finish. The song also features one of the album's only guitar solos, which pales in comparison to Cummings's thoughtful vocal gibberish. The Virgins are more eminent as a live band, although their recorded tracks have gained notoriety by appearing on the shows "Entourage" and "Gossip Girl." In person they're hilarious to watch, often inebriated, gazing up victoriously when they nail a difficult line of music. Their songs fill up any concert hall, and if the volume is turned up, any living room—and even without the swaying hipsters it's still a party.

Arts & Entertainment

Tea is for Tasteful



Amanzi Tea is a local Tribeca tea bar that specializes in many eclectic flavors.

By HYEMIN YI

Amanzi Tea is a tea bar, and serves organic teas from around the world. It opened its first Manhattan location on Saturday, December 6.

Amanzi Tea was founded in 2004 by a Zimbabwean family that fled the oppressive regime for a better life in America. The family opened a pushcart in Miami selling teas from their native Africa. The cart’s enormous success made it clear that a larger space was needed—they soon opened their first store in Greenville, South Carolina.

Amanzi’s new Tribeca location is small, but the bright, orange decor gives the venue an air of spaciousness. An array of tea cans, ranging from the standard green and herbal to the more exotic rooibos (“red bush”) and yerba mate, line the store’s wall. Scattered around the store are self-serve tea samples, changed daily. Tea leaf samples are also available for smelling.

The other portion of Amanzi is dedicated to the “tea bar.” The bar consists of a few small chairs where customers can sit and enjoy tea in small paper cups. Thankfully, the taste is retained

despite the inelegant dishware.

If you’re used to traditional East Asian teas, you can’t go wrong with the Chinese Jasmine Pearl, a common green tea. The Japanese Hojicha, known for being a digestive aid, is a pleasant, toasty and nutty variation on the Pearl. Amanzi also offers the timeless black teas, Earl Grey and English Breakfast.

The Peppermint Herbal, a slight variation on the timeless classics, is not too overwhelming and retains its peppermint flavor well. The rooibos teas, native to southern Africa, are a shock to Western taste buds, but the Va-

nilla Mint variation is a perfect mixture of sweet and bitter.

Amanzi offers a large selection of unusual flavored variations, such as the Chocolate Truffle Black Tea and the Lychee Pomegranate Green Tea. Whether your taste buds like flowery teas, fruity teas or traditional relaxing teas, be sure to scan the menu.

Served hot or cold, teas are sold at a fixed price. A small is \$2.50, a medium is \$2.75 and a large is \$2.95. The same prices apply to sparkling iced tea, made of tea and San Pellegrino mineral water.

While Amanzi does offer bubble tea (tea with small tapioca balls), bubble tea connoisseurs who normally buy the popular drink in Chinatown may be disappointed by Amanzi’s take. Others looking for a quick fix near school, however, would be more than satisfied. The Red Thai (medium \$3.95, large \$4.25), consisting of sweetened black tea, star anise and exotic spices, is not too sweet and has a smoother flavor than some of the other bubble tea options. However, the mediocre bubble tea isn’t worth the high price.

Amanzi’s “signature” drinks add even more variety to its menu. The Oreo Cookie Frappé sounds strange but is eerily similar to McDonalds’s McFlurry. If you’re longing for a cocktail, taste the Mojito teaser—the unique taste of lime and mint goes down well. A medium signature drink is \$3.95 and a large is \$4.25.

Like the teas, the pastries offered are just sweet enough, but on the pricey side. If you’re looking to get rid of some loose

change in your pockets, go for the Matcha Cupcake (\$2.50), topped with green tea frosting.

The well-informed staff is also more than happy to help or answer questions. Friendly and approachable, the employees actually know a thing or two

With a tea menu of over a hundred teas, it’s safe to say that there is something for everyone.

about tea and are sure to offer a few suggestions as to what you might like. Amanzi is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

With tens of flavors of every kind of tea, Amanzi can concoct whatever flavor of tea you’re looking for. It’s about time to make your tea-buds more sophisticated.

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“Soar to new possibilities!”

Sports

Girls' Swimming

Penguins Bring Home City Title

continued from page 16

less, the team still took advantage of the opportunity to celebrate. “We hadn’t won in a long time so it was really exciting,” junior Clarissa Lam said. “We also knew beforehand that we were going to win because it wasn’t so

“This season was in honor of April. This would’ve been her final season and she would’ve been with us.”
—Kei Okochi, senior and captain

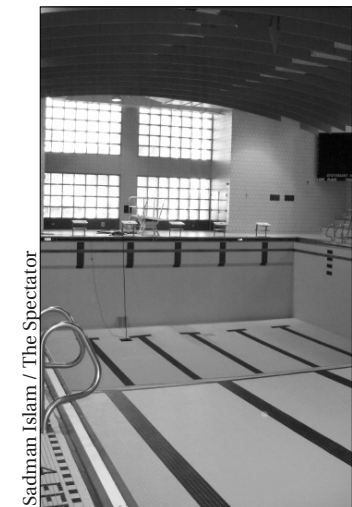
close, but when we did find out I was just yelling to everybody.” Junior Lauren Ng also felt enthusiastic about the victory. “You could see how excited everyone was, and how unexcited Townsend was,” she said.” Lam was especially glad for the seniors, who had waited their entire high school careers for that moment. “The seniors were really happy because they hadn’t won their whole time here,” she said. “It was really good to see them so happy since it was their last year.” It is always hard to follow up a perfect season, especially with eight seniors graduating, but Sabala thinks that they have a good shot at repeating the championship. “What they were able to accomplish without a pool only sets up what they can do with a pool next year,” she said. “Although we are losing a great group of seniors there are some great younger girls that will have the opportunity to step up next season.”

By LUC COHEN
with additional reporting
by CHRISTOPHER ZHAO

After nearly two months of renovation, Stuyvesant’s swimming pool is back open and good as new. Principal Stanley Teitel closed the pool on Thursday, September 25, after learning that a 40-pound hanging acoustic tile had become partially detached from the ceiling. As a result of the closure, swimming physical education classes were displaced, and the girls’



“Age causes things to break down.”
—Martha Singer, Assistant Principal Health and Physical Education



Sadman Islam / The Spectator

Before

varsity swim team had to seek out other locations for practices and meets. Until mid-November, the maze of scaffolding that was the pool resembled a giant jungle gym more than an aquatic center. Construction on the pool was completed on Monday, November 17. It was funded by the New York City Department of Education and thus, had no impact on Stuyvesant’s budget. According to Assistant Principal Health and Physical Education Martha Singer, however, it was out of use for about a week afterwards because the water was too cold.



Stephanie London / The Spectator

After

“Most kids didn’t go back in until after Thanksgiving,” she said. The re-opening was just in time for the boys’ varsity swim season. “It’s good to have our pool back, since it’s one of the best in the city,” senior and boys’ swim captain Albert Chang said. The administration originally expected the construction to be completed in early December. At first, Singer was concerned that it would be completed much later than that because she saw little progress early on. “When you don’t see people working, you don’t expect it to be done on time,” she said.

Nevertheless, the construction workers proved to be efficient and got the job done ahead of time. “They just followed their timetable and there weren’t so many delays,” Singer said. The reason for the tile’s collapse, according to Singer, was simple. “Age causes things to break down,” she said. To address this, the construction not only fixed the most problematic tile, but also restored other aging parts of the pool to prevent other potential incidents. “It won’t happen again in the near future,” Singer said.

High School Musical 4: The Penguin Story

continued from page 16

than the all-American feel-good Disney production. And where I could go on for pages talking about how to believe in yourself, I’ll leave you with the three lessons that these four seasons have taught me. 1. Goals differ from expectations. A goal is a destination—the point you imagine yourself reaching every single time you suit up for practice. Goals are within the control of those who set them; they die only when the dreamer achieves them. Expectations are mere predictions. They are subject to human error, and bank only on predictability. Expectations will never withstand the unexpected.

The original rookies of 2005-2006 never expected to lose one of their best friends. The replacement pool at NYU broke.

The original rookies of 2005-2006 never expected to lose one of their best friends. They never thought they would meet five coaches. They didn’t even know pools had the capacity to break. But they did have one goal: to make their senior year unstoppable. Goal achieved. 2. Blessed are the fans. There is one feeling better than hearing encouraging words. And that is hearing encouraging words shouted at you by smiling faces and the occasional painted chest. Fans, you are the fuel for our team, and the reason why every stroke taken on the night of Tuesday, November 25 finished a little bit stronger. We won our meet not only for ourselves, but for every person watching, all so

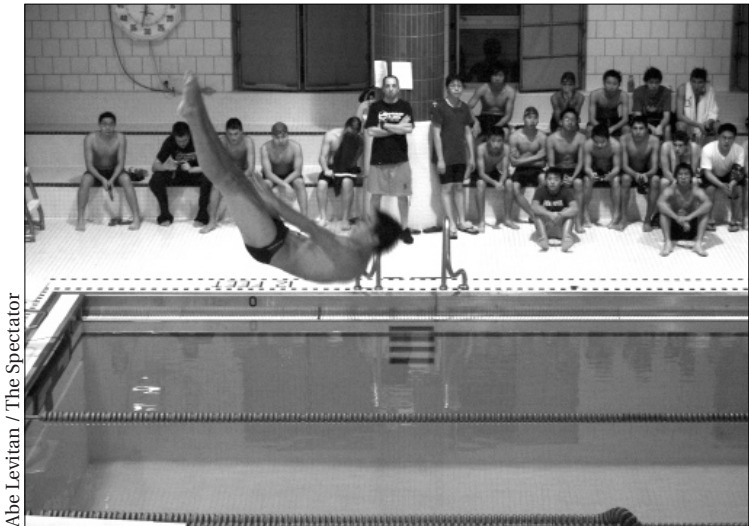
that 3, 200 would be proud to chant “ST-UY.” 3. Fate is a funny thing. Superstition aside, life has a way of repaying itself. After being accepted to the Penguins in early September of 2005, captains Mollie Miller (’06) and Vivian Healy (’06) sat the 11 rookies down and told them that “being on this team is an honor” and “if you didn’t deserve your spot, you would be asked to leave.” After four years of leading workouts and cheers, scoring points and cleaning up lane lines, never complaining and always scheming up some new team signature, and never, ever failing to be proud to be a Penguin, I feel that the seniors have earned their spots on the team.

SPORTS CALENDAR

Girls' Basketball	Girls' Swimming	Boys' Gymnastics	Girls' Volleyball	Boys' Basketball
<p>Tuesday, November 25 vs. School of the Future 53-39, School of the Future</p> <p>Tuesday, December 2 vs. Baruch College Campus High School 47-35, Baruch</p> <p>Thursday, January 8 vs. High School for Health Professions and Human Services Stuyvesant High School 3rd Floor Gym 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Friday, January 16 vs. Bronx High School of Science Stuyvesant High School Pool 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Girls' Gymnastics</p> <p>Tuesday, January 6 vs. Fiorello H. La Guardia High School Stuyvesant High School Auxiliary Gym 4:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Sunday, January 4 vs. Fiorello H. La Guardia High School Stuyvesant High School Auxiliary Gym 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, January 9 vs. Dewitt Clinton High School Stuyvesant High School Auxiliary Gym 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Wednesday, December 3 vs. Harry S. Truman High School 48-36, Truman</p> <p>Friday, January 9 vs. Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy Stuyvesant High School Auxiliary Gym 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Boys' and Girls' Indoor Track</p> <p>Friday, January 2 A Night at the Sprints @ The Armory 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Wednesday, December 3 vs. Murry Bergtraum High School 77-61, Stuyvesant</p> <p>Friday, December 5, vs. George Washington High School 56-54, Stuyvesant</p> <p>Monday, January 5 vs. Murry Bergtraum High School Stuyvesant High School 3rd Floor Gym 4:30 p.m.</p>

Boys' Swimming

Pirates Look to Regain Championship Title



Despite ending last season with a loss, the boys' varsity swim team hopes to win the city championship.

By ANITA WU

The Pirates, Stuyvesant's boys' varsity swim team, ended last season with a 53-49 loss to Brooklyn Technical High School

and will be looking to win the city championship this year.

“There were a lot of fast people that tried out this year so it was really competitive to get on the team.”
—Dennis Kan, freshman

on Tuesday, February 5, in the City Championships. It was their first defeat in eight years. The year before that, the two schools tied in the championships 51-51. This year, however, Stuyvesant is determined to follow in the footsteps of the girls' swimming team and regain the New York City Championship.

There are seven scheduled meets so far, against the other schools in the Bronx/Manhattan division. Of these schools, Hunter College High School and the Bronx High School of Science are expected to be the toughest competition.

The team practices five days a week after school, working on both distance and sprint events. Because the pool was under construction up until Monday, November 17, the Pirates were not able to schedule as many morning practices as they would have liked. To make up for this, they swam at Brooklyn Tech's pool after the Engineers finished their practice at around 4:30 p.m. “Now that we have our pool and we're back on track, we're working really hard,” coach and physical education teacher Peter Bologna said. “Hopefully we'll be one of the top teams in the city.”

According to senior and co-captain Chris Kwok, the Pirates' goals are to “take back the title of champion and for everyone to drop times,” he said. “Instead of starting the season with medium difficulty practices and then working to harder ones, this year we're starting off working a lot harder. I think that all the swim team members are focused and want to get better.”

They are optimistic that the 10 new swimmers will help them achieve this goal of winning the city championship. “There were a lot of fast people that tried out this year so it was really competitive to get on the team,” said freshmen Dennis Kan, who has been swimming competitively for three years. Forty-nine swimmers tried out for the 10 available slots.

One of the new members of the team, freshman Noam Altman-Kurosaki, stands out for his diving skills. He has been diving ever since he was five years old. His older brother, Jonas Altman-Kurosaki ('06), was also on the team and earned a spot on the record board for the 400 meter freestyle. “This just gives me some more motivation to get on there myself,” Noam Altman-Kurosaki said. “Since we do different things, I don't really feel too pressured, or, at least, I don't yet.” He hopes to win all of his diving events this year, and anticipates that he will also do a little swimming as well, even though he said that it is not his forte.

According to Bologna, one of the team's main strengths is that many of its members are already experienced swimmers. After seven seniors graduated last year, these experienced swimmers, like freshman En Wei Hu Van Wright, who swims for Asphalt Green Unified Aquatics, must step up to fill the void they left.

In addition, Bologna said the

team is looking to win the city championship this year.

“As long as we remain focused, I'm confident that we are going to be the best.”
—Peter Bologna, coach

three captains, (Kwok, senior Albert Chang and junior John Connuck) are doing a good job leading the team so far and expects them to continue to do so.

Their first meet took place on Wednesday, December 10 against George Washington High School at the Stuyvesant pool.

“As long as we remain focused, I'm confident that we are going to be the best,” Bologna said.

Wrestling

Lacking Experience, Spartans Still Put Up a Good Fight

By SAUNGWON KO

Last year, the Spartans, Stuyvesant's varsity wrestling team, finished with a winning record for the first time in their four season existence. Now in its fifth year, the team is struggling to overcome the loss of 14 seniors, including standout and co-captain Christopher Stair ('08), in order to once again attain a winning record. While the Spartans do not by any means lack members—52 new members joined this season alone—the vast majority of the players have little to no wrestling experience. For example, sophomore Gabriel Hwang, who has a background in judo, joined so that he could translate his martial arts experience into a school team.

“Because we have less experience, we need to focus more

on technique conditioning, and since 75 percent of the team has no prior experience, we're going to take our time with our technique,” senior and co-captain Madar Laffir said. The Spartans finished the 2007-08 season with a 7-3 record, a huge improvement from the 2006-07 season, when they finished 3-7. In each of the two previous years, they were 1-11.

Many team members are optimistic about their prospects this season. “We're working harder,” sophomore Ashish Bhandari said. “We are going to win every

single match.” According to Laffir, the team practices until eight o'clock every day, just like it did last year, but this year there are more weekend practices.

The coach, Richard Murray, a lawyer and Vietnam veteran who is in his second year of leading the team, wants to take things slowly, just like Laffir does. He believes that last season's record was a result of practice, conditioning and experience. Without as much experience this year, the team's development of good wrestling technique won't happen immediately.

“We have a good nucleus for a good team, with potential,” Murray said. “We just need to take some time.”

That nucleus was indeed on display during the team's first meet of the season, on Wednesday, December 3, against Harry S. Truman High School, but some of their weaknesses were also prevalent throughout. Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) wrestling consists of 15 matches, one in each weight class. For each match a team wins, it receives six points. Each team must forfeit a match if they fail to provide a wrestler to compete in one of these classes. Because three wrestlers failed to hand in their medical forms, Stuyvesant was forced to forfeit three matches, beginning the meet 18 points behind Truman.

Senior Shayanta Hasnat began to get Stuyvesant back on track with a victory in the 130 lb. weight class in the first match, defeating Truman senior Kenny Victorio in three minutes, after taking him down six times.

Junior Paul Kim helped Stuyvesant keep heading in the right direction, with a victory in the 160 lb. weight class. Despite taking a long time – 4 minutes, 59 seconds – to pin his opponent, Truman freshman Samuel Medez, Kim was able to remain focused and in control throughout. Kim's performance was scattered with what junior Michael Zhang referred to as an impressive sequence of sprawls. A sprawl is an evasive maneuver that allows a wrestler who is on top of his opponent to keep his knees out of

the opponent's reach, preventing his opponent from escaping his grasp. At one point, Medez

appeared to have gained control over the match, but Kim countered with a reversal, swiftly removing himself from Medez's grasp and getting on top of him.

Despite these victories by Hasnat and Kim, Truman came out on top, defeating the Spartans 48-36.

“Half of the team didn't show up, and the disqualifications we had to work with didn't help us either,” said Laffir, citing reasons why the Spartans couldn't ride Hasnat's and Kim's performances to victory. The ‘disqualifications’ refer to the matches Stuyvesant was forced to concede when some athletes didn't hand in their medical forms. Murray, however, said that he thought the team made the most of the situation and thought that the meet showed how well the team would be able to perform later in the season. “I'm happy with the performance, because this is a young team, and they don't have much experience, but everyone fought hard, and they've only been practicing a month,” he said. “The team has a lot of enthusiasm, and a lot of potential.”

For footage of the Rebels in HD, visit www.stuyspectator.com/rebels-video1212.

After the game, many members of the Rebels were optimistic about the future of the team's

season. “We can go all the way with this team,” junior Ben Diamond said. “We've got the shooters, the kids inside, we've got the smart players. I really think we can win.”

A lot of the responsibility will fall on Becker and senior and co-captain Feng Ye. “They really inspire me to do well,” junior Petros Skaliarinis said of the captains.

“As a freshman on JV, I thought about how I could be the captain next year, so I tried to emulate these guys,” said junior Zachary Weiner, the captain of last year's junior varsity team and current varsity rookie. “They have great work ethics.”

Last year, the team lost eight seniors to graduation. As a result, the current players have to pick up their games. “Every kid on this team has a role,” Fisher said.

The Rebels will need all these role players to contribute, especially in the division games. “All of the division games are very important,” junior Jack Mar-



golis said. The Rebels went 10-8 against their own division last year, which just barely qualified them for the playoffs.

So far, the Rebels have started off their regular season well, with a convincing 77-61 victory over Murry Burgtraum High School on Wednesday December 3, and a close 56-54 win over George Washington High School on Friday, December 5.

Fisher, however, was not so sure of his team's chances just yet. “Ask me again in a month or so,” he said.

For footage of the Rebels in HD, visit www.stuyspectator.com/rebels-video1212.

Football

Stuyvesant Seniors Honored at Football Division Championship



Seniors Nicholas Goldin and Nicholas Wheatley-Schaller were given awards for leading in their respective categories.

By ALAN TSE

Last Sunday, the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) hosted its boys' varsity football Cup Division championship game between Far Rockaway High School and George Washington High School at the Midwood Athletic Complex. Stuyvesant football competes in the Cup Division, the weakest of the three PSAL divisions. Although the Stuyvesant Peglegs ended their season with a 3-6 record and had failed to make the playoffs, senior captain Nicholas

Goldin and senior starting wide receiver Nicholas Wheatley-Schaller were two of Stuyvesant's players present at the championship game to receive personal accolades for leading their division in their respective categories. Along with six other leading athletes from other schools, Goldin and Wheatley-Schaller were commemorated for their achievements during a special halftime ceremony in which the players were lined up and awarded plaques. After completing the season with eight passing touchdowns, Goldin was awarded League Leader in Passing Touchdowns. Wheatley-Schaller piled up 29 receiving catches and seven receiving touchdowns, and received awards for League Leader in Receptions and League Leader in Receiving Touchdowns. Although it is without a doubt that the two players would rather be playing in the championship game with the Peglegs, Goldin and Wheatley-Schaller nonetheless took great pride in accepting their honors. "It's always cool to be honored like that—especially with a teammate. It was nice to take something out of the season, even though the team wasn't so successful," Wheatley-Schaller said.

Boys' Basketball

After Preseason Victory, Rebels Look Ahead



The boys' basketball team, the Rebels, started the season off with victories over Murry Burghtraum High School and George Washington High School.

By PHILLIP GODZIN

Last season, the referees' failure to count the game-tying basket ended Stuyvesant's varsity basketball team's championship dreams prematurely in the first round of the playoffs. Even after video evidence proved that the final score of the game against Food and Finance High School was 40-40, not 40-38, it was still ruled a loss for Stuyvesant, eliminating them from the playoffs. This season, the Runnin' Rebels are back, and with a vengeance. "We really don't want to go out like that again this year," senior and co-captain Nolan Becker said. "If we work hard the rest of this year, we'll be in a position where it won't even be a close game in the playoffs." The Rebels got their first taste of such a lopsided win in an unofficial game on Friday, November 26, when they defeated the Engineers of Brooklyn Technical High School by a score of 66-51.

The first quarter started out with a couple of big dunks by Tech's 6'6" junior Oshane McRae, before Stuyvesant silenced him by placing more defenders under the basket. The Rebels then countered with a few inside shots, including a three-point play by Becker in which he sunk the basket and drew a foul for a successful free throw, tying the game at 10. A few steals and good defense by Stuyvesant closed out the quarter with the Rebels leading 21-18. The second quarter went back-and-forth, and ended with the Rebels up 36-35. Becker contributed 22 of the first half's 36 points. "I wouldn't be surprised if he's our leading scorer by the end of the season," coach and physical education teacher Phil Fisher said of Becker. After leading by only one point at halftime, the Rebels went on a 16-2 scoring run in the third quarter, holding the Engineers to

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Girls' Swimming

Penguins Bring Home City Title

By TIMOTHY PARK and CHRISTOPHER ZHAO

The Stuyvesant girls' swimming team completed a perfect season on Tuesday, November 25, with their victory over Townsend Harris High School for the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) City Championship. In their first year, coaches Kristen Sabala and Kasia Sawicz led the Penguins to a title the team had not won since the 2000 season. The championship meet, held at the Flushing Meadows Aquatic Center, started off close, but Stuyvesant pulled away in the latter half to win by a score of 61.5 to 40.5. The meet was a rematch between the two teams. Both made it to the championship last season, but this time Stuyvesant won, avenging their loss last year. As the third seed in the playoff bracket, the Penguins first had to defeat both Curtis High School and Brooklyn Technical High School before facing Townsend Harris. The Penguins went into the championship match fresh off a decisive win at the Opens Championships nine days earlier. Opens is an annual meet between every PSAL team which has qualifying swimmers. Their victory certainly gave Stuyvesant some significant momentum in their final meet. The newly constructed Flushing Meadows Aquatic Center was packed with fans, but most were from Townsend Harris. Eleven shirtless members of Stuyvesant's official booster club, WooPegSooie, arrived during the meet, with "S-T-U-Y-V-E-S-A-N-T-!" spelled out across their chests. The fan atmosphere became very



The girls' swim team, the Penguins, came in as the third seeded team in the playoff in which they defeated two other high school teams.

intense, and created a supportive feeling for both teams. "Many of the girls stepped it up this year and got faster by two to three seconds in many events," senior Dawn Chen said. Their progress may come as a surprise, considering Stuyvesant did not have a pool to practice in this season, forcing them to jump around various other schools looking for places to practice. Senior and co-captain Kei Okochi viewed the lack of a pool as just another obstacle that her team had to overcome. "There are some problems every season, and this season the only problem was that our pool broke so we couldn't swim for two weeks and we had to travel to get to practice," she said. In addition, she said, the added challenge of lacking a pool made the team stronger. "It also motivated us because we knew that not having a pool

was a disadvantage and that we had to work that much more." The problem meant that the team had to travel across all five boroughs this season. Another motivator this season was the late April Lao, a Stuyvesant student and swimmer who died two years ago in a tragic car accident. "I feel like this season was in honor of April," Okochi said. "This would've been her final season and she would've been with us. Also, her mom and brother were there and it was just special." Because the Penguins dominated the meet throughout, it was clear they were going to win all along. As a result, the atmosphere at the end was not as ecstatic as it would have been had the match been tight. Nonetheless,

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High School Musical 4: The Penguin Story



By EILEEN CONNORS

I don't know who turned my life into High School Musical, but I'd like to thank them. Maybe take a picture with them under the new Penguins City Championship banner. In its shortest form, here's how my high school athletic story goes: Freshman year, 2005-2006: The Penguins try-out what Coach Silvana Choy called the "fastest group of girls" she had seen at Stuy. A "rookie takeover" followed when Choy took 11 new swimmers, removing three seniors to make room. After coping with a month of 6:00 am practices due to the birth of Choy's daughter Miranda and

the resulting time constraints, the team eventually placed second in PSAL and swam at the City Championship meet. Losing the last relay caused the Penguins to lose the meet to the Townsend Harris Turtles by six points. Sophomore year, 2006-2007: The team returned one rookie short. Swimming in a pool under the plaque remembering the precious teammate they had lost five months before was a near impossible task without tears. The Penguins were forced to keep their heads in the game while their hearts lay in a larger mission—educating a new generation of freshmen swimmers on the significance of April Lao. After months of mixed emotions, the Penguins finished fourth in PSAL, dancing the "Cha Cha Slide" off the deck of their Semi-Final meet. Junior Year, 2007-2008: After the announcement of Choy's second pregnancy, the Penguins found themselves a new coach in former Physical Education teacher Ahmad Elgalad. Due to geographical challenges and language barriers, the team experienced another coaching change one month into their season. Under Coach Leonard DeVirgilio

(who, unfortunately, was not a swimmer himself) the team made its way to another City Championship meet. Despite a clear defeat by the Townsend Turtles, the Penguins accepted their silver medals with a smile as WooPegSooie, the now official booster club of Stuyvesant athletics, made their first appearance. Senior year, 2008-2009: Under Kristen Sabala and Kasia Sawicz, the Penguins underwent their third coaching change in four years. The ceiling began to fall down five weeks into the season. The replacement pool at Brooklyn Tech began to leak. The replacement pool's replacement pool at NYU broke. The Penguins swam in every borough in New York City. They won the Opens Championship by over 100 points. Their coaches became their best friends. And they won the City Championship swim meet by 21 points. April's mom was there for it all. Now, some of you may be rolling your eyes by this point, proclaiming that "you get it" and wondering when the obnoxious medal wearing will cease. But I'm here to tell you that there's more to my story

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