



# The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"

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## Math Teacher Richard Geller Passes Away

By DEVON VARRICHIONE  
with additional reporting by  
VIJENDRA RAMLALL

On Tuesday, November 1, at 1:50 p.m., math teacher Richard Geller passed away after waging a year-and-a-half-long battle against advanced melanoma cancer. He was in his 30th year teaching at Stuyvesant and was 65 years old.

In December 2010, Geller was notified that he had tested positive for melanoma, an aggressive type of cancer that begins on the skin and spreads rapidly through the body if not identified and contained quickly. Geller informed his colleagues that the cancer had metastasized to his lungs in early April 2011, at that month's interdepartmental faculty meeting.

Around the same time, Geller began taking Vemurafenib, a drug recently developed by the biotechnology company Genentech. The drug has been shown to inhibit a cancer-causing genetic mutation found in the gene B-RAF that is common to many patients with melanoma. Accord-

ing to a study led by Dr. Paul B. Chapman of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, Vemurafenib is effective in preventing the growth of new tumors for a period of anywhere between seven months and two years after a patient begins taking it.

"I had read about this very promising drug when we were waiting for biopsy confirmation of the melanoma," Geller's wife, Barbara, wrote in an e-mail interview. "I asked for additional testing for the B-RAF mutation at this time. When Richard's pulmonologist called me to confirm his B-RAF mutation, I was so choked up with happiness."

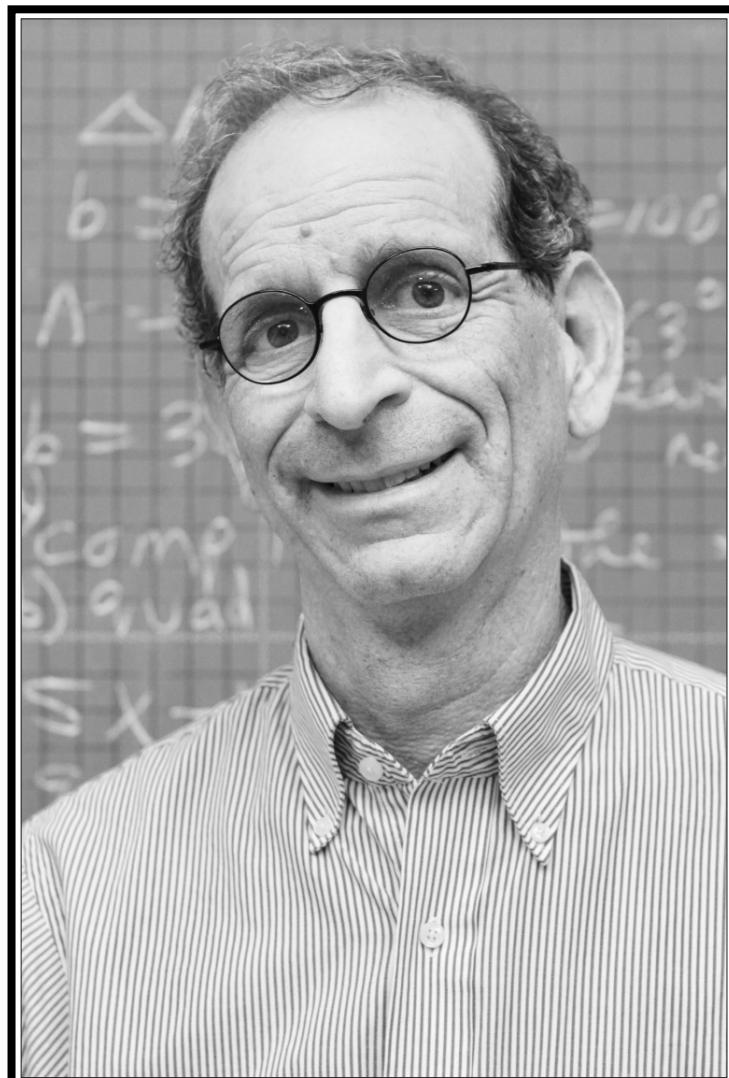
Starting on Thursday, April 21, Geller went down to Richmond, Virginia, once a month to take part in an expanded access study for Vemurafenib during the spring term of the 2010-2011 school year. The drug had already been tested in many cities, and showed significant promise for treating metastatic melanoma for patients with the B-RAF mutation.

Geller transferred treat-

ment to the New York University Clinical Cancer Center on Wednesday, July 13, as soon as the expanded access trial for the B-RAF inhibitor was relocated there. Doctors introduced another drug, Cabozantinib, into his regimen, so that he took the two drugs in tandem. While Vemurafenib slows the growth of tumor cells, Cabozantinib reduces metastases, and inhibits angiogenesis, the formation of new blood vessels necessary to support tumor growth. Unfortunately, Geller's melanoma metastasized to his liver and stomach cavity following his transfer to NYU.

During a routine check-up on Wednesday, October 19, Geller discovered that the medication he was taking had stopped working. At the advice of Dr. Anna Pavlick, his specialist at NYU, he introduced the immune-system booster Ipilimumab into his system next day. He took the drug along with Vemurafenib, even though there was no clinical evidence to support the conclusion that the drugs would

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Joann Lee / The Spectator

For a feature on the life of math teacher Richard Geller, turn to page 8.

For reflections on his passing, turn to pages 12 to 23.

## Seniors Recognized in Siemens Competition



(Left to Right) Dr. Jonathan Gastel, Angela Fan, and Brian Kim.

By TEN-YOUNG GUH  
and LILY LIN

The Siemens Competition, an annual math, science, and technology research competition funded by the Siemens Foundation, recognized seniors Brian Kim and Angela Fan as a Regional Finalist and Semifinalist, respectively, on Friday, October 21.

This year boasted the largest number of submissions since the beginning of the competition in 1999. Kim's and Fan's projects were among the approximately 300 papers chosen for the semifinals. Kim will proceed to the next phase of the

competition.

"Finishing the paper in itself was a huge accomplishment, so I didn't even anticipate receiving this award," Kim said. "I am honored and shocked that my project was chosen from thousands of others and can't wait to compete in the nationals."

Kim submitted a paper titled "Inequalities Between Packing and Covering Densities in Centrally Symmetric Convex Bodies" to the mathematics category of the competition. He explored packing and covering a regular hexagon, whose edge lengths are equal, with convex disks, whose shapes resemble

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## DOE Alters Grading Policy for Regents Exams

By MARTA BAKULA  
and MIRANDA LI

The Department of Education (DOE) will implement a new policy whereby teachers in New York State public schools cannot grade their own students' Regents exams.

The Board of Regents committee came to this decision on Monday, October 17, and will put the policy into effect in all schools in the state for the 2012-2013 school year, in order to give schools ample time to prepare.

According to the DOE, this change is being made to ensure that there is fairness in grading and avoid cheating scandals with teachers tampering with their own students' scores.

"Every year, there are many more students who score 65s compared to 64s, which suggests that teachers review tests and find ways to add points for students just below the passing grade," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said. "That's what began the investigation on cheating on Regents tests in the first place."

Assistant Principal Biology Elizabeth Fong believes that teachers can also help out their students by grading more leniently the first time through. "The reason the Board of Regents is doing this is to make

the test more objective. Teachers change the grades in the end, but they can also be more lenient to their own students while grading," she said.

Suri supports the policy, because she believes security measures must be taken for the system to be fair. "Teachers should definitely not grade their own [students'] Regents exams. I have never understood why we used to do that, especially since the Regents is such a high-stake test," Suri said. "What should be done is that all the tests should be sent to a central location, to be graded there."

This is one of the potential changes in the process of Regents testing and grading, once the policy is implemented. It could require sending tests to a central location in another district for grading by hand or by computers. The grading system would be lengthened and may result in Regents exams being administered in the spring, as opposed to in June.

Another possible change may simply require having different teachers within each department in each school grade student exams.

"Stuyvesant has a large staff, so we can maneuver around this policy change fairly unaffected, but we're a big school with many teachers in each department," Principal Stanley

Teitel said. "Suppose in a small school, there is only one physics teacher; who would mark these students' physics Regents then?"

Although these alterations will be put into action soon, many teachers and students feel that these changes are not necessary at Stuyvesant.

"It seems an unnecessary precaution given that 99 percent of our school passes the [English] Regents anyway," said Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman.

While the History, Science, Math, and Foreign Language Regents are graded by class, the English Regents is graded alphabetically. Thus, in all other departments it is guaranteed that the teachers grade their own students' exams, while in the English department, teachers may or may not mark their students' Regents. This rating procedure was recommended by the Board of Regents to ensure the fair marking of essay-prompt questions, which are unique to the English Regents.

"I don't think we need [this policy], but I understand the concern of some schools on the matter," Teitel said. "With school ratings and progress reports being based on these state

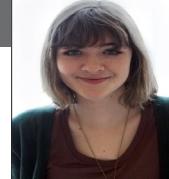
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### Opinions

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Two Sides of the SHSAT

A look at the trouble with the test.



Article on page 25.

### Arts & Entertainment

Thus Mimed George Valentin

Revitalizing cinema without a sound.

# News

By NANCY CHEN and SHARON CHO

Yellow buttons proclaiming, "Be an ally. Be the change," rainbow-colored bracelets, and red ribbons have become a common sight in the classrooms and hallways due to SPARK's attempt to raise awareness about a variety of issues during Ally Week and Red Ribbon Week.

Ally Week, which ran from Monday, October 17, to Friday, October 21, was organized by SPARK coordinator Angel Colon and members of the Gay Lesbian And Straight Spectrum (GLASS) to promote the acceptance of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community at Stuyvesant. The event was part of an ongoing "Days of Action Series," a SPARK-initiated program that is meant to promote awareness about various types of diversity.

"It raised awareness for most of our students," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "We want to make sure that students understand that we're a community in which we tolerate all types of people."

This week of awareness is a national youth-led effort created in 2005 by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) National Jumpstart Stu-

dent Leadership Team. This organization encourages students to be allies against anti-LGBT bullying, harassment, and name-calling in schools.

"[Ally Week] spreads awareness that there are LGBTQ teens in high school, especially here in Stuyvesant. It's just telling everyone that they should be accepting and encouraging no matter what," sophomore and GLASS member Carolyn Fisher said.

GLASS sold bracelets, buttons, and stickers to supporters at the table on the fifth floor outside the cafeteria every day of Ally Week. The club made over a hundred dollars in profit, and by Wednesday, all of the merchandise was sold out. They raised over a thousand dollars for LGBT charities, and contributions will be made to non-LGBT charities and to P.S. 721, SPARK's peer partnership school.

After school on Wednesday, guest speakers from Citi Group spoke to Stuyvesant students about their efforts to increase staff diversity.

"When talking about diversity, we're referring to a number of different things, including diversity of thought, which is crucial because if everybody that we hired thought the same way, we could never come up with

new creative, innovative ideas, and we would never grow our business," said Deborah Bertan, Citi Group's Director of Campus Strategy and Diversity Recruitment. "I think a lot of times what happens for students, especially diverse students, is they don't realize that there's a world of opportunities [...] no matter what it is that excites you, no matter what it is that you love to do."

Citi Group's introduction was well received by those who attended. "It was basically education on what [LGBT] students can do to empower themselves," Colon said. "Not many people are comfortable in coming out, because they fear their friends or their parents finding out about their orientation, so this is not easy."

Teitel believes in making these students comfortable within the Stuyvesant community first. He sees Stuyvesant as a microcosm of the outside community and believes that preventing intolerance here will have larger effects. "If there's discrimination out there, there's got to be discrimination here. We don't tolerate it. In general, people are more tolerant of others here, probably more so than other schools," he said.

"We read these reports of kill-

ings, people being attacked on cyberspace for people's personal sexual orientation, gender identities," Colon said. "[Ally Week] is something that is needed in all schools or all levels."

Red Ribbon Week ran from Monday, October 24 to Friday, October 28. With an estimated 80 million participants nationwide each year, it is the largest drug intervention campaign since 1988. The Red Ribbon Week pledge summarizes the goals of the week of drug awareness: "I pledge allegiance to myself and to who I want to be/ 'Cause I can make my dreams come true if you believe in me/ I pledge to stay in school and learn the things I need to know/ To make the world a better place for kids like me to grow/ I pledge to keep my dreams alive and be all I can be, I know I can, and that's because/ I pledge to be DRUG FREE."

At Stuyvesant, Red Ribbon Week was implemented when SPARK advisor Angel Colon joined the faculty. "This was the best platform for promoting [drug awareness] throughout all the United States," Colon said.

In previous years, SPARK set up a table in front of the cafeteria to distribute information. This year, however, SPARK members put up posters containing facts

about drug use on the second, fifth, and seventh floors.

Colon hoped to tell students about the "resources and referral for anyone struggling and needing help with their drug use, drug abuse and addiction, the importance of educating and uniting [the] school community to address drug dealers and drug trafficking rings, and about the school's zero tolerance policy," he said.

Ally Week and Red Ribbon Week were only the first parts of the "Days of Action" series for the month of October.

Students will be able to learn more about the numerous dimensions of well-being at the Health Fair, which will be held on Friday, November 18. They will also have the opportunity to memorialize people killed due to anti-transgender hatred during Trans Day of Remembrance, which is scheduled for Monday, November 21.

Sophomore and GLASS member Aron Helfet says that the "Days of Action" series "is not principally about one different group, but it definitely helps to spread the message about awareness in general. It definitely does get people thinking."

## Recycling Bins Sent to NYC DOE Schools

By ANNECHEN and ISABELLE NG

Pass by room 726, and you will see towers of green cardboard boxes made from 100% recycled paper. These boxes are part of Stuyvesant's newest recycling initiative.

Over the past week, the Students Taking Resolute Initiative to Vindicate the Environment (STRIVE) club began placing the boxes around Stuyvesant. Boxes were put in classrooms on the second and seventh floors as well as administrative, and faculty offices.

Eight hundred cardboard boxes for paper recycling were sent to Stuyvesant from the Department of Education (DOE) under its sustainability initiative in mid-October. The DOE aims to improve recycling habits and energy conservation methods used in schools across the city.

The initiative is part of the GrowNYC's Recycling Champions program. GrowNYC is a non-profit organization that aims to improve local quality of life and maintain a clean environment through environmental programs. The organization is working with Pratt Industries, who donated 40,000 paper-recycling bins, and the DOE to place the bins in all public schools in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island for the 2011-2012 school year.

"In order for this to work, we need one of these boxes in every single classroom and in every single room and some in the hallways so people always have an opportunity [to recycle]," biology teacher and STRIVE faculty advisor Jerry Citron said.

Each bin is made of double-walled corrugated cardboard and has a slotted lid to prevent contamination. The recycling bins can be used with or without clear plastic bags and were designed to be large enough to not require daily servicing.

"Even though we already have recycling baskets, people can easily throw anything they want into them. These new boxes have openings that can only fit paper, so that will increase our ability

to recycle effectively," member of STRIVE and senior Keerthana Krishnarajah said.

However, the boxes were not well received. Complaints among the faculty concerned the size and usefulness of the recycling boxes in classrooms. The boxes are at least three times larger than the blue recycling bins that Stuyvesant currently uses.

"When we put it in the staff rooms, it took up too much space, it was very bulky and some of the staff already used the blue bins," President of STRIVE and senior Aarthi Kuppannan said.

There were also issues regarding potential contamination of the deposited paper.

"We tried some out and there's mixed waste in the boxes," Citron said. "Once they're contaminated, they go in the general waste strain."

The original STRIVE plan was to place plastic bags into the boxes so contaminated boxes could be easily dealt with by disposing of the tainted bags. The plastic bags with recyclable contents would be collected for recycling while the actual recycling boxes would still be reusable. However, the DOE refused to provide plastic bags and the cost of the bags was not within the custodial budget.

"We have bins for recycling," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "The real problem is that people don't put the right item in the right box."

Students believe that Stuyvesant needs to become more aware of the recycling program. "We need a better sense of awareness of the environment," sophomore Calvin Yang said. "We're Stuyvesant, we have the brains to put a slip of paper in the box."

The boxes were most successful in administrative and faculty offices.

"They've really found a home in the offices," SPARK counselor Angel Colon said. The faculty and administration have successfully implemented them in their office routines. However, most boxes have been taken out of classrooms. Teachers placed them outside in hallways because they were hindrances to their classroom en-

vironments. As of now, STRIVE is in charge of looking after and collecting the recycled contents of the boxes in use.

There are still hundreds of unmade boxes in the school's basement.

"We don't have room to put up 800 boxes. If I put up the boxes you won't be able to walk," Teitel said.

These boxes will either be shipped back to the DOE or donated to other schools around the city that will be able to use them for their recycling programs. STRIVE is planning on replacing the larger cardboard recycling boxes with smaller copy paper boxes. They will paint them green and place them in classrooms around the school.

"We're going to take those [copy] boxes, we're going to cut a big hole on top of them and put those in the classroom," Colon said. "Having something small that size in the classroom will encourage not just students but also faculty to recycle."

If they are successful, STRIVE will contact the DOE and suggest the Stuyvesant recycling box model as an alternative to the current, larger model.

Sustainability proponents ultimately believe that the success of the recycling program is up to the student body.

"If there was a group of students to take responsibility, just standing near the receptacles, over the course of a year [...] just watching people throw stuff away, then [recycling] will be natural," DOE teacher sustainability educator Jocelyn Cohen said.

To increase awareness, supporters of the recycling initiative believe that more attention should be called to recycling. "We can have a school-wide [event] where [students] search the recycling bins every month," junior Naoki Cho said.

"There needs to be an effort to change the way things are done," Cohen said. "It's going to be people making a commitment to doing [recycling]. That's how it'll change."

## DOE Alters Grading Policy for Regents Exams

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exams, it's not a surprise that it poses concerns."

Students have mixed reactions regarding the change.

"It would prove beneficial to have your teacher grade your Regents exam," junior Zuzanna Rybicka said. "Teachers have different ways of teaching some parts of the curriculum, and they would be more likely to understand our methods of approaching certain problems."

**"Stuyvesant has a large staff, so we can maneuver around this policy change fairly unaffected."**  
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

of an improbable grouping of scores in several unnamed schools in the state.

"It's tremendously time- and money-consuming if the DOE wants to do this," Grossman said. "It points to a flaw in the grading system, especially since the new Regents exam is graded by a computer sensitive to every spare mark that is not trying to raise scores."

Some students believe that especially in today's economy, so much money should not be spent on Regents security. "This is very unnecessary. The money could be used for so many other things. We are already suffering from budget cuts and lack of money to support different aspects of our school. To invest millions of dollars on something like this is just too much," sophomore Cassandra Silano said.

Others point out that, in the long run, the extra dollars improve education. "It's a lot, but there are other advantages. Teachers spend six days grading these tests, and now they won't have to do this anymore. They can spend time on productive special development," Suri said. "Also, if other people grade the regents, we can have a more even exam schedule [...] and more days of teaching."

Fong acknowledges both sides of the issue. "I'm not familiar with how the budgeting works, but it's definitely a complicated process. They have [to find] balance between teachers' pay, textbooks, curriculum development, [and] maintenance of the school," she said. "Now that they want to spend more money to make sure the Regents is fairer, I'm sure that the budget directors will be able to find the balance between this money and the money going to other school resources."

## New Language Lab Tested in AP Spanish and French Classes



Joann Lee / The Spectator

Students in Anna Montserrat's eighth period AP Spanish class use panels and headsets in preparation for the AP exam.

**By THOMAS ZADROZNY**

Stuyvesant now has its own portable language lab, used exclusively for Advanced Placement (AP) French and Spanish classes. The new lab replaces cassette recorders, which Stuyvesant teachers used in the verbal sections of language AP examinations in previous years.

All AP language exams have a verbal component, in which students complete what is known as a simulated conversation and presentation section. During the simulated conversation, students listen to a recording of someone speaking, as if in a conversation, and then record themselves responding. For the presentation section, students read a document and listen to a recording, and then have two minutes to prepare a presentation on the

relation between the two. They then speak for two minutes. The new language lab can be used for both sections.

Students used the language lab for the first time two weeks ago in AP Spanish classes taught by Assistant Principal of Languages Arlene Ubieta and Spanish teachers Robert Weldon and Anna Montserrat, and in AP French to practice for the simulated conversation section of the exam. The new system, housed in a cart roughly the size of a student's desk, is compact and portable. For exams, the cart is wheeled into the room, and hooked up to an outlet. The cart houses two laptops, and six pods. Each pod is a router for five panels, which are each given to a student. The panels are placed in front of the student who has a noise-cancelling headset and microphone connected to it.

The seating arrangement is saved on one of the two laptops—one for operating the equipment, and one for housing the students' recordings from the exam. "I can collect and save all sound files and listen to it immediately," Ubieta said. "That's much better from how it was before."

"We've had some technical difficulties, because it is new," said Ubieta. She was unable to save the recordings made, because of a failed connection between the two laptops. Despite the small technical issues, Ubieta believes that everything has been smoothed over. "We've been working really hard to make it work." Ubieta expects that the language department will be able to resume testing in the coming weeks.

"I found the new system very efficient," junior and AP Spanish student Jason Cheng said. "It was hard to set everything up, and some of the headphones didn't work, but it was all fine in the end."

The language lab, whose cost was shared between the Parent Association and the school, was expensive, and there were fears that the system might not perform as well as predicted. However, besides the defective headphones and the issues with saving files, such fears have yet to be realized. "The new system worked out fine," said junior Daryl Okosh, who is also taking AP Spanish. "I think it will be a great improvement."

Unlike many other schools, Stuyvesant does not have an official Language Laboratory, a

room solely devoted to recording students' verbal exams. Stuyvesant's former building, located at 345 East 15th Street, had a language lab, as did the present building when it began construction in 1989. However, by the time the building was completed in 1992, the equipment was outdated and subsequently removed. The room was eventually converted to a computer science classroom.

Stuyvesant's previous system for recording the verbal component relied on cassette recorders. Many issues arose from this method. "This generation didn't grow up using cassette players, and to try to explain it to them, in a 40 minute period, is just ridiculous," Ubieta said. Students had problems putting the cassette in, making sure that it was recording when they spoke, and hearing the recording being played.

As the cassette players were not designed to be used with headphones, students would listen to and speak into the recorder. But there was no way to prevent the students from hearing each other speak. "Imagine having 34 students speaking English at the same time. That's 33 interferences with your own concentration. Now imagine doing this in a foreign language. They have no privacy to think," Ubieta said. "The students had a huge disadvantage to other schools in their performance on the exams."

The teachers also had to deal with interference when listening to the recordings, and some said they had difficulty picking out the students'

voices, let alone analyzing their pronunciation and grammar.

The new system allows for complete quiet, for both the student and the teacher. Ubieta says she saw instant improvement from the old system when the students began recording for the first time. "I knew it was a success, because immediately when we did the conversation, there was a smile."

As of now, the portable lab will only be used for AP French and AP Spanish classes. The only other AP language exams administered at Stuyvesant—Chinese and Japanese—require a special system from the College Board, involving computers. The AP Chinese and Japanese exams have experienced their own problems, but will remain separate. (See "Advanced Placement Mandarin and Japanese Exams No Longer Offered," from the June 14, 2011 issue.) The Verbal sections of the Regents Language exams are administered in person by a teacher. Tentative plans have been made to purchase another lab to be used for the Regents if the exams are revised, though there are no plans for the near future.

While the language lab is new and has not yet been used for an actual AP test at Stuyvesant, it is viewed as a preferable alternative to the old system and will be utilized during the upcoming spring AP testing season.

"The language lab is a huge improvement from the old system, the cassette tapes," said Ubieta. "I have great hopes for it."

## Efforts to Form Occupy Wall Street Club Thwarted

**By THOMAS ZADROZNY**

Now entering its third month, the Occupy Wall Street movement has gripped America's attention in major cities, from our nation's capital to Stuyvesant High School.

The movement, which began as a protest on Wall Street with protesters occupying Zuccotti Park, has now spread to all 50 states, along with countries in Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, and even Antarctica. The demonstrations, which started with only a few hundred supporters, have grown enormously in the last few weeks.

In New York City, this is largely due to the involvement of 14 labor unions, including the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), which joined the protesters in Foley Square on October 14. Several Stuyvesant teachers attended the protest, organized by English teacher Megan Breslin, who is the UFT union representative. Ms. Breslin declined to comment. Stuyvesant students have also participated in the protests, including seniors Brendan Carroll and Ben Koatz. Carroll and Koatz, along with a handful of classmates, would travel to Wall Street during their lunch and free periods, as well as after school, to attend the rallies in Zuccotti Park.

Koatz and Carroll have attempted to establish a Stuyvesant chapter of Occupy Wall Street and have held an interest meeting in the park across the street from Stuyvesant's first

floor main entrance. While attendance was scarce, in recent weeks popularity has grown due to the movement's increased media attention nationwide.

The pair officially submitted a charter to the Student Union two weeks ago. The charter outlined a plan to have a Stuyvesant chapter of the movement, which would assist students who wished to participate in the protest. After examining the charter, Student Union (SU) President Edward Cho gave his support for the establishment of an Occupy Wall Street club. "I see no reason why we shouldn't have a Occupy Wall Street club, and if enough students support it, I definitely think there should be one," Cho said.

However, when the SU passed the charter on to Principal Stanley Teitel, the proposal was denied.

While Teitel has no issue with students protesting individually, he does not support school-organized participation. "I don't believe this is something the school should be brought into. [Stuyvesant students] should be participating as individuals," Teitel said. "Just don't say you are Stuyvesant participating. The school is not taking sides."

Teitel's concerns also stem from fears for the safety of students at the protests. The protests, particularly the marches, have experienced a strong response from the New York Police Department, culminating in the Brooklyn Bridge protest on Saturday, October 1. The

protest was broken up and 700 protesters were arrested on charges of disorderly conduct.

Teitel also expressed concern over the lack of faculty supervision. "I have no one down [at Wall Street] supervising, and you get hurt, or arrested," he said. "The next question is, who was in charge? I don't want that coming back to me."

Koatz and Carroll acknowledge that while Teitel is right that the school should not have an opinion on the protests, his decision goes beyond that by preventing the students from organizing a club for protests. "I respect the concerns of the administration for the safety of the students, that's fine," Carroll said. "The administration has made it a little more difficult than necessary to make this club a reality."

Koatz, who was arrested at the September 24th Union Square protest, cites the Vietnam War protests as examples of how students spoke out against the government's actions. While the protests were controversial, the students were allowed to protest in their school after a judge ruled in favor of them. He suggests that the same applies here.

"You can't stop students from doing something because it's controversial, or it looks bad for the school," Koatz said.

Teitel, however, is adamant. "No principal in his right mind would support something that far away from his building without physical faculty support," he said.

Teitel was clear that if a club were established, any activities would have to be held inside the building. The guidelines set up for this club would be that the faculty advisor would act on his or her own discretion.

As a result, Koatz and Carroll have decided to amend

Zuccotti Park, they would be clear that the club would be not be condoning the trip.

"Anyone in our club who went to the protest would be like someone from the confectionary delights club going to the protest, totally of their own volition, and not representing the club nor the school," Koatz said.

While remaining separate from the Occupy Wall Street Movement, Koatz and Carroll plan to model their club on the direct democracy that has been developed by the protesters. The "General Assembly," as it is called, is a non-hierarchical structure of government, where everyone has the opportunity to speak and vote on the issues brought forth. Similarly, Koatz and Carroll as president and vice president would act as facilitators rather than take on an authoritative role.

While disappointed by Teitel's decision, Koatz and Carroll have decided to abide by it, considering the Stuyvesant 99% is a step in the right direction.

They expect students will be excited to join, as the issues that are being protested will play such a significant role in the future. "The argument that the protests don't effect us Stuyvesant students isn't true at all," Carroll said. "We are about to enter into the system where we will be carrying incredible, incredible debt for the rest of our lives. We should have some say in what happens."

**"I don't believe this is something the school should be brought into."**  
—Stanley Teitel,  
Principal

their club, changing their name to the Stuyvesant 99%, disassociating it from the Occupy Wall Street movement, and instead having an apolitical club, which would neither support nor condemn the protest.

"What we are doing as a club is fostering educational discussion of the issues that are being raised by the movement," Koatz said.

The club would welcome discussion from all sides of the issues and work to educate the student base on the issues. While Koatz and Carroll would encourage members to visit

# News

## Math Teacher Richard Geller Passes Away

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work well together. Despite all these medical complications, he went into school to administer a make-up test on Friday afternoon, the last time he was at Stuyvesant.

Geller checked himself into the hospital on Monday, October 24, at the suggestion of Pavlick. Over the weekend, he had experienced trouble breathing. "He was unable to breathe at night except in an upright position sitting at a chair with his head on the table. It broke my heart to see him in this way," Barbara Geller wrote in the e-mail interview.

Geller was hospitalized for the entirety of the following week. "The doctors had recommended hospice care for Richard since his cancer seemed to be progressing rapidly. We initially resisted this option since Richard had just started a new treatment and we were hoping it would be effective in controlling his cancer," Mrs. Geller wrote. "Richard did experience some encouraging improvement with some of his cancer tumors during his week at the hospital, but his cancer was too aggressive and too widespread."

"I was aware during his last week that things were not going well," Principal Stanley

Teitel said. "I knew that there was fluid forming around his lungs and that the doctors felt it necessary to transfer him out of home care and into the hospital full time."

Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara notified Teitel of Geller's passing after receiving a call from Geller's family. "Even though I knew it was coming, it hit me hard. He was a young, vibrant man doing what he loved. It's a terrible loss. Just a terrible, terrible loss," Teitel said.

After hearing the news, Teitel delivered a brief speech over the school's intercom in which he expressed a personal sorrow at the death of a "friend," a "master teacher," and "an iconic member of the Stuyvesant community." He then asked everyone in the building to observe a moment of silence to honor Geller.

The days following Geller's death were marked by an outpouring of appreciation for the man who devoted almost his entire career to the students of Stuyvesant High School. Overnight, Geller's favorite saying, "Math is #1!" sprouted up on posters around the school. Students scrawled the saying onto their hands and wrote it on T-shirts. They also created multiple Facebook groups where people could reminisce about

Geller. A notebook, placed just inside the bridge entrance to the school, was filled with pages upon pages of messages to Geller from students and faculty. The day after his death, footage from Geller's graduation speech to the Class of 2011 played on the television monitor next to the security desk at that same entrance.

"He invested so much of his time in the kids because he loved to see them learn. If he wasn't running a math contest after school, he was running review sessions, or giving a makeup test," math teacher and Math team coach Jim Cocoros said. "If there was ever a time when he left early, it was very rare. At the end of the day when I think of him, I'll always remember his dedication and his passion for teaching."

Students also expressed their admiration for Geller. "Mr. Geller was a great guy, he taught extraordinarily well, and he stressed understanding to an extent that I have never experienced in my life," senior and Student Union Vice President Reema Panjwani said.

Assuming responsibility for Geller's five classes is Stuyvesant alumnus and student teacher John Taylor ('07). He will most likely lead the classes, under the supervision of a certified substitute teacher, until

the end of the fall semester, at which point Teitel hopes to hire someone to work full time.

"We will consider contacting a recent retiree who might be willing to come in and finish the semester. Then we have to see if we can find somebody who would be willing to take on a full semester's work," Teitel said.

Another possibility, if no one steps up to apply for the teaching position, is that cuts will have to be made to accommodate the five classes. "I may reduce the number of children in math team or in math research," Teitel said. "We're still in flux after Richard's death, but it's not because of a lack of funds to hire a new teacher. It's a matter of finding somebody who will meet the math department's expectations and be able to teach the students at the proper level."

"We're all amazed that he wanted to teach until the end. It really was his last wish, to teach. And he died, but he died doing what he loved," math teacher Gary Rubenstein said.

Geller's last spoken words seem to reflect his dedication to teaching. "On Monday night, the last night Richard was alive, his son Jason stayed with him," Mrs. Geller wrote in the e-mail interview. "Jason heard him in a half awake, half asleep state.

Richard muttered something, then said, 'Take one and pass the rest down,' muttered something again, and then said in an animated way, 'Any questions?'

Geller's funeral was held on Friday, November 4, at 11:45 a.m. at Riverside Memorial Chapel. Attendees included the faculties of the math and computer science departments, in addition to other members of the Stuyvesant community. Mrs. Geller invited them to donate money, in lieu of flowers, to a scholarship fund set up in her husband's name. The scholarship will be awarded each year to a senior for accomplishment in mathematics, and will be used to defray the costs of attending college.

Stuyvesant will be holding a ceremony in the Murray Khan Theater to celebrate Geller's life on Wednesday, November 9, at 4:00 p.m. Members of the school choir will sing and a four-person string quartet will perform, after which students will have the opportunity to say a few personal words about what Geller meant to them.

"It's tragic that he had to pass away. And yet, I'm so glad that the Stuyvesant community could pull together to remember him. It's heart-warming," senior Kevin Tang said.

## Seniors Recognized in Siemens Competition

*continued from page 1*

eggs. The packing density is the fraction of area filled by these disks, such that they remain within the edges and do not overlap. The covering density is the fraction of area covered by the disks with minimal overlap. He then found the range of the product of the two densities.

"You [just] need basic geometry," Kim said. "But to really grasp the topic and get deeper into it, you need to use vectors and all these other geometry power tools."

During the spring of this year, Kim found out about the competition and looked for ideas to research in his free time. "A lot of [Stuyvesant students] have participated in [research]," he said. "Doing research is a good way to go into math, understand complex topics."

Hofstra University professor Dan Ismailescu, Kim's mentor, wrote a paper on packing and covering densities. Ismailescu helped him clarify his research topic. "He wanted me to expand on his idea," Kim said. "He gave me general ways to go, and I followed it."

Students should not come up with ideas alone, according to Research Coordinator and biology teacher Dr. Jonathan Gastel. "There is no start to their projects or where they get their ideas," he said. "Only later do they get ideas that are driven by the data themselves."

Kim worked on his project in September for "around 20 hours per week," he said. "Progress comes really quickly in research projects. Most of the research project is getting your topic and trying out different ways to see if it'll work."

However, for two weeks Kim struggled with proving the high-

est value of the product. "We couldn't make any progress," he said. Although the number itself was intuitive, "finding the right method and equations [to prove the number] was very hard, but we did some heavy manipulation to find the right method," he said.

An application of his research would be optimizing cellphone coverage for telephone companies. Starting with a hexagon with convex disks, radio towers could employ this shape to solve the problem of covering density, which would increase the places in the country that would have a signal.

Kim also cited improvements in packaging for manufacturers. Packing density helps determine how to put the most copies of an item into a package.

"My research places bounds on both of these numerical densities, which these companies can then use accordingly," Kim said.

Kim plans to major in either pure or applied mathematics and become an engineer or a mathematician.

Fan, who also incorporated mathematics into her research project, submitted a biology paper titled, "Root Nutrient Foraging: A Morphometric Approach to Quantifying the Developmental Plasticity Space of *Arabidopsis* Ecotypes in Laboratory and Natural Environments." Her project focused on the ability of plants to obtain key nutrients and water from their environment.

She started researching this topic during the spring term of her sophomore year, when she decided to look further into the theory that the steady increase in population would increase food demand and, consequently, cause a sharp increase in the

price of food. Intrigued by the possibility of preventative measures, she sought methods that might be "applicable to making agricultural production more sustainable in the long term through genetic engineering," she said.

**"It really is a great experience. People feel driven. And it just goes to show that kids can accomplish things, great things."**

**—Angela Fan, senior**

Fan became a frequent visitor of the New York University (NYU) library when she was coming up with ideas for her research. This library was also a valuable resource when Fan found her project would be greatly aided by courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science and AP Calculus, classes that were not available to sophomores such as herself. By teaching herself the necessary concepts through the books and resources available at the NYU library, she was able to resolve a majority of these problems.

Fan looks back at studying on her own with a positive attitude. "In school, especially here

at Stuy, we take many subjects, but the problem is that they all seem very [...] separate," she said. "Through this project, I realized the integration between subjects like chemistry, comp sci, and calculus."

Fan's mentor, Angelica Cibrian-Jaramillo, Assistant Professor of the National Lab for Genomics of Biodiversity, helped her with the project. "[Our goal was] to guide Angela in her work, help with the interpretation of her results, and teach her the skills she needed for her project," Cibrian-Jaramillo wrote in an e-mail interview. "Also to motivate her to continue exploring her interest in science."

With Cibrian-Jaramillo's aid, Fan dedicated three to four days a week, as well as time during the summer, to lab work. Her research consisted of utilizing computer programs to chart and analyze the responses of the root architecture when plants are subjected to different soil environments. She also used linear algebra techniques and was aided by mathematics teacher Jim Cocoros in her research.

The varying treatments of nitrogen, auxin, and cytokinin in the soil showed that roots have a highly plastic property and can alter their shape to best accommodate their surrounding environment, which allows the plant to maximize the probability of survival in that environment. Fan's goal involved identification of the genes that allowed this change of the root architecture in these different environments.

Fan found that in the model plant *Arabidopsis Thaliana*, the gene ABG responds to the stimulus of auxin, cytokinin, and nitrogen, and is responsible for shifts in lateral root archi-

tecture. Future alterations of this gene would help in the creation of genetically-engineered crops. More research on the gene could enable scientists to control the root architecture within crops and consequently engineer these plants to ensure their survival.

This experience has reinforced Fan's interest in biochemistry and she hopes to continue working within the lab in college. "It really is a great experience," Fan said. "People feel driven. It just goes to show that kids can accomplish things, great things."

Dr. Gastel, who oversaw Fan's project, shares a similar enthusiasm for this competition. "[The competition] allows you to study up problems in depth to the point in which you bring new knowledge to the world," he said. "What students should find exciting is that there's both a theoretical component to their projects and a component of application. Both [Kim and Fan's] projects have an application in the world, the purpose of improving, making better or making cheaper things that we want to do."

While the Siemens Foundation funds the competition, the College Board provides the prestigious math, science, and technology scholarship awards ranging from 1,000 dollars to 100,000 dollars to these young adult competitors. In recognition of his achievement, Kim was awarded 3,000 dollars.

As a regional finalist, Kim will be advancing to the next stage of the competition and will present his research against other competitors across the nation. He will attend the regional finals in Carnegie Mellon University in November.

## DOE Gives Stuyvesant a “C” for School Environment

By LINDSAY BU  
and NABANITA HOSSAIN

Stuyvesant High School received an overall grade of “A” on the 2010-2011 Department of Education (DOE) progress report, which was released on October 24, 2011. This grade is based on the total of all scores obtained in three categories: student progress, student performance, and school environment. The only noticeable change from last year was that Stuyvesant received a lower grade in the School Environment category, dropping from a B to a “C,” earning 8.5 points out of the maximum of 15.

First used in 2007, the DOE progress reports help parents, teachers, principals, and school communities understand schools’ strengths and weaknesses, according to their web site. Progress and performance scores are based on how well a school does compared to other schools with similar statistics, like the number of minority students and the number of students on free lunch. School environment scores are based on surveys conducted on students, faculty, and parents. The answers to the surveys are then compared with answers from students, faculty, and parents from peer schools.

From all the data collected, the DOE creates a mean, or average, score. Then, a numerical standard deviation is calculat-

ed. A standard deviation measures how close the numbers in a data set are, and can be either above or below the mean. When comparing a school to its peer schools, the DOE takes into account how far away that school’s score is from the mean score in a category.

According to some, however, this system of using standard deviations and means makes the disparity between schools seem significantly greater than it actually is. According to mathematics teacher Gary Rubinstein, the standard deviation used in this grading system is so small that even if a school is only two standard deviations below the mean, its scores could be disproportionately low.

Rubinstein first became interested in analyzing the annual DOE progress reports after reading an article published in The New York Times about P.S.84, the Lillian Weber School. P.S. 84 received an F on its report despite its reputation as a good school. Using the actual report cards and database available on the DOE website, Rubinstein analyzed the accuracy of the 26 calculations that go into the final score, which is between 0 to 100, and is translated into a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

Through his research, he found three major flaws in the grading system that, he believes, make the progress scores issued

by the DOE invalid: the assumption that if a school is two standard deviations away from the mean, it is a lot worse than its peer schools; the oversimplification of the method by which peer schools are created; and the method by which progress scores are calculated, which give unfair benefits to schools with higher baseline scores. Progress is calculated through probability. For instance, if in one school, a student has a one in five chance of passing a Regents examination, that school gets five points toward their progress score for every student who passes a Regents exam. In Stuyvesant, since most students pass all their Regents exams, the school only gets 1.6 points for every passing score. This means that if all students passed all of their Regents exams, the highest possible average score Stuyvesant would get would be 1.6. The average progress score of the peer group that Stuyvesant is in is 1.2. Because Stuyvesant fell below the mean, it received a “B” in the progress section.

In a normal peer group, schools are supposed to have 20 schools above and 20 schools below them [in terms of their scores]. In our [Stuyvesant’s] peer group, we only have 20 schools below us, since we’re the top school,” principal Stanley Teitel said. “Everybody below us has a better opportunity to do better than we do. If you fall below the

mean even a little, it looks like you’ve done very poorly.”

“The worst thing about the progress scores is that they seem to be set up to make that predetermined 3% of schools that are going to get Fs get them with extremely low-seeming scores. When someone has to be punished, even though everyone does well, it doesn’t give schools any way of improving,” Rubinstein said in a blog post on his TeachForUs blog.

In addition, schools are also graded unfairly through the use of surveys, which account for the school environment grade on the DOE progress report.

“Almost all of our students filled out the surveys. The faculty had an opportunity to fill it out and 90 percent of them did,” Teitel said.

However, some parents do not fill out the survey, while others haphazardly fill it out, not knowing the consequences.

[Stuyvesant] mailed surveys home to parents. Only 25 percent of parents filled out the surveys and sent them in,” Teitel said. “That’s why we received a ‘C.’

If students, teachers, and parents in one group of peer schools give their schools a five, while a couple other parents give their schools a four, the schools with fours will receive far fewer points than schools with fives, since they are not near the mean, which will

be closer to a five.

“The environment grade based on parent surveys is something that can easily be manipulated. The principals get the forms and they don’t really have to give them to the parents. I have heard of cases where principals have filled those out for themselves, guaranteeing them nearly 15 points of environment—out of the 15 already—while simultaneously hurting their peers,” Rubinstein said.

Stuyvesant’s “C” for school environment concerned some people, but some students feel that the grade can be justified.

“The school itself is really big, so it doesn’t foster a learning environment or a sense of personal creativity,” junior Mariana Gurevich said.

Others felt that the grade was undeserved.

“There are a lot of competitive students, which puts a lot of pressure on other students. But I don’t think that means we deserve a ‘C.’” junior Jahwa Hossain said.

“I’m not concerned about [the scores from the progress report],” Teitel said. “I’m more concerned with getting students to graduate. Most students graduate in four years and are earning more credits than they need to earn their high school diploma. I haven’t lost any sleep over these scores.”

## Features

### From Plasmids to Proteins: Sophomore Biology Electives



Dr. John Utting teaches a sophomore Molecular Biology class.

By REBECCA GAEBLER  
and TEN-YOUNG GUH

One of Stuyvesant’s main selling points at open house events is the wide variety and excellent quality of the school’s science electives. Two of the best known are the Molecular Biology sequence and the Genetics Research course. Many students, however, do not know what they are getting into when they sign up online.

Every day during periods six through eight, two sections of sophomores meet in Room 730 to learn molecular biology techniques, read papers on major experiments, and write lab reports. The Molecular Science elective, taught by biology teachers Anne Manwell and Dr. John Utting, is offered every fall, while its counterpart, Molecular Genetics, is offered in the spring.

To be selected for the sequence, a student must submit an application, which entails an essay explaining his passion for

research science, in the spring of their freshman year. Applicants must also have a minimum average of 93 in Living Environment.

One of the many techniques taught in the course is the use of Methylene Blue dilution series, which is used to “stain,” or mark, a gene so that it may be tracked throughout the later stages of an experiment in order to identify intercellular transfer of genes.

Another technique uses recombinant DNA technology to insert a gene for fluorescence into Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria. The E. coli is then allowed to multiply under appropriate conditions. An observable glow of the E. coli signifies successful transformation of the gene.

Although most students enjoy the class, it is not without its challenges. Students are responsible for completing detailed lab reports for each experiment—a big responsibility for students who have only recently become familiar with the laboratory environment.

Junior Zambeta Tsapos, who took the class last year, explained that instructions for experiments are often explained only once, and handouts with directions are not always provided, often leaving students to conduct experiments with only their personal notes as guides.

Students found the labs both stressful and rewarding. “It became difficult when time was an issue, and there’s also the pressure to not make mistakes and mess up. But there was also something very exciting, fulfilling, and rewarding about that,” Junior Helen Nie said.

Nonetheless, the class struggled together and had a good time. “The fact that we all had to collaborate and work closely alongside other students ended up inevitably pulling all of us closer,” Tsapos said.

Nie liked the hands-on parts and nontraditional classroom approach. “Instead of reading about experiments, we could actually do them ourselves,” Nie said.

Both Nie and Tsapos felt that they came out of the course with new perspectives on lab work. “It told me something about preparing for things in advance and staying focused during a task. When I didn’t prepare enough for a lab, I usually ended up very confused, but when I did prepare and stayed focused on each step of the lab, it was a lot of fun,” Nie said.

“[Molecular Biology] gave me a more realistic perspective on science and how things were conducted in a laboratory, albeit not always perfectly,” said Tsapos.

Many scientifically oriented students have also enjoyed Genetics Research, an AP Biology prerequisite taught by biology teacher Dr. Maria Nedwidek in the fall. Nedwidek also teaches Medical Human Genetics in the spring.

The class covers Mendelian genetics, gene interaction, and molecular biology. “We start with Mendel, because it has brought applications to general approaches to crosses, to human genetics and pedigrees, and Punnett squares,” Dr. Nedwidek said. “Things we discuss with Mendel we apply to every other unit in the class.”

**“Understanding the entirety of the genome is critical to understanding the formation of human disease.”**

—Dr. Maria Nedwidek,  
biology teacher

According to Dr. Nedwidek, gene interaction “gets pretty complicated, because we talk about mapping genes and how we examine genes at the genetic, analytic level,” she said.

The class culminates with a

project in which students analyze their own DNA. Nedwidek said that students find this project exciting; in fact, this was what attracted sophomore Lily Yuan, who currently takes the class.

Yuan completed the project on a Saturday at school, but past students traditionally took a trip

on a school day to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Citing “financial reasons and logistical concerns,” Nedwidek arranged for a kit to arrive at school so students could work on the project there instead.

After attending a workshop, students who attended the trip copied their DNA in order to find their ALU sequences and compared their class results. An ALU sequence, a kind of a jumping gene, is a DNA sequence that can move itself to a new position in a cell’s DNA. The location and number of ALU insertions in a person’s genome correlate with ethnicity, so students used a National Institute of Health (NIH) database to see which ethnicity their results matched.

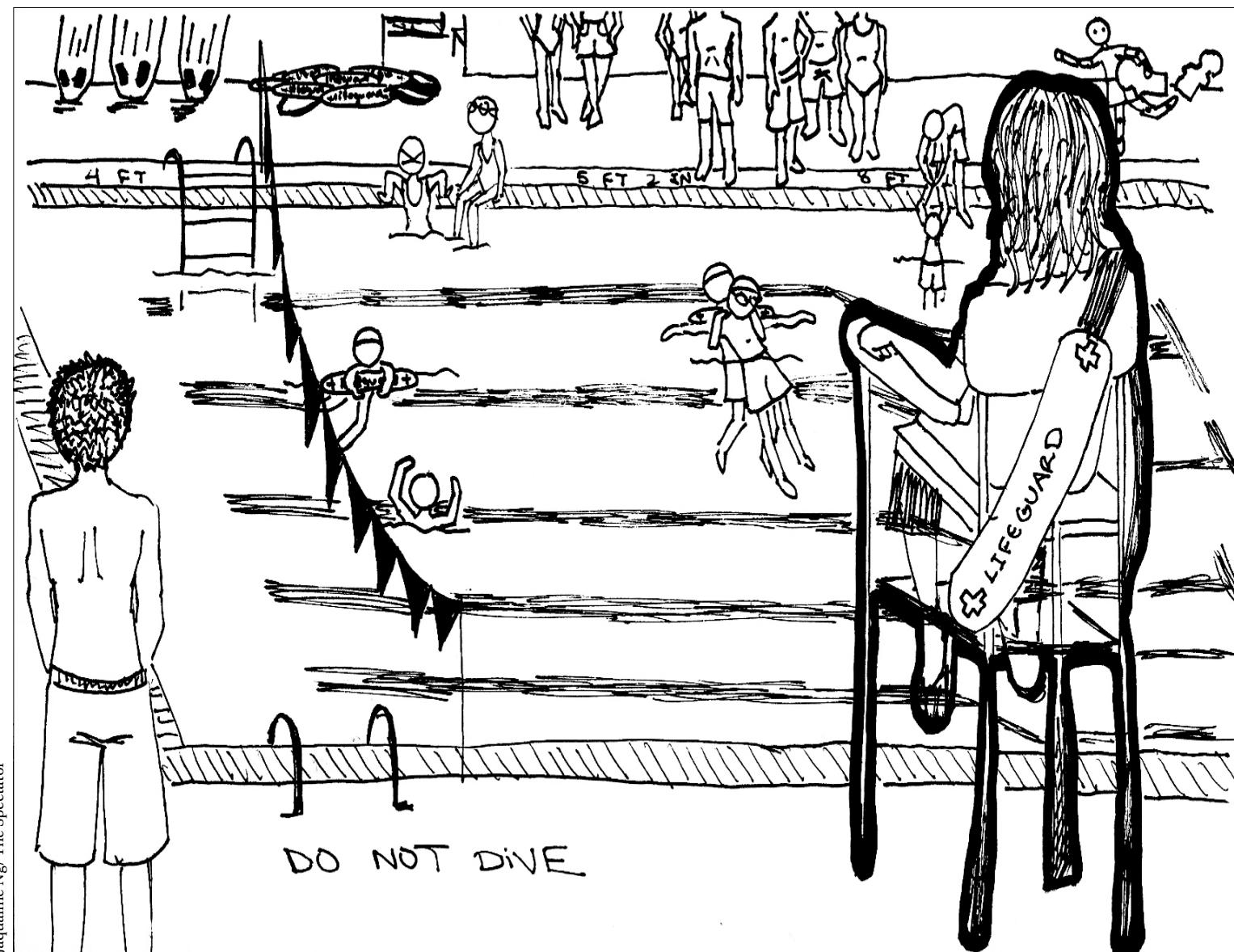
Nedwidek’s electives are marked by her attention to detail and thorough use of preparatory material. Depending on the day and topic, Nedwidek sometimes sends her notes via e-mail to her students beforehand. “I try to prepare them ahead of time for what we’re going to be doing, so they know a few days in advance,” she said.

To Dr. Nedwidek, the purpose of the class depends on the student. “Some students are taking it to fulfill the science elective requirement,” she said. “But more students take it, because they want a more detailed knowledge of how genetic analysis is done, what genetics really is, [...] and why genetics is important. Understanding the entirety of the genome is critical to understanding the formation of human disease.”

Senior Jamie Zhan suggests a more personal purpose to the class. “It teaches us who we are and how we got here,” he said. “Self-discovery in the most literal sense.”

# Features

## Poolside Practices



Jaqueline Ng/The Spectator

By KAVERI SENGUPTA

Every morning during first period, senior Eric Li sits up on the high chair beside the Stuyvesant pool, and lifeguards a Swim Gym class. He observes the students' every move, ensuring that they remain safe in the pool and occasionally enters the pool to assist a swim teacher in demonstration.

Li, who became certified for the job in the fall of last year in Stuyvesant's lifeguarding physical education class, greatly enjoyed his class experience. "It's definitely fun learning how to lifeguard with your classmates and friends," Li said.

Stuyvesant's lifeguarding class, taught by physical education teachers Peter Bologna and Anetta Luczak, is offered to both juniors and seniors, though the class is much more popular with juniors.

Martha Singer, former Assistant Principal Health and Physical Education, began and taught the lifeguarding program at Stuyvesant before Bologna and Luczak. "The lifeguarding class was probably started to help students get certified prior to the summer, so that they have a chance to work as a lifeguard," Bologna said. "There are exceptional swimmers that go to this school. Even swimmers that are not on the team are exceptional swimmers, and they should have an outlet to take an elective that they would like that also helps out with their school-based needs, like getting credit." Stuyvesant also charges a significantly lower amount of money to certify lifeguards than other agencies do.

"It's such a great opportunity for these kids to have the life-saving skills, and then if they are very good, and they get certified, then they can actually get a job and apply it to the real world," physical edu-

cation teacher Silvana Choy said. "There are a lot of very strong swimmers in this school. I teach a sophomore [swim] class, and I'm so impressed [by their abili-

ing to receive physical education credit for taking the class. "If you come to class and you do everything that's required, you're doing what's required for Phys. Ed. Certification's a different exam. You're not risking summer school," Choy said.

The class is taught based on requirements set forth by the American Red Cross. "Some of it is lecture, some of it is showing the video that the Red Cross has made already and demonstrations and practice," Bologna said. "Unfortunately, it's an every other day class, so it's very tough [to finish the curriculum in one semester]."

Even with the time constraint, most students do complete the requirements. "If I had to put a percentage on it, probably two-thirds of the class passes, usually," Bologna said. "To be certified, the lifeguard has to pass three written exams that the Red Cross makes. They are based on the book that the Red Cross puts out for lifeguards. Two of them pertain mainly to lifeguarding in general, and then the third one is mainly about CPR and [the use of automated external defibrillators]. It's a dual certification. And then they also have to pass three practical exams in the water, which [consist of] retrieving different types of victims and administering care."

Of course, accidents can happen. "In my lifeguard certification class, it was during Regents week and I was testing everybody to pass the class, because I ran out of time [in the school year]. During a test, a girl was saving the dummy—I have a full-size dummy—from the bottom of the pool," Bologna said. "She didn't make it all the way up, and she passed out underwater. So the girl that was in the pool taking the test with her and being a lifeguard too, she went down and grabbed her

**"The lifeguarding class was probably started to help students get certified prior to summer, so that they have a chance to work as a lifeguard."**  
—Peter Bologna, physical education teacher

ties]. Most of my sophomores can take lifeguarding next year; they're very, very strong."

While many choose to, students are not required to gain certification in lifeguard-

and I was on deck and we both removed her properly and then we woke her up, and she wound up being fine." These mishaps are very rare. Bologna has never had to enter the water at Stuyvesant due to an accident.

The school asks that lifeguards volunteer during Swim Gym lessons, because lifeguards must be present during the classes. "You need a teacher and a lifeguard on deck at all [class times] times according to the Department of Health," Bologna said.

Stuyvesant lifeguards are paid for their work. "We are fortunate enough to reimburse them for the amount that we charge to certify lifeguards here," Bologna said. Students are required to buy books and other materials for lifeguarding classes, and Stuyvesant pays them back for these purchases through a salary.

"At the end of the semester for every class, every cycle you lifeguard for, you get \$90," said senior Sharon Romero, who took a lifeguarding course outside of Stuyvesant in February during her sophomore year. She began lifeguarding at Stuyvesant in the 2010 Spring Term.

Senior Cynthia Lock, who took a lifeguarding course at Queens College during spring break her sophomore year, does not find her 6th period lifeguarding job to be very stressful, because her class itself is a lifeguarding class. "They all know how to swim, so it's not difficult for me," she said. "If you know that the kids aren't good at swimming, then definitely you'll be cautious. But if you know that the swimmers are comfortable and they swim regularly, then you don't have as much pressure."

This term, 16 lifeguards are on hand to lifeguard each Swim Gym and lifeguarding session. "Some people are do-

ing both sections, A and B, of Phys Ed. Some are just doing A or just doing B," Bologna said.

During Swim Gym, lifeguards usually remain on deck, at times entering the water. "Sometimes I get into the pool, because my period has two lifeguards, so it alternates: I'll get into the pool or I'll be out lifeguarding," Romero said. Those out of the pool may sit on the high chair or walk on deck holding a rescue tube in order to observe the whole pool.

"Basically their job is to make sure everybody stays safe, to glance around and make sure everybody's still around while the teacher specifically speaks to the class or to a student," Bologna said.

After students have passed the lifeguarding exams, they are certified to lifeguard at any type of pool in any location. "This past summer I lifeguarded for the city near Houston Street," Romero said. "It was really fun and rewarding."

Li believes the merits of knowing how to lifeguard extend beyond the pool. "My favorite part is watching the kids swim, knowing that if anything were to, God forbid, happen, you would be able to help them out," Li said. "With the lifeguard certification you have a CPR certification as well, and those are pretty valuable skills to learn. Let's say you find yourself on the street and a loved one or someone

**"My favorite part is watching the kids swim, knowing that if anything were to, God forbid, happen, you would be able to help them out."**

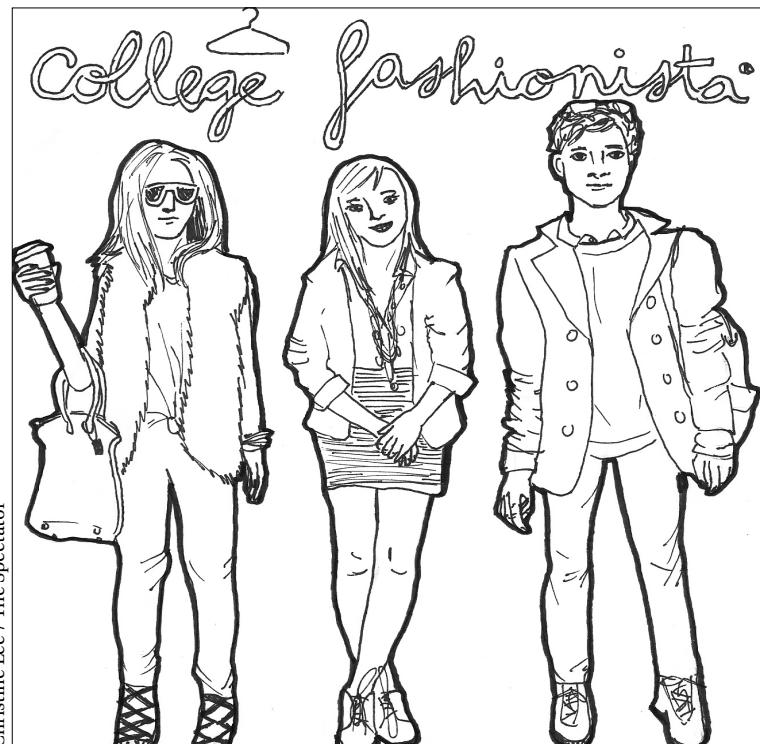
—Eric Li, senior

you know starts choking. You know what to do to help them."

Romero agreed. "My favorite part of it is the people you get to meet. I get along really well with all the students I get to lifeguard, so that's a plus. I work with the swim gym teachers too; they're very nice," Romero said. "You're helping out and you get rewarded for helping out too, so it's a win-win situation."

## Features

### The New Style of Today's Generation



Christine Lee / The Spectator

**By ALIYA TUZHILIN**

Though style is said to be an experimental art form that is unique to each individual, having a source of inspiration can be helpful. That is why Amy Levin, a fashion and business graduate from Indiana University, founded collegefashionista.com, an online blog that documents fashion trends on over 200 college campuses around the country and on campuses in 13 other countries around the world.

CollegeFashionista runs on the posts uploaded by Style Gurus, interns for the company who attend a college covered by

the Web site. The posts include a photo of the student wearing the featured outfit, and commentary on how to incorporate the fashion trend into the reader's wardrobe. In addition, people who become members of the site receive emails with information about contests, events, and discounts that collegefashionista.com is privy to.

Each day of the week represents a new topic that the Gurus must write about. Monday is style advice day, when a fashion tip is given to help people start their week off. Tuesday is Lets Hear it for the Boys day, which focuses on men's fashion. On Wednesday the Gurus feature

fashionable students in the Fashionista/o Spotlight, while Thursday's All About Beauty topic focuses on runway trends that are seen on campuses. Friday is dedicated to the Accessories Report and Fashion from Abroad.

When her blog picked up at her university, Levin decided to turn it into a company, naming it CollegeFashionista. Her goal was to "create a community for college students to come and to contribute street-style, photography, and helpful hints on how to get style on a budget," Levin said.

"College is such a cool time, because it's the student's first chance, when they're away from home, when they're really expressing themselves," Levin said.

Junior Izzi Clark, who describes her personal style as "vintage-y, but not over the top," agreed. "A lot of style blogs are too hipster. They have a very narrow perspective on fashion, whereas this is all-encompassing. It's from colleges all over the country," Clark said. Though she says that "some of [the style] is kind of plain, I guess, and not particularly interesting" she believes that she will use the site for outfit inspiration when she gets to college.

Her favorite outfit on the site is a duffle coat with toggle buttons over a floral print button-down shirt, with leggings tucked into brown leather boots and high socks peeking out. "I really like fall colors and clothes like this [...] and I love

the whole socks-sticking-out-of-the-boots thing," Clark said.

Junior Clarissa Sorenson believes the site will be useful and inspiring as well. "I could see the trending choices at my college," Sorenson said. "It's probably pretty different around the country." In addition, Sorenson said, "Instead of showing skinny models or people who are following a trend it shows people who are real-life trend setters."

While talking about her favorite outfit on the site, which was called "Red, Orange and Yellow, No Need to Feel Mellow" sophomore Eugenia Sanchez expressed a similar sentiment. "It was an accessible, affordable and realistic look that could work for many types of girls," Sanchez said.

Speaking of the site in general, Sanchez said, "Some of the style choices were definitely interesting and refreshing. I wouldn't necessarily wear all the outfits they portrayed, but it's a good Web site because it presents accessible fashion. These aren't runway looks, nor are they particularly avant-garde [...] And that's fine. Everyday looks almost never are."

"I wish they had a bit more variety in the types of style they portrayed, but this is definitely one of the best fashion blogs I have read recently," she said.

As a Web site that not limited to fashion in the United States, collegefashionista.com lets readers see clothing trends in other parts of the world. People can see what kind of trends

are followed in countries like India where "there's a lot of vibrant colors and it's just kind of a different feel," Levin said, or in Australia, where "just because they're on a different season, the trends are different." The Web site also covers the fashion on college campuses in South America, the Philippines, and Europe.

According to some students, the Web site can be a useful tool. "As a high schooler, you're looking at many colleges, and though it's not the most important factor, you can get an idea of the vibe at each college," Sorenson said.

However, Levin thinks that the people who frequent her site do not have to be college students. "I always wanted to, you know, look to the older generation for inspiration for my wardrobe, and I think this site allows high school students to have good role models, [...] to look up to these students on collegefashionista who aren't dressed risqué. They can kind of use that to achieve their wardrobe," Levin said.

Levin is now planning for the future of her Web site. "My goal is to continue to expand. We're at a ton of campuses, but there are many other campuses that we haven't conquered yet. We also want to continue to give to the community of college students who are passionate about fashion, passionate about photography, to position them so that they are able to get a job in the industry," Levin said.

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## Features

### Remembering Richard Geller



Courtesy of Barbara Geller

Richard Geller with the Stuyvesant Math Team.

**By ARIELLE GERBER  
and CHRISTINE LEE**

Math teacher Richard Geller was famed for his catch phrase, "Math is #1," and spoken of by students throughout the years as a strict, but excellent teacher. Though he passed away on Tuesday, November 1, after a prolonged battle with melanoma cancer, current and former students, faculty, and friends say his passion for mathematics, and devotion to students will not be forgotten.

"This was a man admired, well-liked, respected, just incredible," math teacher Dawn Vollaro said.

Geller was a teacher for many years. He came to Stuyvesant in 1982 after spending 13 years teaching math at Junior High School 143 and one at Intermediate School 144. He soon became an influential staff member, serving as the head of the acclaimed Stuyvesant math team for nearly 20 years, spearheading curricula changes, and helping introduce graphing calculators into the classroom. In recent years, he taught Algebra II/Trigonometry and was one of the assistant coaches for the math team.

"Nobody loved teaching as much as him," math teacher Gary Rubenstein said. "He was really most comfortable in the classroom, even more than when he was in the teachers' lounge talking."

Over the duration of his ca-

reer, he was repeatedly recognized for excellence in teaching. He was the recipient of the Mathematics Association of America's Edyth May Sliffe

**"He was a dedicated, supportive, professional math teacher, but he was also something of a paternal figure to me."**  
**—Edward Cho, senior**

Award for Distinguished High School Mathematics Teaching, and the New York State Mathematics League's Kalfus Award for math coaching. More re-

cently, the Education Update magazine selected him as one of the 2011 Outstanding Teachers of the Year.

Though Geller quickly was known throughout the school for his rigorous, no-nonsense teaching style, many of his students left his class not only intimidated, but also inspired.

"The first day I walked into his class, I thought he was really strict," said senior and Student Union President Edward Cho, who was in Geller's math team class as a freshman. "Within a week, I realized that he had a rough exterior, but he was a really soft-spoken guy. He had a kind heart."

Many students noted how Geller attempted to help his students both inside and outside the classroom. "He would always go out of his way to check up on me," Cho said. "He was a dedicated, supportive, professional math teacher, but he was also something of a paternal figure to me."

Students from decades before expressed similar sentiments. English teacher Annie Thoms, who graduated from Stuyvesant in 1993, was a student of Geller during her sophomore and junior years. "Mr. Geller was extraordinarily clear and passionate," Thoms said. "So much so that it was impossible not to respond to that passion."

While Thoms acknowledged that his intensity could be "frightening," she said, "You always knew that it came from

an extraordinarily high set of standards."

Geller's not only impacted his students, but also the teachers who worked with him.

"The first day I met him, as a student teacher, I had a question to ask him and started calling him 'Mr. Geller,'" math teacher Ashvin Jaishankar said. "He looked up at me and said, 'My name is Richard. You're not my student.' It made me feel like an equal, even though I had never taught."

Both students and faculty members recalled how Geller held tutoring sessions for his own students the day before every test, staying late to ensure they understood the material. "He's definitely influenced me as a teacher," Jaishankar said. "I admired his willingness to sit with any student that came to him with any difficulties. I make a point to follow that every day."

Outside of the classroom, Geller was "a fun-loving guy," Principal Stanley Teitel said. During vacations, he took many bike trips through Europe and America with his wife, Barbara Geller, and posted the photos on the walls of his classroom afterward. Alongside one set of photos, he wrote a paragraph-long description of an exquisite meal he had eaten, since he enjoyed eating fine foods and was a gourmet chef himself.

Furthermore, Geller was an avid sports fan. "I'd see him the day after the Giants or the Rangers won, and he was just

as excited then as he was about teaching," Jaishankar said. "Whatever he was into, he was so excited that he couldn't help but let others see it and be excited as well."

Even while undergoing strenuous treatment, Geller's dedication shone through, as he continued teaching until only a week and a half before his death.

Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara said, "He told me close to the day of his death that 'the only time I don't think about my pain or my troubles is when I'm teaching.'"

Even when he was incapacitated by his illness, educating remained one of his top priorities. "My last interaction with him was last week, when he was at home and he had these tests that he had graded and wanted me to give to his students," Rubenstein said soon after Geller's death. "That's what he was doing a week ago. He was grading tests."

"He showed great courage in coming back this far knowing his medical situation," Teitel said. "This was where he wanted to be. This is what he loved, and he thought he might as well be doing what he wants to do: teaching math."

Though Geller is gone, col-

**"This was where he wanted to be. This is what he loved, and he thought he might as well be doing what he wants to do: teaching math."**  
**—Stanley Teitel,  
Principal**

leagues and students say his memory will endure. "I'm very grateful to him," Jaishankar said. "I hope that wherever he is now, he's continuing to impress on other people that

**30**

**437**

**69**

**16**

**17**

Number of Years Mr. Geller Taught at Stuyvesant

Mr. Geller's Classroom

Total Number of Photographs in Mr. Geller's Classroom

Number of Places Shown in Mr. Geller's Classroom Trip Photos

Number of Posters for Mr. Geller Hanging on the Fourth Floor

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## Features

# Science at Stuy: Do Different Tracks Mean Different Outcomes?

By ARIELLE GERBER

Each spring, an ever-growing number of eighth graders fill out the same form, confirming that Stuyvesant is their school of choice. They mark their language and science preferences, sometimes deliberately, sometimes on a whim, and hope for the best. However, what most middle school students fail to realize is that the freshman science class in which they are placed will shape their schedules throughout high school.

Sophomore science electives are, for the most part, dependent upon what science class is taken in freshman year. While there are environmental studies and a few earth science electives, such as Geology, most science electives available to sophomores are biology-based, and thus cannot be taken until biology has been completed – whenever that may be.

[Taking freshman physics] makes it hard to get into any biology electives," science teacher Anne Manwell said. "You can get into earth science electives, but you really can't take any bio electives until senior year."

Many science electives popular among sophomores, such as Molecular Biology, are off-limits to sophomores who took physics in freshman year. Because two terms of science electives are required to graduate, this poses the risk of putting some students at a disadvantage, since they may have to wait until senior year to take their required electives.

Physics-based electives are few in number and, except for AP Physics B, are only available to juniors or seniors. Furthermore, with limited seats in each class, some students may be left, semester after semester, with no elective science classes.

**"If you really like physics, you can become very advanced by the time you leave high school."**

—Dr. Jonathan Gastel, biology teacher

However, freshman physics is not without its advantages.

"You get to actually understand what's going on," said junior Alex Ching, who took physics freshman year. While he did not take any science electives sophomore year, he still thinks he made the right choice by

starting with physics instead of biology. "Physics does a lot to explain chemistry," Ching said, "and then chem. explains bio and organic chemistry later. It works well that way."

Chemistry classes at Stuyvesant explore some physics concepts, such as magnetic attraction and basic quantum mechanics, and having knowledge of physics beforehand may help students understand how these concepts relate to chemistry. Biology classes, in turn, explore some concepts from chemistry, so taking the classes in that order may, eventually, produce academic advantages.

The benefits are not necessarily limited to the classroom. Members of certain science-based extracurricular activities, such as the Science Olympiad for Technology, while able to participate without it, may benefit from taking physics early.

"As far as [Science Olympiad for Technology] goes, I feel like it would have been helpful," junior Kenneth Wang said. "It's not necessary for the club but it would have helped."

"The longer you think about a subject, the better off you are," biology and science research teacher Dr. Jonathan Gastel said. "If you really like physics, you can become very advanced by the time you leave high school."

However, Dr. Gastel said, the benefits may not apply to every student. "Some people will benefit, but some won't," Dr. Gastel said. "We have some ideas and

we can give people some advice about which to choose...but [physics is] a harder class."

The benefits, Dr. Gastel said, are best for students with more aptitude for mathematics. "Aptitude exams can predict math aptitude, but they don't per-

herently easier to grasp than physics. "The advantage of biology is that the animal is right there in front of you," Manwell said. "It's more concrete than it is abstract. Students might not be able to handle the level of abstractness in physics in their freshman year."

Different students learn differently. Some are more visual learners and respond best to more concrete, observable examples, and may stand more to gain from taking biology first. Others work better with numbers and equations, and thus may stand more to gain from taking physics first. Whatever the inclinations of the student, many do not consider, when filling out that form in eighth grade, what impact their decision will have on the electives they are allowed to take. Those who do not feel particularly inclined either way – and who are aware of their options – may end up taking biology freshman year because it offers more elective choices.

"There should be more physics electives," Ching said. "We have such a strong math department, and the physics complements what we learn in math."

With foresight and planning, and with the help of guidance counselors and assistant principals, many students are eventually able to take the classes they want to, whether they include Neurobiology or Astronomy—but there is no guarantee.

**"The advantage of biology is that the animal is right there in front of you."**

—Anne Manwell, biology teacher

fectly predict whether or not a student will succeed in physics," Dr. Gastel said. "There's a learning element, and [success partially depends upon] how fast you can learn. Only a certain number of students meet both requirements."

Other teachers agreed that biology was, in some ways, in-

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## Features

# The Daily Life of a Military Academy Attendee



Linda Cai / The Spectator

**By LILY LIN**

For many, the term "military service" evokes an image of order, obedience, authority, and perhaps even fear. However, such perceptions have failed to deter individuals such as Rachel Kim ('09), who has known from an early age that she wanted to serve her country. In recent years, other Stuyvesant students have followed suit, forgoing the traditional college experience to attend a military academy. Saungwon Ko ('11) enrolled at the United States Naval Academy because of his love of the sea and memorable experience at the six-day United States Naval Academy Summer Seminar. Lauren Ng ('11) has a similar story; indifferent to the idea of military academies beforehand, she fell in love with West Point after just one week at the Summer Leaders Seminar. However, for many students, what military academy attendees do on a daily basis once they enroll is completely unknown.

### Saungwon Ko – United States Naval Academy

Even though the first classes at the United States Naval Academy (USNA) do not begin until 7:55 a.m., its students, including Saungwon Ko, are up and working long before that. As excellent physical conditioning is expected from each and every cadet, they are expected to be ready by 5:30 a.m. for the 40-minute-long mandatory workout. These workouts can be every day or every other day, depending on the staff in charge of the training regiment. However, no matter the company, the training is nothing short of intense. A workout day could start with lunges along the perimeter of the football field, followed by sprints, pull-ups, push-ups, and crunches, all in rapid succession. The more strict companies might ask students to also run around the campus, practice ground fighting, or do calisthenics.

The morning workouts are not the sole time where students at the USNA have to do physical exercise. For Physical Education, students are given the choice between a full semester of wrestling, or half a semester of wrestling and half a semester of swimming. Later on in the day, students have

time to practice a particular sport during the athletic reserve period.

"It's almost exactly what I had expected," said Ko, referring to his school. "It is challenging both physically and academically."

The 50-minute classes start early in the morning, but schedules change depending on the day of the week. For example, Ko has Calculus, Japanese, and Seamanship on Mondays, and Leadership, English, and Chemistry on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Japanese class is a favorite of Ko's. "It's fun to learn an entirely new language. I didn't like [learning] Spanish in high school as much," he said.

Mealtimes at the USNA all follow standard military procedure. Students are expected to arrive in the cafeteria by 6:40 a.m. for chow call, when the underclassmen recite the menu to the upperclassmen. After announcements are made, the students eat breakfast, with a menu of eggs, bagels, cereal, and pastries.

Similar to breakfast, lunch is preceded by a chow call, but it is served in a family-style meal setup, with students taking food from trays that are passed around. Food items include the popular buffalo chicken sandwiches or gyros, as well as salads. After students finish eating, the remainder of the hour is used for mandatory training, conferences with higher-ranking officers, or even punishments, such as uniform-changing races.

After dinner, students have a free hour during which clubs can meet. Then, for freshman, the day ends with a mandatory study period from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., the time at which they are mandated to go to bed, since they are not allowed naps during the day.

Ko's favorite part of his day is the same as that of many Stuyvesant students: bedtime.

### Lauren Ng – United States Military Academy at WestPoint

Lauren Ng, a Division I (D1) swimmer, starts out her day at 5:00 a.m. every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. While this prospect of waking up at such an early hour may seem daunting for most, Ng takes an optimistic outlook. "I just got used to it after the summer, when sleeping in

until 6:00 a.m. was considered a treat. Also, I'm used to it because I used to have morning practices over the summer in high school." After swim practice, at 6:55 a.m., she joins the rest of the school at Breakfast Formation, when the entire corps of cadets assembles in groups based on regiment, battalion, company, platoon, and squad, for accountability purposes.

Each class, which begins promptly at 7:30 a.m., lasts for 55 minutes. Classes run on an alternating schedule, so before lunch, Ng takes Information Technology and Advanced Multivariate Calculus on Day 1, and Advanced Multivariate Calculus and Advanced Chemistry on Day 2. "I enjoy math and chemistry the most, but that's probably just because I'm good at those subjects" Ng said. After, Ng takes either U.S. History or Composition.

Most of her classes are like those in a traditional college, but she noted that WestPoint is "probably the only school where it is hard for most people to pass PE [Physical Education]," she said. Adding on some more physical activity, her sports team practice at 3:15 p.m. every day takes the place of another class.

In terms of meals, Ng's experience is similar to that of Ko's at the USNA, with formations preceding every meal. In this mess hall, each table seats three plebes (freshman) and seven upperclassmen. The younger students perform the table duties. "One would be responsible for pouring drinks, another for cutting the dessert, a third to get coffee and make sure that all the condiments at the end of the table are lined up in height order," Ng said.

As a D1 athlete, Ng has to sit with her team during lunch and dinner, so she is only able to sit with her company during breakfast. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m., and students dress up based on specific themes on "spirit dinner" Thursdays.

West Point also stresses the importance of extracurricular activities, and mandates students to take "Athletics." During this hour and a half, students can partake in physical activities such as intramurals, which are recreational activities, perform drills and ceremonies, or do military/physical

training. Some other non-athletics related alternatives include clubs such as debate.

As academic excellence is expected in addition to being physical adeptness, there is a mandatory evening study period for plebes and sophomores from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. During this time, some students do homework, while others meet up to do club work.

Cleanliness is another must for the students. Plebes do chores for an hour and a half after the study period, such as cleaning, sweeping, and taking out the trash.

Despite the regulations, Ng's love for her school has not wavered since she first applied. "Everything is pretty much how I thought it'd be. There are times you really appreciate the little things," she said.

One of the unique aspects of the school is its room standards. When the rooms are in AMI, which is every day until 9:30 a.m., the door is open and students are not allowed to take naps, partially to stress the importance of obeying the set bedtime. Any student who has the first two hours of the school day free and wishes to take a nap during this time has to use the auditorium in the academic building. "It's funny that I thought it was ingenious when I found out about it, whereas one of the sophomores in my company thought it was sad that there are times we aren't even allowed to sleep in our own beds," Ng said.

Even the extra freedom that the upperclassmen have is limited. Standard bedtime is at 11:30 p.m., when the TAPS, or advisors come around to each room to check that everyone is in their rooms.

### Rachel Kim – United States Military Academy at WestPoint

An even earlier riser, Rachel Kim starts her day at 5:10 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays to work. Like Ng, Kim looks upon her early mornings with a bright attitude. "Granted I don't get a lot of sleep on the weekdays, [but] I think Stuy prepared me well enough on how to manage sleep deprivation," Kim said.

Before they leave, Kim and her peers have to clean their rooms, which are inspected on a daily basis, to meet cleanliness standards. Before morning formation, some students work out, while others catch up on work. On Wednesdays or on days of importance, uniform sessions at 6:45 a.m. are used to iron clothes and shine shoes.

Classes officially begin at 7:30 a.m. Alternating on a two-day cycle, a day is composed of five or six classes lasting 55 minutes each. The core curriculum requires cadets to take a total of 26 to 30 core academic classes depending on the major, not including the core physical education classes, military science classes, a job title after plebe year, as well as a leadership position that is a major factor of the cadet's military grade. Kim plans to study solely classes related to her major at the United States Naval Academy next year, and so is taking extra core classes to meet the requirements of the school.

Her extra classes include Systems Engineering (Computer/Database Design), Advanced Military Science (studying infantry tactics from the perspective of a platoon leader), Military Leadership, and two Physical Education classes: Combatives (boxing and grappling) and Survival Swimming (swimming while geared

in full army combat uniform and boots).

"The abundance of core classes makes it less enjoyable at times, but I really enjoy the DP [Department of Physical Education] classes, especially Survival Swimming, when you have to escape in full uniform. It's really different from anything else that you would ever take," she said. "Research Methods class is applicable towards groundwork for research in general, and my Systems Engineering class showed me something new."

Outside of these mandatory classes, Kim also dedicates much of her time to soccer, and numerous clubs, including Sandhurst (which prepares members for the military skills competition called Sandhurst Competition, dubbed SANCOM), Glee Club, Korean Seminar, and Christian Club.

At West Point, there is also a notably smaller teacher to cadet ratio (12 to 18 cadets per teacher) than at other military schools, which allows for more individualized instruction. Teaching by the Thayer Method of Instruction, instructors have the cadets read and teach themselves the material before coming to class. This contributes to altering the class from being entirely lecture based to being more interactive. "The military instructors are [also] typically more invested in your learning because we will technically be future employees in their organization," Kim said.

Immediately after graduation, cadets are commissioned as Second Lieutenants. Kim is currently leaning towards Military Intelligence in either Germany or South Korea. And since it is also often the case that the officers were West Point graduates themselves, they are able to offer advice to the cadets based on their own experiences. Such advice would involve "specific branches, military schools, career advancement, cadet-officer transition and how to succeed as a brand-new second lieutenant leading a platoon," Kim said.

At West Point, juniors like Kim herself faced a difficult decision at the beginning of the school year. Unless they plan to transfer, juniors have to commit to completing the "next two years at the Academy, five years in the Army as Active Duty personnel and three years in the Reserves," Kim said.

Last year, because of her conflicting interests, Kim was dubious of the route that she would take. She wanted to focus on her academics and conduct research, but because West Point emphasizes a holistic military, with fit cadets who are able to lead well, it makes it impossible to focus on just one activity. "I realized that I have still so much to learn about what it means to be a leader. I am constantly learning something new everyday in the classroom, in the field, in the company, from my classmates or instructors. While my perspective shifted from plebe year, it's changed for the better." She said.

Kim looks back contented with the decision she made three years ago. "It's definitely a different college experience in that I have to take extra core classes, have mandatory events, summer training all in a military setting [...] but after a while, you get used to the formalities," she said. "It's hard to imagine what my life [would be like] otherwise. I imagine I would have more personal time and freedom to pursue different opportunities, but then again, I think West Point provides similar, if not more, opportunities."

## Features

### SPARK Office Creates Peer Partnerships

By HANNAH BRODHEIM  
and ISABELLE MAHNKE

Inside Stuyvesant lies a branch of P.S. 721, a system of public schools dedicated to students with special needs, including autism, cerebral palsy, and other developmental disorders. Combining a curriculum focused on functional literacy and math with occupational and vocational training, the school provides the disabled students with the ability to gain an independent adult life. Unfortunately, many Stuyvesant students do not interact with these students, due to their small number and because they are not part of the regular Stuyvesant clubs. The Peer Partnership program, founded in 2006 by SPARK coordinator Angel Colon, who still runs it along with the head of P.S. 721 at Stuyvesant, facilitates interactions between Stuyvesant students and the P.S. 721 students.

The P.S. 721 students progress through three different educational levels—V10, V11, and V12—before graduating. “V10 is kind of like the beginners, the new students that they get into the program. V11 is intermediate. And then V12 becomes the students that are being prepared for graduation, what they call the work study program,” Colon said. “Once the kids move on to V12, they’re being prepared for the outside world. Their population starts at age 14, and they graduate out of the program at age 21.” The work-study programs are essentially vocational training programs, in which students spend time at the public library learning how to organize the books and helping with other basic administrative tasks. Programs like this help special needs students adjust to life outside of school. Some of the students currently in the V12 program already have jobs outside of Stuyvesant, including one student, graduating this year, who regularly volunteers at his local fire station.

The Stuyvesant branch of P.S. 721 has its own teaching staff and follows a different schedule from Stuyvesant High School, so most Stuyvesant faculty members know little about it. Colon started trying to learn more about the school when he was first hired

at Stuyvesant. “I came across those [special needs] students being made fun of by Stuyvesant students. Some of the kids were imitating them—stereotypical stuff you always see on TV and in the media,” he said. In an effort to prevent this behavior, Colon worked with James White, the director of the special needs school at the time, to create a program that would allow more interaction between P.S. 721 and Stuyvesant students.

Senior and ASPIRA—a club affiliated with SPARK—member Sharon Romero has noticed the lack of interaction between the two schools. “It’s a good thing, what SPARK’s Peer Partnership program is doing. It builds a bridge between communities, which is very important because even though we’re in the same building, those students are isolated from other Stuyvesant students,” Romero said.

Senior and ASPIRA Vice President Kimberly Iboy said that when there is interaction, it is often negative. “These kids get the chance to be normal teenagers when they interact with Stuyvesant students. I feel like they do face a lot of discrimination because of their disabilities, ranging from rude looks to straight up mean remarks, and they should have the equal chance to enjoy life just like us healthy kids,” she said. “I haven’t interacted with them through the Peer Partnership program too often, but from the times that I have, I can say it’s effective in the sense that they can develop their social skills with other people their age, and some of them really are nice kids with interesting things to say.”

Once a week, on Thursday or Friday, a small group of Stuyvesant students meet with the small number of V12 P.S. 721 students to help them build basic social skills and complete schoolwork. Colon is planning to restart the lunch group he ran in previous years, in which the students worked together on board games and played charades. He is also planning to start a breakfast club, which would meet before P.S. 721’s first period, which is the same at Stuyvesant’s first period.

“I know about three of the students from that program and they’re really interesting to be

around. You see how they really are when they get to know you on a first-name basis, as someone they can trust and talk to,” senior and Peer Partnership member Wei Lin said. “It’s very effective. I know a kid who’s graduating this year and he’s able to go around the city, and he’s also working, and it does work.”

However, Peer Partnership is a little known program at Stuyvesant.

“No one is really aware of the function it serves, or if it has any sort of partnership with Stuyvesant, or how students can get involved. There is definitely a lack of caring and knowledge of what its purpose is, and that it exists,” junior Jeremy Kaplitt said.

Junior Jane Kim, who is President of Project Love, another club affiliated with SPARK, noted that more participation on the part of Stuyvesant students would be beneficial. “Once everyone starts contributing, this program will help students from both schools much more,” Kim said. “This opportunity helps us not only connect with a different learning community, it also helps their mental health. Everyone who thinks they’re alone and needs help, not only in terms of physical health but also emotional help, can find help here. By reaching out to them, we’re helping not only them but also ourselves. It’s a great precedent for more of these sorts of programs, so more people can connect to this community and people who really need it.”

“For peer partnership, I want students who are open-minded, students who are very non-judgmental, students who are into all kinds of diversity, and at the same time, people who just have patience,” Colon said. At present, the Stuyvesant students in Peer Partnership are exclusively SPARK members to insure the students have these qualities. Rather than focusing exclusively on the individual students participating in the program, Colon hopes that Peer Partnership will help to increase tolerance across the entire school and show Stuyvesant students as aspect of the world we miss despite it being right in front of us.

### Cracking the (Discipline) Code

By BEBE LEGARDEUR

Every fall, history teachers across the city are required to hand out the New York City Department of Education Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights. While these rules are made to use across the city, in schools where weapons and gang violence are everyday issues, at Stuyvesant, the booklet is viewed as something of a joke.

The discipline code outlines the procedure for punishing students for infractions ranging from an unexcused school absence to possessing or using a firearm. The code is distributed in every school in the city, to students from kindergarten through 12th grade. One of the more shocking aspects of the code is that the same infractions are outlined in the kindergarten to fifth grade section as in the sixth to twelfth grade section. There is therefore a section for kindergarteners dealing drugs. There is also a section for “seriously dangerous or violent behavior” that is almost never used by Stuyvesant school officials because people at Stuyvesant generally are not violent.

When asked which commonly broken rule at Stuyvesant bothered him the most, English teacher and dean Mark Halperin said that it was “a very tough question to answer, because, for the most part, [Stuyvesant] students tend to be law abiding. They don’t do really bad stuff. So if I say what bothers me most and it’s relatively minor it’s because what we see is relatively minor.”

“Probably the most irksome is eating in the hallways,” Halperin, who has served as a dean since the beginning of the school year, said.

At Stuyvesant, the most common infractions fall under either category one or category two. When asked what the most commonly broken rule at Stuyvesant was, Halperin said, “Cutting. That’s intense.” Cutting is classified as B03 in the discipline code, and is defined as “reporting to school and failing to attend one or more programmed classes”. The deans at Stuyvesant keep track of chronic cutters and try to put them back in class. However, sometimes a person who is cutting class will refuse to cooperate and will not return to class. This then falls under the category of insubordination, and is reported to Principal Stanley Teitel.

Dean and Physical Education teacher Vincent Miller also added that insubordination was a big problem. Insubordination includes “disrespecting [a dean] or any teacher, but it’s not just the deans, [...] maybe [Assistant Principal Randi Damesek, or just a teacher walking down the hallway who sees someone using their cell phone and they refuse to give it up. A lot of times [the student] could be suspended for something like that,” Miller said.

Most suspensions at Stuyvesant are principal’s suspensions. For a principal’s suspension, a student is sent to

the principal’s office instead of attending classes for one to five days. During a principal’s suspension, students are required to be at school for the whole school day, and are made to complete all school work they would have if they were attending classes. A principal’s suspension can be given as punishment to anything from “misleading school personnel (B16)” to “falsely activating the fire alarm or other disaster alarm (B42)”.

“I have seen a lot of thefts, people stealing others’ property,” Miller said. He also said that “[people] giving someone

**“The code is what it is for very good reasons.”**  
—Mark Halperin, dean and English teacher

else their ID” is a big problem, which falls under the category of misleading school personnel.

Stuyvesant has, in the past, had some more serious infractions. In 2009, a student set fires throughout the school, causing the building to be evacuated multiple times. This type of infraction does not even fall into the most serious category; “starting a fire (B47)” is under the label “dangerous or violent,” one level below “seriously dangerous or violent” infractions such as possessing a weapon or engaging in gang related activity.

There have also been some instances of students bringing weapons into the school building. The official list of prohibited weapons includes imitation guns, cane swords, all knives, explosives, sand bags, stun weapons, sharp pointed instruments, and firearms.

Miller said that though it is almost never needed at Stuyvesant, the section for the most intense infractions is needed in plenty of schools across the city.

“Some [infractions] are violent, some involve drug cases, some of them are [fights] that happen in those other schools,” Miller said.

However, due to the low level of common infractions at Stuyvesant, deans at Stuyvesant “do not [have to refer to the discipline code] that often,” Halperin said. However, that does not mean that the code is not necessary.

“I have been a teacher in a lot of different schools,” Halperin said, “and I’ll say that I understand that the code is what it is for very good reasons.”

### Cartoon



# Reflections

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Every other Wednesday for the last 29 years, anyone unfortunate enough to wander down the fourth floor corridor without adequate ear protection would be met with the incredibly loud and enthusiastic sound of mathematics teacher Richard Geller shouting, "STUDY!" to a reverently stunned math class.

Over the last three decades, Mr. Geller has become as much a part of Stuyvesant as the school building itself. Dedicated, strict, and remarkably funny, he had his own teaching style that was the best Stuyvesant had to offer. His enthusiastic bellowing, and crazed exclamations sometimes intimidated students, but were also the hallmarks of a man both admired and respected.

We remember Mr. Geller through the legends, the stories,

## Math is #1

and the idiosyncrasies that defined his life at Stuyvesant; his Math-is-number-one dance and soliloquy on the first day of school; his calling the two Adams in the class Adam 1 and Adam 2 ("My dream is to have a class full of Adams. That way I could shout, '1, 23, 17.' Math is wonderful," he said.); his explosive tirade against cheating at the start of every term; his 3-point bets with various students over super-hard challenge problems; his division of positive and negative infinity into Math Heaven and Math Hell; his weekly help sessions after school, even when he was busy or tired.

We remember Mr. Geller's pink Valentine's Day t-shirt—one of the only times he strayed from his button-down—that declared his love for math; his collection of vacation photos, over which he wrote, "The Other Mr. Geller," plas-

tered to the walls of Room 437; his speaking about himself in the third person—"Mr. Geller is in excellent shape," he would say, or, on the rare occasion that one of his deadpan jokes flopped, "Boo, Mr. Geller, bad joke," his fierce dedication to the Stuyvesant sports teams—he would write on his board, "Boys' Cross-Country is #1 in the city, but math is always #1!" and, of course, his fierce dedication to teaching.

We remember when his cancer worsened, when it hurt him to walk down the halls, he continued to come to school and teach. He told his students that teaching was the best part of his day, that "for every forty-minute class period, I experience forty minutes without pain."

Mr. Geller was both a fantastic teacher and a dedicated human being. We miss him greatly.

## Richard Geller's 2011 Graduation Speech

Ms. Suri, assistant principals, my colleagues of the faculty, parents, guests, and the Stuyvesant High School graduating class of 2011—I would like to thank the graduating class for having chosen me as your faculty speaker. I think it is time, for the third time, to thank the entire staff at Stuyvesant High School for teaching you, guiding you, helping you during and after school, and writing your college recommendations, and passing you. Will all my colleagues of the faculty and staff please stand up so that the graduating class and their parents can acknowledge us.

When the Senior President and Vice President told me that I was the chosen faculty speaker, I wondered, "Why me?" I have been teaching math at Stuyvesant for 29 years and was never chosen before. By the way, 29 is a prime number. There are exactly two factors of 29: one and 29. Maybe I was chosen for the approximately five basketballs that I confiscated from students during your four years at Stuyvesant, or the 17 frisbees I took away, or the 113 decks of playing cards, or the 257 cell phones I took away and brought to Ms. Damesek's office. In case you haven't figured it out, all those numbers are prime numbers. Or maybe you wanted to hear me say one more time, "Off the fourth floor! One, two, or five—not four!" No, I don't think so. I think that you heard, three months ago, that I have metastasized melanoma cancer in my lungs, and that you either had me as a math teacher or heard of me, and wanted to honor me for my passion for teaching math. I think you also respect for requiring you to behave as adults, and you rarely disappointed me. Thank you for honoring me.

Ten days ago, I found out that the experimental drug that I am taking is working, and that the melanoma cancer in my lungs has decreased. I hope it continues to decrease. Even through all my problems, the best part of my day is teaching math. I have been teaching math for 43 years—another prime number!—and still love it. I got lucky; I found a career that I really love. If you have been in my math class, you know that I love the beauty and logic of math and love teaching it.

When I was in high school, I never thought of being a teacher. I became a teacher to avoid fighting in the Vietnam War, a war I very much opposed. I had to teach in a junior high school that had students who were underprivileged to avoid being drafted. That junior high school is only nine blocks from this theater. I was not a very good teacher my first year and had problems controlling my classes. During subsequent years, I got better at controlling classes and really enjoyed teaching the students math.

In junior high school, I became involved in the math team and en-

joyed teaching advanced problem-solving techniques to the team. The team members interacted with each other very well and many great friendships developed. Teams are special. The members of a team become like a family.

When I got to Stuyvesant in 1982, teams were important and doing well. The chess teams and the debate teams were first in the state. The boys' fencing team won the city championship. In 1982, there were 22 sports teams. By the way, 22 is not a prime number! It is a composite number because it has more than two factors. It has four factors: 1, 22, 2, and 11. You will be tested on this later.

Three decades later, and here we are. Teams are now even more special at Stuyvesant High School. There are now 37 sports teams. This year, the boys' cross-country, the boys' swimming, the boys' fencing, the girls' swimming, and the girls' golf teams all won city championships. In 1982, there were nine students on the debate team. Now, under the leadership of Ms. Sheinman, there are 180 students on the speech and the debate team. They won a first place in overall school sweepstakes at nearly every tournament they attended this year. I congratulate all those teams for a great year.

However, the best team at Stuyvesant High School is the math team! In 1982 there were 55 math team students. Now there are 241 students—another prime number. I was the head coach of the math team at Stuyvesant for over 20 years. Many of the students still are friends long after they left Stuyvesant. I know of at least one math team marriage. They live a few blocks from Stuyvesant and have two children. Two is another prime number! In fact, it is the only even prime number.

A few years ago, Mr. Cocoros became the head coach. I am now an assistant coach. This year, the math team came in first in the state competition, first in the ninth grade Continental Math League competition, first in the city in the junior and soph-frosh divisions. The senior teams were fantastic this year. For the first time ever, the senior teams came in first and second in the citywide fall competitions and first, second, and third in the citywide spring competitions, which proves that the math team is number one!

This is a fraction of what the senior class has accomplished. During this year, this senior class had Pajama Day, Beach Day, Video Game Character Day, Sweatpants Day, Hippie Day, Twin Day, Sports Jersey Day, Stuy Spirit Day, College Apparel Day, Nerd Day, and Tie Day. But I have one question: what happened to Math Day?

And of course we cannot forget that you, the seniors of 2011, won SING! as juniors, and then won SING! as seniors, a feat rarely ac-

complished by Stuyvesant senior classes. The senior class of 1983, my first year at Stuyvesant, also accomplished that feat.

You have accomplished a lot during your four years at Stuyvesant. This graduation ceremony should be very special to you. Many of the people around you will be life-long friends, so enjoy your special day today.

I have been to many junior high school and high school graduations as a teacher, and even my own graduations. However, the most important graduations for me were my children's graduations. That is because, for me, my family is #1. Yes, I am a parent of a son and a daughter. Teachers do it too, you know. Only when I attended my own children's graduations did I realize how special parents find graduation. My daughter actually graduated Stuyvesant in 1983. So give your parents a break today. Thank them for everything they have done for you. Let them take lots of pictures. Spend time with them. Let them enjoy it. In fact, please stand up, turn around, face your parents, and give them a round of applause.

I have some homework for you. Assignment #1: Volunteer. Give back to your family, give back to your community, tutor for free, help out at your church, synagogue, or mosque, volunteer to help a political candidate, help your parents clean the house or apartment, make dinner, baby-sit, say thank you, give up your subway seat to someone who is elderly or disabled. Think of others. We tend to think only of ourselves too often. We should always be thoughtful and compassionate to others.

Assignment #2: Find a career that you enjoy as much as I enjoy teaching math. You will spend at least one-third of your life at work, and it is important that you enjoy that part of the day. And that career doesn't have to do with math, the number one subject. You will be much happier with your life if you enjoy your job, and if your parents don't like what you choose, that is their problem, not yours. When they see you happy in your life and career, they will be happy for you too. My children decided not to go into math. However, they have found careers that they enjoy, and I am thrilled and very proud of them.

Assignment #3: Is 2011 a prime number?

I have loved being part of your four years of Stuyvesant. I have enjoyed watching you grow physically, mentally, and mathematically. Thank you for a great four years. Enjoy college, find a rewarding career, remember to help others, and become the greatest and happiest senior class of Stuyvesant High School ever.

I leave you with the following words: MATH IS NUMBER ONE!

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

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Student  
Body"*

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Please address all letters to:  
345 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10282  
(212) 312-4800 ext. 2601  
[letters@stuspectator.com](mailto:letters@stuspectator.com)

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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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The Stuyvesant Spectator  
345 Chambers Street  
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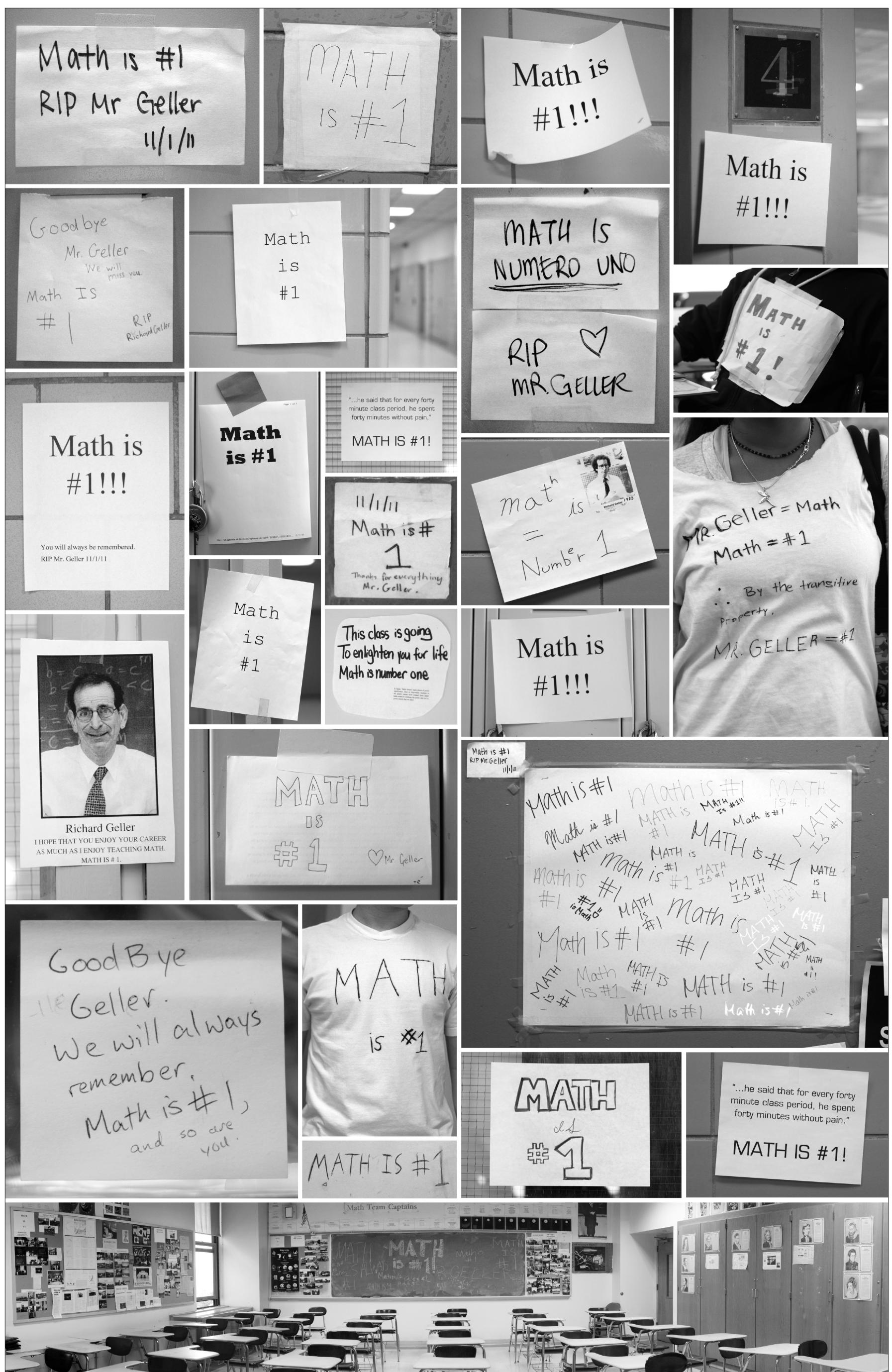
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## FOR THE RECORD

- In "School Aide Fired Due to DOE Budget Cuts," Elena Song teaches Spanish, though she is of Korean heritage.
- In "Stuyvesant Ranks Behind Staten Island Tech in Math and Science," it was incorrectly stated that Stuyvesant does not offer AP Computer Science A.
- In "Kathie Markowski: Star Sans Superficiality," Markowski was crowned Miss Polonia, not Miss Poland.
- Margot Yale drew the op-art on page 10.
- Myra Xiong drew the comic titled, "The Scariest Costume Ever."

# Reflections

## Math is # 1



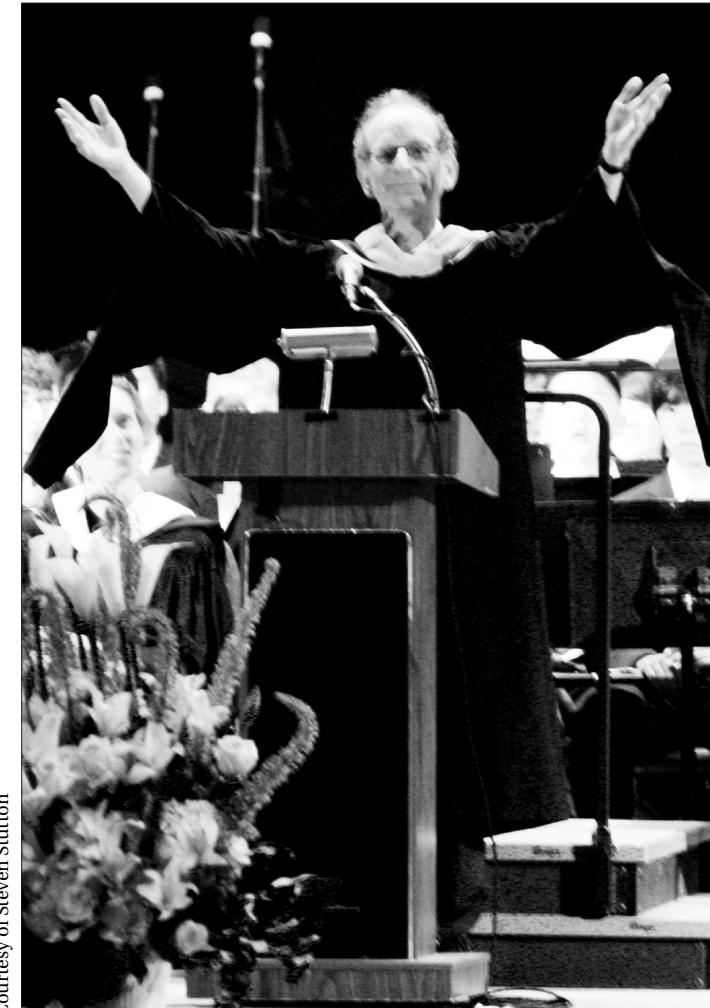
# Reflections

It's like a surreal feeling when somebody just suddenly *disappears*. To me it's like a sign that time is passing, that everyone is moving on, and I just want to stay rooted in place, like yesterday is today, and tomorrow should never come. It's like a sweet passing, all those faces that you can't recall, those people with no significance. But for that *moment*, you know they're there. It's surprising how far you can dig back into your dusty memories and find people that you don't remember clearly, or when you go into your own little web world and find people you added *years* ago, when flare jeans were cool and Tamagotchis were hip. Or when the word "hip" was stellar. Or something like that.

But Mr. Geller was never just another passerby on my morning commute; I went through his "Math is Number 1" sermon every day, 4th period sophomore year. His voice was clear, and you could feel his passion reverberating through his words and actions. I remember the impact his announcement that he had cancer had on me. I remember just how bad I was at math, and how hard he tried to get me to understand during tutoring even though his pain to even sit was obvious.

I guess his death still hasn't hit home for me. Although he was at school less and less, he showed up even through his sickness to do what he loved. With passion. With vindication. And that's the Mr. Geller I've known since the beginning of sophomore year, and the man that I respect so much. I think that it's strange that I'll never see him face to face, and hear prime numbers being echoed around the 4th floor hallway again, but I'll always live the fact that math is number one. Or rather, Mr. Geller is number one.

—Teresa Huang ('14)



Courtesy of Steven Sutton



Courtesy of Barbara Geller

In eighth grade, I took a prep course called GRF to prepare for the SHSAT. This was where I met Mr. Geller. At the time, he was just a crazy guy I saw four hours a week, screaming such mottos as "pick a number" and "if you take the square root of a funny thing times the square root of a funny thing, you get the funny thing!" At the time, I disliked him—I couldn't get above a 75 on his quizzes, and I felt like a failure. I now know that he took the subway to the Upper West Side every week after a full day of work to spend four hours teaching bratty eighth graders with the same enthusiasm he used with his real students. I now know that without Mr. Geller, I would not have gotten into Stuyvesant.

One day, after teaching us a new concept, he gave us a few minutes to do practice problems. The room was eerily silent without his piercing voice. At some point, I looked up from my work to see him hunched on the floor behind his desk, sipping intently at a juice box, readying himself for his next act. This is the image of Mr. Geller that stays with me—he was a performer, an acrobat, who gave all his efforts to shove some knowledge into our hard heads. This is a tragedy beyond the way any human death is a tragedy, because Mr. Geller had not an ounce of selfishness in his body. To the end, he proved to us and the world that Stuyvesant is not a cold, uncaring place. We were always more than numbers to a man who loved numbers more than anything.

Thank you, Mr. Geller, for everything you have given me and thousands of other students. Math might have been your number one, but you'll always be ours.

—Mollie Forman ('12)

It's been over a year since I had Mr. Geller, but my methods for doing math haven't changed. I still have neat scrap paper and draw a line between my identities when proving them (yes, you people who had him know what I'm talking about). His passion was always seen. His speeches at the end of the term touched everyone, whether they liked math or not. He truly loved his job because, not only did he love math, but he also loved his students. I just watched Mr. Geller's speech at the 2011 graduation. I never knew that a number that wasn't prime was called a composite number. Even after he's gone, he's still teaching me math.

—Morgan Higgins ('12)

Dear Mr. Geller,

I had you for first period math team in the fall of 2007—my first high school class, ever. My Big Sib looked at my schedule with the teachers on it, and before I ever got to class, I'd already heard stories about how strict you would be on your students. And you were intimidating, for sure. In fact, I will admit to being so ridiculously intimidated that I dropped out of math team for the spring term.

Our paths would cross again in my sophomore year—not as student and teacher, like most of my peers, but as student and student, sitting in the back of Dr. Feigenbaum's Introduction to Statistics class. You would sit in once or twice a week, not as a teacher, but to learn with the rest of the class. I don't think you ever learned my name, but I do remember asking you for help every now and then, and the clarity and energy with which you would explain your understanding of whatever we were learning—z-values, chi-squared tests, and other statistical methods that escape me now.

But those are episodes from early on in my high school career that I can barely remember now. My interactions with you in my senior year are the memories that stick with me most strongly. When the school learned of your illness, the senior class was in the process of selecting our faculty speaker for graduation. A massive portion of the senior class pushed for your selection as our faculty speaker, and so one afternoon Wasi and I approached you with the possibility of being a candidate.

What happened next will stick with me for a lifetime. Your eyes softened and you went quiet, and suddenly your lip began wavering and you teared up. Wasi and I stood there in shock. The man we saw in front of us was not the intimidating and indomitable disciplinarian we had heard about and experienced during some of our fourth floor misadventures. The man we saw in front of us was a vulnerable man who was suffering through incredible pain and stress, and the tears we saw were tears of happiness and gratefulness for the students who finally paid back your tireless efforts with the recognition you deserved. And when you said yes, we decided right there and then that no matter what, you would be our faculty speaker that year.

And the Class of 2011 pulled through and selected you as our speaker. When I was up on stage sitting a seat away from you at graduation, you asked if I was nervous. I nodded yes, and you smiled at me and said I would be fine. I can only begin to imagine your anxiety, knowing you were about to give a speech in your condition. But nonetheless, you went up to the podium and gave one of the most memorable and inspirational speeches we will have ever heard. Mr. Geller, thank you for being our faculty speaker.

I can't really say anything about my experiences with you as a teacher—I was never truly able to experience that. But I will remember you as a great man with a greater passion for what he did and for spreading that passion to his students. I will remember your tears when Wasi and I approached you with the honor of being our graduation speaker. I will remember you always taking the time to stop by the prom ticket table as you exited the mail room for a quick conversation with us. And I will remember you standing on the stage of the United Palace Theater, in triumph, in front of a standing and applauding Class of 2011.

Mr. Geller, thank you. There are few people who embodied Stuyvesant in the manner that you did, and you will be greatly, greatly missed.

—Alexander Wong, Senior Class President '11

## Reflections

Mr. Geller has been my favorite math teacher since the first class I had with him. Secretly I'd refer to him as "Papa Geller," since he always felt so fatherly. Students always complained about his strict policies, but he was just trying his best to keep us in line, even at the cost of his reputation among students. He was always so enthusiastic about math, and despite the constant testing he gave to anyone he caught not paying attention, he was always kind when students did what little he asked. His little jokes were always endearing, as was his Halloween costume. Was he Chef Geller again last year? I didn't get to see him, but I wish I had. I remember running into him when the school was evacuated for a fire. It was cold, and he was just running around doing little exercises and shouting little excited words to students. He was also kind enough to tutor me when I was getting worried about being behind in math as the Math B Regents approached, since my math teacher was going through the curriculum too slowly. Busy as he was, he took the time to write my teacher's recommendation for the SSR when I asked him out of the blue a year after taking his class. I have many fond memories of Mr. Geller, but only spent one lucky term in his classroom. It is my most treasured term at Stuyvesant, out of the three years I spent there. I really wish I'd had the courage to send him that thank you card, even though he didn't quite know who I was. I'm so sorry that the environmentally healthy sport (biking) he loved so much ended up causing his lungs stress. He was always so lovely and optimistic, and I'll never forget that wonderful graduation speech he worked so hard to deliver for us. Prime numbers! I laughed so many times throughout that speech. I never thought I would shed tears for someone, but my face is raining now for you, Mr. Geller. Please rest in peace. I hope there's a math section in heaven, because MATH IS #1!

—Pearl Lam ('11)

Mr. Geller—  
You were the best math teacher I have ever had. Though I was afraid of you at first, you taught me not only how to become skilled in math, but, more importantly, how powerful someone's dedication to something could be. You showed me, and all the students lucky enough to ever have had you, the strength and passion that one human could possibly have. You taught us to fulfill our dreams, and to never back down from any challenge. I will always remember the countless times you stayed after school to help any of us who needed or wanted help. You will forever be missed and I hope that you will always know, no matter where you are, that you are deeply loved and will be severely missed. Goodbye Mr. Geller.

Math is #1,  
Andrew Reilly ('13)



Courtesy of Jing He

## SUMMER 1993



By the time I found myself in Mr. Geller's class, I had collected three semester's worth of math grades that would only be described as horrific by most Stuyvesant students. It was 2003 and I was a junior, and a worn out one at that; worn by the constant feelings of inadequacy in the company of my brilliant peers, worn by the constant pressure from my parents, worn by the constant effort to come to terms with my family's difficulties during those years. To this day, the darkness of those years is something that I grapple with every day, although like many teenagers, I tried to hide my insecurities with a brittle veneer of sarcasm and nonchalance. Seeing Mr. Geller's name on my schedule was enough to resign myself to yet another semester of barely-passing math grades. My anxieties around math were so cemented at that point that I planned the rest of my schedule every year to ensure that I had high enough grades to offset the inevitable sink in my average.

Everyone said that Mr. Geller was hard, strict. Everyone whispered about his notoriously difficult tests, the constant point deductions for the most minor transgressions. All of these things were true—but amongst the whispers and complaints of his reputation, there was always the constant caveat that followed: *Mr. Geller is a great teacher*. The miracle that happened during my time with him was a small one, academically. I finished his class with solid grades. Beyond the small blessing of my revived comprehension of math was the larger miracle of encountering a life-changing teacher, one that saw past my brittle exterior and dealt with me with humor, pathos, and compassion. Good teachers inspire interest and impart knowledge; great teachers impart a sense of self, independent of a student's abilities. Unlike many of my peers, I was never destined for a future as a brilliant quantitative mind, but I knew that Mr. Geller did not consider me to be less. He never questioned the anxiety I had with my tests when all the numbers in front of me would jumble and easily learned lessons would leak out of my head; nor did he ask me about the changes in my family life that had left me bewildered and scared through much of high school. He didn't have to. Like all wonderful teachers and wonderful people, he merely understood, translating his empathy into gentle and constant encouragement. During a year that I had very little to rely on, I relied on Mr. Geller and his numbers, those complex entanglements that always invariably reached neat, elegant solutions.

In senior year, after I had been accepted to the University of Chicago, I ran into Mr. Geller into the hall. I told him the good news shyly, thinking that perhaps he dimly remembered me only as the sub-par student in his class from last semester. Instead, his narrow face broke into a wide, gleaming smile: *Well, UChicago! One of the best in math! Keep it up!* I didn't keep it up, and majored in Art History instead. I thought that I deserved to do something that made me as happy as math made Mr. Geller. After graduation I worked everywhere from auction houses to museums before landing happily in education. At my job, I advocate daily for the educational access, figuring in my reports the complex factors and conditions that lead children into a path of success. I deal with metrics, numbers, yields. Yet every day my work somehow feels inadequate, because my words and reports never speak of the teachers, their gentle encouragement and their constant, unyielding kindness. *Math is number one!* Mr. Geller used to cheerily announce during class. But an alternate interpretation would speak to the fact that there is an infinite, endless span of numbers greater than one, greater than even his love for math: his love for teaching, his love for his students, his love for Stuyvesant.

—Jeanne Su ('04)

I saw Richard in a different context than most. Aside from being a fellow assistant coach of the New York City Math Team, we were both big New York Rangers hockey fans. And since I have season tickets, he would go with me several times a season for the past 25 years. Whenever the Rangers scored, he would jump up and enthusiastically high five everyone around us, people he didn't know, of course. The following game, the fans would say to me, "Where is that exciting guy you brought to the last game?" I would say, "Well he's coming back next week, but if you want, I can high five you if the Rangers score." And they would say, "No, if you would do it, you'd be faking it, because you're too boring. But this guy is the real thing!" And I couldn't describe him better. The Real Thing. RIP Richard.

—Arthur Samel

Mr. Geller was probably the hardest math teacher I've ever had in my life, a year and a half of college included. He was strict with homework, brutal with tests, and terrifying to fourth floor loiterers everywhere. He was probably one of my favorite teachers in my life as well. His strictness made me learn, brutality taught me determination, and terror taught me discipline. I feel truly blessed to have experienced even one term of him. Two iPhones and a lot of stress later, Mr. Geller has made me a better man, and for that I am eternally grateful. He is a major part of why I look back to high school with fondness. When that B came around on my report card, I was more proud of that than any 97. Mr. Geller taught me the value of hard work in those short months of sophomore year and that is a lesson I take into life. Rest in peace Mr. Geller, Stuyvesant is a darker place without you.

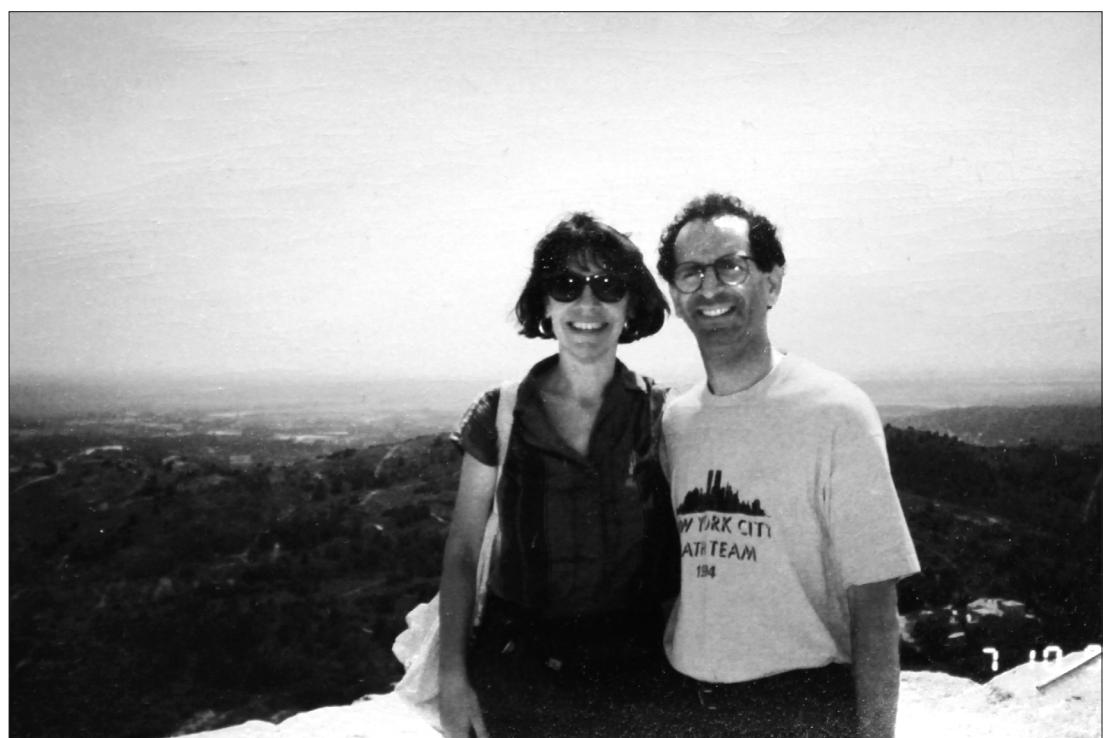
—Henry Lin ('10)

# Reflections

Dear Mr. Geller,

I remember sitting down in your classroom for the very first time in my sophomore year at Stuyvesant. I had heard all of the rumors about you being the most strict and demanding teacher at the school and was ready to put your skills to the test. I was a cocky student who thought he had the world (and Stuyvesant) in the palm of his hand and I wasn't about to let some teacher make my life more difficult. Within the first ten minutes of class, I had realized that I was sitting in front of a man who would go on to change my life. You taught me more about discipline, respect, life, and mathematics in that one class than I learned in all of my other classes combined. You taught me to respect educators, as they are the people who devote their lives to giving students a chance at achieving their goals and reaching their dreams. You taught me to approach mathematics and all of my other studies with a succinctly disciplined and logical mindset. You taught me to respect anyone who is standing in front of a classroom by acting appropriately and paying them the focused attention they deserve. I remember becoming enamored with wanting to make you happy, and always had my homework out ready for you to put a quick check through it as you raced around the classroom and my cell phone tucked away silently in my locker in fear of it going off in your class. You were the only teacher that ever scared me enough to make me go put my phone in locker before class (turning it off simply didn't do enough to settle my nerves). While it took me some time and reflection to understand all of the lessons you taught me, and the importance of the way you delivered message, I think I have come to a point where I can truly be thankful for all you have done. I have used those lessons of discipline and respect in all of my endeavors since and currently use them in my studies at the University of Miami School of Law. No matter where my personal and career paths may lead, I feel stronger and more secure knowing that I had the ultimate teacher on my side. You were the best teacher I ever had and the most dedicated man I ever met; I only wish I had the foresight to thank you earlier. No matter where you are, make sure to remind those around you that MATH IS NUMBER 1! God Bless you and your family.

Sincerely,  
Eric Stepansky ('06)



Dear Mr. Geller,

Thank you for teaching. Not math—I actually never had the privilege of taking one of your classes. But I was in math team for four years. And that's where I learned something even more valuable than math. Community.

Since graduating from Stuyvesant, despite 4 years of college and 3 years of law school, my best friend is a fellow Stuyvesant math teamer. We met because I'd always bump into him in Blimpies (now a smoothie shop) on the way to Stuyvesant where he'd always be taking an early morning cat nap. Freshman year, he won the Math Team Award for "Most Frequently Found Asleep." I had the honor of winning that same award during my sophomore year.

My fondest memory of you was during my senior year. One day after math team, you met my friend John and I after math team for a conversation. It went a little something like this: "I heard you are both failing multi-variable calculus. As a math team captain [John] and substitute math team captain [me], it's pretty embarrassing. Stop failing."

Somehow those words did the trick. On our next test (afraid to sully the honor of the Stuyvesant Math Team) we were able to literally double (yes, "literally" has been used correctly in this sentence) our previous test score and maintain that for the rest of the semester. By semester's end, we both pulled our average in that class into the low 90s.

I truly enjoyed my four years at Stuyvesant and I wouldn't have if it was not for the Math Team community. They were my friends when there and my friends after I left, and continue to be friends to this day. We traveled up state and took competitions together for Stuyvesant's reputation. We crushed our competitors in the NYSSML and got destroyed in the ARML but because we did it together. It was an exhilarating and unforgettable experience.

So thank you, Mr. Geller. You built a community in Stuyvesant where I for the first time in my life truly felt like I belonged. And that is why math is not number one. You're number one.

Yours Truly,  
Jacob Y. Chen ('04)



I had the pleasure of taking Mr. Geller's class three times in my first two years at Stuy. I had been self-studying math before attending Stuy, so Mr. Geller was the first person to teach me high-school level math. Not only did he correct the mistakes I had been making on my own, he also helped me appreciate the beauty of math, which led me to study engineering in college instead of a science.

I'll never forget the learning environment Mr. Geller established in his classroom. It was the only class I ever had where everyone was silent and working from the moment we walked in to the moment he was done (even if the bell rang first!). I'll never forget how he would digress and shout "Math is #1!" how he put the sequence (14, 18, 23, 28, 34, 42, 50...)\* on the board during a lesson on mathematical sequences, and how he rapped the quadratic formula (and had us requesting that he do it again at the end of the term).

Despite all this, grade competition forced me to ask out of his class when I got Mr. Geller for the third time. I remember being conflicted about it because of how great his class was, yet also knowing that taking his class again was a huge risk. After making the change, I attended his class once more and found him outside afterwards to explain why I switched...and he was very understanding. It is unfortunate that I had to choose between a shot at an Ivy-league school and having Mr. Geller for a third time. It is even more unfortunate that looking back, this one schedule change likely improved my GPA just enough to get into MIT.

I continued to say hello to Mr. Geller in the halls for the next two and a half years and every time I returned to Stuy to visit. I don't remember the name of the teacher I switched to, nor do I remember which class it was for. I do, however, remember much of Mr. Geller's class, down to individual lessons. And when I think back and picture myself in Stuy, I remember two scenes: 9/11, and Mr. Geller's classroom. Rest in peace, and may math always be #1.

John Healy ('04)

\*The sequence of stops on the (1) train going uptown. No one got it.

## Reflections

Being in my junior year at Stuyvesant High School, I was lucky enough to be taught by the wonderful Mr. Richard Geller. I only had him once, and it happened to be the second-term of sophomore year when he was diagnosed with his lung cancer. I remember sitting in my math classroom on the fourth floor, hearing the news, and thinking about how terrible it was. Mr. Geller would give us updates about his health every now and then, and we would wish him well and hoped he got better soon. Before I had Mr. Geller, I used to hear about him being this hardcore teacher who was strict about studying, especially making those study sheets, and had zero tolerance for cheaters. When I finally had the privilege of being in his class, I can honestly say that I didn't get used to him yelling, "STUDY!" every Wednesday before a test, but those study sheets did help a lot. But behind this hardcore teacher was a great soul. There was nothing that made Mr. Geller happier than teaching math. I saw it in him everyday. I knew he loved standing at the chalkboard, making those funny jokes about math, and helping us grow "mathematically." Mr. Geller had great respect for us, his students, and we hold a tremendous amount of respect for him, not only as a teacher, but a human being. His famous phrase, "MATH IS #1!" will always be with us; it was etched in my memory since the first time he yelled it out. Mr. Richard Geller is an awesome teacher, family member, and friend. I say is, not was, because even though he is not with us, he is just living it up in heaven right now. Maybe Mr. Geller could teach those who were less fortunate to be introduced to the wonderful world of math in heaven.

—Christine A. Kowlessar ('13—a prime number!)

Room 437 was Richard Geller's temple. You felt it when you crossed the threshold. Every inch of that classroom belonged squarely to him. He set the tone. He owned the air. And for the 45 minutes you sat in that room, you were his. In front of the blackboard he grew larger than life. He was towering, omniscient, omnipotent. He terrified students who couldn't do math and challenged those who could. It was an act designed to keep you on your toes.

Richard's passing left a void in room 437 that stretched out beyond the confines of the building to touch every student who had ever sat in that classroom. He was a fixture at Stuyvesant. He had an unmistakable profile. His voice shook the hallway when he shouted at students to study for an exam the next day. No one had the courage to challenge him. It's unthinkable that anything could take him down.

He felt a responsibility to students beyond teaching and grading. Far from picking on the weak, he targeted struggling students to make them believe they could do math. He knew, from decades of hammering concepts into teenage brains, that comprehension could be achieved through persistence. He had a soft side he didn't like to show, beneath that gruff, exact exterior. Once he admonished me in class for taking too long to solve a problem on my calculator. Seeing me blanch, he approached my desk after the bell and apologized for making me uncomfortable. I countered that he'd made feel stupid. For the first time, he was taken aback.

Friends warned me that that confrontation would cost me my grade, but the next day, Richard pulled me aside and delivered a five-minute apology outside his classroom. I stammered that it was alright, but he insisted it wasn't. It was never his intent to make me feel stupid. Faced with a conflict between a student's feelings and his actions, he backed down and accepted responsibility.

He had a weakness for tears. I would cry regularly at his after-school review sessions the day before an exam, knowing that I would fail and have to retake the test. He would bring me tissues and tell me to "think Latin" because this was my best subject. Richard understood that math wasn't number one for all students, and he knew that speaking to their strengths would help them overcome their fears.

The year I spent learning pre-calculus in his classroom was transformative. I must have been of the worst students in the class. Yet after one semester, I found myself helping far stronger students with their math homework. I hadn't suddenly become a genius. I simply had the best teacher in the department. I stuck with him and he stuck with me.

The highest grade I ever scored on one of his exams was an 88. It was a makeup exam, which meant that the two scores would be averaged for a final grade. He congratulated me on doing well, and, noting my slight disappointment, exclaimed, "You're never happy!" I'd failed to live up to my own expectations, but I finally surpassed his, and that was all that mattered.

—Inna Guzenfeld ('04)

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Mr. Geller not just once in my life, but twice. The first experience was as a member of Stuyvesant's math team in the very early 1980s, when he showed his enthusiasm for math and enjoying math not merely to win a contest but to learn something and enrich his students' lives. The second time was in the late 2000s as a student teacher, and still later as a research mentor and volunteer. He was still the same, and math was still #1 30 years later, despite increased competition from the Internet and cellphones. I cannot imagine Stuyvesant without him, and the most depressing part is that it is not all my imagination that he is not there.

—Amy Prager ('85)

Until 10th grade, I hated math. I think part of this stemmed from the fact that I never understood it fully. People always talk about the clarity and simplicity of math, but I couldn't see that until I had Mr. Geller in the fall of my sophomore year in 2007. The foundation I got in his class led me to eventually take AP Calculus my senior year (if you know me, you know how shocking this is), and I actually did well. In a way that only the best teachers can, he made everything make sense. His class was strict and fair, and it was clear how much he loved math. That term, my mother came home from parent-teacher-conferences looking slightly worn-out, and she told me like she still couldn't believe it: "Mr. Geller gave us math homework while we were waiting." She shook her head. "And we all did it! I haven't done math homework in years."

His teaching style worked so well for me that the spring of my sophomore year, when he was no longer my teacher, I still sat in on his class (with his permission) every day during my lunch period for more practice with the material. He must have thought I was joking because on the second day, he walked to the back of the classroom where I was sitting and asked, "Is this going to be a regular thing?" I told him I would only come if it was alright with him. He nodded gravely and said in a deep voice, "It's alright." Mr. Geller not only taught well and loved math, but he cared deeply about all his students – even the ones who were technically no longer his, because the third day when he made handouts for his classes, there were just enough for everyone in his class...plus me.

—Shoshana Akabas ('10)



Mr. Geller taught me trigonometry in the spring term of my sophomore year at Stuy. He was a rare breed: while disciplinary, strict and demanding, he exuded warmth and humor.

Mr. Geller's best quality was by far his passion. His near-giddy love for the subject made me remember what it felt like to be seven and obsessed with infinity, or nine and announcing to my mother that I planned on being a mathematician. I was a child enthralled by numbers and though by the time I arrived in trig class sophomore year I was more interested in other subjects, Mr. Geller's unfiltered passion for math helped me re-learn how to love something in the same way I loved lemniscates in the fourth grade.

I've somehow retained the trig identities Mr. Geller drilled into my brain nearly four years ago and I'm indebted to him for indirectly helping me through my college calc class, but I'm far more grateful to him for what he taught me about life. His own may have been cut short, but he did what he loved and taught what he loved. Math was his #1 and he taught his students by example that the most fulfilling way to live is to live every day with your own #1.

—Emma Dries ('10)

### SUMMER 1999 Hawaii



# Reflections

MATH SURVEY 1995

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Math Team Luncheon at Bouley a Huge Success

BY IRIS LAN

The Stuyvesant High School Math Team was invited to a luncheon at *Bouley's*, the world class, five star restaurant that famous critics have hailed as "New York City's best." We had named our 6 math teams "B.O.U.L.E.Y." after the favorite restaurant of our beloved math team coach, Mr. Richard Geller. Mr. Geller showed Chef David Bouley our math team scores, and he was so impressed that he invited the whole math team to his restaurant. Representatives from all Stuyvesant math teams were there. Our principal Mr. Murray Kahn even attended and loved the food and conversation. We were served a five course meal (menu on next page); all were awestruck at the variety, colors, elegant presentation, and, most of all, taste of the food. We've never tasted anything like it. From the dried flowers pressed into our menus and elegant atmosphere to the great variety of breads, *Bouley* impressed all of us. We enjoyed our meal so much, that we have continued the math team "*Bouley*" name tradition: our senior math teams are named D, G, and B, the initials of Chef David G. Bouley.

We anonymously give a rating:



Stuyvesant math team members (acclaimed critics) say:

"The bread was scrumptious."

- Michael Develin, boy genius of B.O.U.L.E.Y.

"(Speechless.)"

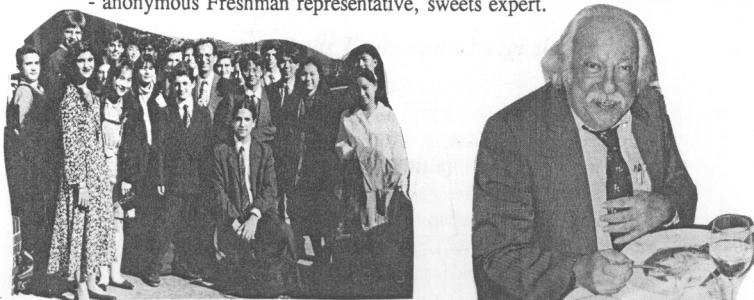
- Alexander Khazanov, Gold Medal winner of I.M.O.

"The servings were just right...I was in awe."

- Oksana!

"Dessert, especially the Sorbets, was the best I've ever had in my life."

- anonymous Freshman representative, sweets expert.



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Thursday October 6, 1994

...

Maine Black Sea Bass with a Stew of Roasted Sugar Pumpkin, Blue Hubbard, White Acorn and Sweet Dumpling Squash, with Spices and Muscovado

....

Organic Hen Roasted with Wild Mushrooms, Puree of Chantenay Carrots from Maine, Steamed Leeks

....

Chilled Melon Soup with Fresh Fruit Sorbets

....

Hot Valrhona Chocolate Souffle with Warm Chocolate Sauce, Vanilla and Caramel Ice Cream and Banana Tart

....

Homemade Petits Fours and Chocolates

....

Chef David Bouley

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It is impossible to overstate the impact that Mr Geller had on my life, and I'm sure many, many others would agree with that statement.

Math team—and Mr. Geller personally—taught me many things; it is also the place where I met my future spouse (I am half of the "math team marriage" couple that Mr. Geller referred to in his graduation speech earlier this year).

Oksana and I kept in touch with Mr. Geller in the 16 years since our graduation. About five or six years ago, we got together with him, as well as several other classmates from the 1995 math team, for another meal at Bouley. At the end of that dinner, he handed each one of us an envelope with copies of a few of the things that he had kept from our time at Stuy (he was an incorrigible, and extremely well organized, pack rat)—some of our score sheets from the various math competitions, his notes on our performance in his classes, as well as the documents shown from the original "math team meal at Bouley" in the fall of 1994.

Thank you for everything, Richard, and we will miss you.

—Leonid Yuditsky, Math Team Captain ('94-'95)

Dear Mr. Geller,

There were many things I told myself to do this year, and one of them was to make sure that I would say hello to you every once in a while when I had the time to pop by your classroom, the math department room, or even after math; if I had decided to visit you before my math class, you'd be upset if I arrived late to math. This summer when I went to Phoenix for a convention, I purposely brought a wristband for fighting melanoma back to New York so I could give it to you when the school year started. But now I can only hope that you hear the words I have to say to you somewhere up in math heaven. Mr. Geller, thank you so much for everything. Having you for two straight terms was a great honor and privilege.

At first I didn't know what to expect in your class and I was a bit scared when you suddenly screamed out, "MATH IS #1," to the entire class for the first time. As the year progressed, you had already become one of my favorite teachers, and though I struggled a little bit, you were always there to help me, whether it be after class or in tutoring. You always smiled and showed great enthusiasm through every class you taught, and even on the days where your cancer was affecting you, you still put your every effort into each class. You would always tell us how teaching us math made your day less painful, even though you were probably experiencing a lot of physical pain. Thank you for making math fun and for all the funny math jokes you told. Your dedication to math and your commitment to your students and your family are amazing. Thank you so much for taking your time to teach me math. Thank you so much for being so patient with me, despite the fact that I'm a slow learner. Thank you so much for always reminding us to pursue a career that we liked and that it is our decision to make. Thank you for writing me a recommendation when I asked for one. Thank you for taking your time to take a picture with me when I asked for one even though you were talking to another teacher. Thank you for saying, "Hi," back to me in the hallways, on the bridge, and on the street as well.

There are many more things I would like to say to you, Mr. Geller, but it's hard to find the right words. You will never know how big of a fan of yours I was and how much you inspired me to work harder in not only math, but in all my other courses. If anything, I just want to let you know that you will always be one of my favorite teachers and that I will never throw away my math notebook with all the great notes you provided us with. I will remember to study and without a doubt that math is the number 1 subject! Thank you so much for everything, Mr. Geller.

With love,  
Anonymous ('13)

Richard was one of the first teachers I met when I began teaching at Stuy. He had the keys! Then it was to the closets, but now he holds the keys to all our hearts here at Stuyvesant. He will be greatly missed. He was always a teacher for whom I had great respect and admiration. I looked up to him. He could never hide from me his generosity of spirit, and enthusiasm for his life, family, and teaching. He even got me, a history teacher, saying, "Math is Number One." I will miss you, Richard. Rest in Peace.

—Lisa Shuman, social studies teacher

# Reflections

It's the second term of my sophomore year and I timidly sit in my seat and wait for my new math teacher to begin the traditional start of term speech. Out of the blue he screams, "MATH IS NUMBER ONE!!!!"

I will never forget that day on a frigid February, or the many days that followed. I remember what a kind person Mr. Geller was, how hard he tried to help every one of his students, whether it was offering a second chance on a test that you failed, or offering some last-minute tutoring to help you excel.

One moment that particularly stands out to me, another demonstration of his never-ending kindness: when tragedy had struck in my family, Mr. Geller not only excused me from not having the day's homework, he also made sure I knew that if I needed someone to talk to, he was there.

I feel very honored to be part of Stuyvesant's class of 2011. We were blessed in hearing Mr. Geller's unforgettable, heart-touching commencement speech. From his speech, I learned many important lessons. The two most important ones were to be a good and kind person, to give back to our community, to love and honor our families. The second was to find a job that we will love, just as much as he loved teaching math, regardless of what our parents want us to do.

Mr. Geller, thank you for all your lessons, math related and not. You have definitely helped shape the person I am today. I will never forget your kind and intellectual words. God bless you. You will forever be in the hearts of all the people you have touched.

—Diana Belinsky ('11)

Mr. Geller was my math teacher during my sophomore and junior years of high school, and my colleague for the last eleven years, since I came back to Stuyvesant as an English teacher.

I remember his class vividly. I do not have a math brain—I've always had to work twice as hard at math as at English and history—but in Mr. Geller's class, the concepts were crystal-clear. He knew how to teach, and expected us to put in the effort to learn. So we did. Mr. Geller's teaching was intense, and could be frightening at times. One of my strongest memories of that sequential math class sophomore year is of a day when he caught a student copying another student's homework. He stood over the boy's desk—one row to my right, two seats ahead—and screamed down at him, red-faced with anger, while the rest of us stared at our desks, petrified. But here's the thing: we knew that the anger came from the high standards he had for us, from loving math and wanting with all his being for us to learn it honestly and love it too. When I was placed in another teacher's class for pre-calculus the next year, I went down to the program office and got myself switched into Mr. Geller's. I knew that, in his class, I would really learn.

When I came back to Stuyvesant as a teacher, Mr. Geller—I struggled at first to call him "Rich"—was a warm and welcoming colleague. He took great pleasure in the fact that I had been his student, and we often talked at faculty gatherings or in the halls about math, and grammar (he was a stickler), and our families. At one end-of-year faculty barbecue, we all got a little slap-happy, and Rich Geller and I danced the twist. He threw himself into dancing with the same intensity with which he did everything. His wide grin at my disbelief in the moment—here I was, dancing the twist with Mr. Geller!—lasted for the whole song.

Mr. Geller was particularly happy to hear, and share, stories about family. He often stressed how vital his wife and children were to him, and always asked about mine. When each of my daughters was born, he sent a card reading, "Congratulations! Math is #1!" Last June, I took my 4-year-old daughter to the prom, and Rich got right down to her level to talk with her about her sparkly red shoes while I talked with his wife. He connected instantly.

After September 11th, during the period when we held classes at Brooklyn Tech because our building was closed, Rich and I met up one morning walking from the subway. We talked about how difficult the last weeks had been, and he told me, tears filling his eyes, of his concern for his own son. He said that teaching was what was getting him through this time, and I said I felt the same way.

Being in the classroom, engaging with his students, was what gave Rich energy and life. As a teacher who plans to spend my life teaching, that is what was most inspiring to me about his example: the energy he brought to, and drew from, each day in the classroom. He loved his subject and his students with equal fervor, and his family even more than that. He shared his passions generously.

Richard Geller was a good man, and an exceptional teacher. He left us far too soon.

—Annie Thoms ('93), English teacher

The first day of Mr. Geller's class second term sophomore year, I was petrified. I had heard all the rumors: he gives a lot of homework, his tests are impossible, and he yells. The first month of class affirmed all of them. But, during that short span of time, I also realized that Mr. Geller cared about his students. Not only that, but he respected each and every one of us and wanted the best for all of us. He stayed after school to help us out, let us retake his tests, and answered each and every question in class.

He cared about his students on a deeper level. I get daily migraines, and Mr. Geller not only respected my wishes to close my eyes in class, put my head down, and stop working for a bit; each and every day, he asked me how I was feeling. Even after he was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma and his health became his primary concern, he continued to make sure I was feeling alright. His selflessness and compassion until the very end are the main reasons he was respected and loved as much as he was.

Rest in peace, Mr. Geller. The Math Gods are lucky to have you with them now.

—Miranda Kalish ('13)

## GUAM



Mr. Geller is the definition of *motivation, dedication, devotion, and perseverance* through his display of all the efforts he had put into his work as a teacher and mentor. He had the strongest mentality of anyone I have come to set my eyes upon. He was so brave, so devoted, and so dedicated that every class spent with him was truly inspirational. His love for math and teaching surpassed all boundaries: he got up every day, including those during which he did not feel well, and spent 10 periods standing on his two feet, teaching and amplifying his love for this subject. He returned to class after taking two days off once and told us: "I truly missed teaching you guys...I will teach until I can teach you no more." Mr. Geller's caring for every single student fueled his unwavering commitment to our school, and I am completely honored to have been inspired by him.

A man could only do so much, but Mr. Geller truly did it all. May he forever rest in peace.

Math is number 1. Mr. Geller, you're forever number 1—I thank you.

—Amy Ng ('13)

I will always remember his suspenders and his multi-decimal-place exam answers.

—Jack Pien ('94)

Whenever I saw Mr. Geller in the hallways, I would ecstatically greet him with, "Hi Mr. Geller!" and then Mr. Geller would respond with a wave that had the same amount of energy that I put into my greeting.

—Victoria Yuan ('13)

# Reflections

## Richard Geller: My Colleague, My Mentor, My Friend

I met Richard Geller in the fall of 1985. Richard had somehow heard that I, a new member of the Stuyvesant Math Department, was a competitive fencer.

Richard came to me not wanting to talk about fencing, but to tell me that he, too, had a hobby. I cannot remember now if it was his interest in fine food or his interest in biking with which he wanted to impress me, but I do remember that I was less than impressed and, in fact, rather annoyed by this irritating man. However, shortly afterwards Richard became my mentor. Now this was not a typical mentorship where one party agrees to help another party. In fact, Richard never knew that he was my mentor and I never realized that Richard was my mentor until several years after I had left Stuyvesant High School. Coming to Stuyvesant from a New York City junior high school, I knew that I had to develop a different class management technique and insist on high performance. When I gave my first test and the lowest class grade was a 96%, it was obvious that I had to up the level of challenge for my students. And who better to learn from how to run my classroom and take high school mathematics to a new level than Richard Geller? And so this silent but active mentorship began.

There are two stories here—not your typical ones of mentor and mentee, however. At first, I only taught what was then called Integrated Mathematics, but after a few years, I decided to try my hand at pre-calculus, then called ME81. And so I asked Richard if I could copy his pre-calculus notes. Now you have to realize that Richard did not just have one or two test copies for his students but, like an Excel spreadsheet, he had copy AA1 to ZZ100. And, of course, he had every problem ever written in the field of pre-calculus in his notes. And so he brought in bags and bags of notes and I lugged bags and bags of notes to my house in New Jersey. Now since I did not have a photocopy machine at home, I had to go to the local pharmacy and use their copy machine. I came in armed with all the dimes I owned; in fact, I took every coin I could find in my house. After exhausting my coin supply and all the paper in the copy machine, the pharmacy manager changed my bills and refilled the copy machine. I stood at the machine for hour after hour copying volumes of Richard's notes. Unfortunately, the machine overheated and I was never able to finish my copying job. These notes, however, have served my students and me well and continue to do so.

After a few years of teaching pre-calculus, I decided that I wanted to try my hand at teaching AP calculus and Richard agreed that I could sit in on his class each day. And so I became a middle-aged calculus student. One day, I went to see Dr. Richard Rothenberg, the late chairman of the Mathematics Department, to ask him a quick question. We started chatting, and suddenly I realized that I was supposed to be in Mr. Geller's class and that I was going to be late. I explained to Dr. Rothenberg that I could not go into Mr. Geller's class without a late pass, something that Dr. Rothenberg completely understood and for which he readily agreed to write a pass. Even with the late pass in hand, I still shook as I walked into that calculus class late and I was relieved that Mr. Geller let me take my seat without commenting on my lateness.

If I am giving a one-sided picture of Richard, let me tell you that there was absolutely another side. Every so often, when there was a half-day or shortened classes at Stuyvesant, I would bring my two young children along with me. My daughter, now 23 years old, still remembers with glee the day that "Uncle Richard" took her and her younger brother for chocolate pastry at a nearby French bakery. I remember many times coming up to Richard and snapping his suspenders and laughing as he gave me that Richard Geller look that said, "Will you ever grow up? Are you having fun yet?" as he quickly got away from me. I remember once asking him why he was attending a girls' basketball game and he told me that he went to all the girls' basketball games, that he wanted to show his support for them. I remember how he called me when he heard that I was going to be leaving Stuyvesant to teach in New Jersey and how genuinely disappointed he was. Last spring, when I found out that Richard was ill, I sent him a get-well card. He responded by writing back to me and saying, "The best part of the day is teaching." Of course, he ended his note by writing, "Math is #1!"

I saw Richard for the last time in June 2011. I told him that I had started a Math Club at Bergen Community College, where I am now a professor. He smiled at me and I knew that he was proud of me. I had seen during my seventeen years at Stuyvesant High School how much pleasure he had gotten as head of the Math Team and how much the students had gained from the time they spent learning from him at Math Team, and I knew that I wanted to do something similar to this at Bergen Community College. Ironically, as Richard was dying at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, November 1, 2011, I was holding a Math Club meeting.

Richard has enriched the lives of all those who knew him. I will miss my colleague, my mentor, and my friend.

Sincerely,  
Nelda Latham, Mathematics Teacher at Stuyvesant ('85-'02)



I had Mr. Geller for two straight years. That was four semesters in a row from September 1984 through June 1986. This was when the curriculum was not Geometry and Trig, but Sequential Math II and III. Two whole years. Do you have any idea what that was like? Heaven and Hell all wrapped up into one, but still the best two years of math in my life.

I always thought that if I were a teacher I would want to model myself after Mr. Geller. He was very strict but at the same time, so very fair. Your grades were based on your tests and that's it! (No one was graded differently. There were no teacher's pets.) He cared so very much about his students learning the material he always helped after class when asked.

Some unique memories of him I have are:

Once he came to class dressed in jeans and a tee shirt, which he had never done. The shirt read GIRARDET, and he promised bonus points on the next exam if anyone knew what it was. No one did of course and he went on to explain that when on vacation in Switzerland he went to the acclaimed restaurant of that name, as he considered himself a gourmand in addition to a math teacher. Well Girardet was closed to his disappointment, but as he was about to leave, the chef/ owner Fredy Girardet himself pedaled up on a bicycle, and after brief chat about his respect for his craft, Girardet literally gave Geller the (sweaty, ugh!) shirt off his back...the same one he wore in class that day.

He gave me a 99% on my Sequential II Regents because I failed to put a period at the end of a sentence in my geometry proof. He said he expected better of me. He DID warn us about that, so how could I argue...Man was I mad! The next year as he called me in for my results on Sequential III he said I had improved on this one...100% yay!

He was very strict about cutting class, yet strangely, to our disbelief, he allowed us (those who had been with him for two full years) one free cut. I was afraid to take it because he was so fast paced I didn't want to miss anything. Well, as the year drew to a close, only two of us hadn't taken the cut and he reminded us, so I said I'd take mine the next day, as the curriculum was pretty much done and Regents were coming up. The other student also took the cut the next day. He then announced to the whole class the next class was cancelled for everyone! Man...what a wasted free pass.

Rest in Peace, beloved teacher!

—Michael Bronowitz ('87)

# Reflections

Few people can truly exhibit the amount of passion, dedication, and enthusiasm towards their job that Mr. Geller did teaching math. The fact that he was still working to educate students only a few weeks ago under the pain and stress of cancer shows how much he really cared. Mr. Geller taught me both terms of trig in my sophomore year, so I was among those who were both saddened and shocked by news of his condition. Cancer is an ugly thing, but Mr. Geller handled it maturely and realistically, always updating us about his treatment and staying optimistic. He told us that the best medicine was teaching his students. Looking back, I see now that he probably didn't want us to be distracted from learning his favorite (and the #1!) subject by any rumors about his health. It's incredible how in his last few months, Mr. Geller was still concerned about our education. His love of teaching math was surpassed probably only by love for his family. His classroom is covered in posters of mathematicians, saved newspaper clippings about math team victories, and sooo many photos of his family, friends, and travels as "the other Mr. Geller." (By the way, there isn't much difference between these two supposedly different people. They both appear truly happy and contented with their lives, and have the same twinkle in their eye.)

Mr. Geller inspired and encouraged us not only to continue specifically in the field of math or logic, but to find our true passion—something in which we don't have to be paid to enjoy. I can only hope to become half as devoted towards something as Mr. Geller was about teaching. It is amazing how many lives he has impacted while doing something he loved. Stuyvesant has lost one of their own, and there isn't much that I can do but thank my trigonometry teacher from the bottom of my heart for his lessons in both trigonometry and life. Rest in peace, Mr. Geller. I hope the Math gods are treating you well.

—Selena Zhou ('13)

Mr. Geller loved his job more than anyone I have ever met, and more than anyone I will probably ever meet. Coming out of that class, I know he didn't just teach math: he taught us how to make our own choices in life. He told us to do what we love and not to listen to parents, society, or any other pressures when deciding on what to do with our lives. His parents weren't happy with his choice to be a math teacher, but he reminded us that it wasn't their choice.

In a place like Stuy, where the pressure to be the best is ever ubiquitous, a voice saying this to the students is vital. His voice reminded kids that they too have a voice in their futures. He reminded the students that it wasn't about being the best, and it wasn't about being a hotshot lawyer or doctor. It's about doing what makes you happy. Because in the end, if you're not happy, what's the point?

This philosophy will forever be with me, as I'm sure it will for the hundreds of other students he's taught. Someday, I hope I love what I do as much as Richard Geller did.

Rest in peace.

—Andy Chen ('11)

I remember my freshman year at Stuyvesant High School. I was a member of the math team at that time, but wasn't very engaged. I even skipped out on a math meet once. During the next day in math team class, Mr. Geller pulled me out of the classroom and berated me for about 5 minutes. Needless to say, I felt a bit bad ever since that I'd wasted an opportunity given to me, and decided to re-dedicate myself after a year of absence to do math team again during junior year. I remember Mr. Geller complimenting me on my good scores on math competitions by my senior year, and I was thrilled to have his favor again.

—John Yang ('06)



Dear Mr. Geller,

I just want to thank you for a wonderful semester of math, and for being so helpful to all of your students. In the beginning of the year, I have to admit, your grading policies scared me a bit. But now, I completely understand why you use the rubric you do. You helped me realize that math class was about learning math, not about getting high grades; you taught the subject with clarity, making sure every student understood the topic before leaving the classroom. There was rarely any material on the tests that you hadn't explicitly taught us in class, and I feel having us make study sheets before every test was very helpful. I've started making similar study sheets in my other classes, and they have definitely had a positive impact on my overall grades. I admire your efforts to be fair, your make-up test policies in particular; you sure weren't lying when you told us that we'd get the grade we deserved in your class. You stayed for hours after school on Wednesdays to help out students who were struggling with the material, and your lesson plans for these tutoring sessions were just as well-organized and effective as your lesson plans for regular classes. I like that you chose to teach us the topics of linear interpolation and some elementary statistics, even though they weren't parts of the curriculum. I found the Unified Mathematics textbook we used last term very easy to understand, and the AMSCO Regents book was always helpful for a simplified view of a topic. The choice to make certain Do Now questions extra credit questions (and the addition of the gambling element) was genius, as it inspired many students to pay closer attention in class. Your absolute dedication to math and teaching has inspired me, and I feel I've learned many valuable life lessons from your class. The good habits your class instilled in me will remain with me for the rest of my life, and for that, I'd like to offer my sincerest thanks. I'd also like to apologize for underperforming on the final. It really is a shame that I won't have you again for a class.

Now that I've told you everything I've loved about your class, I want to wish you the best of luck. I was devastated when I heard you were sick, and moved to write you this letter. You really made a difference in my life, Mr. Geller.

Sincerely,  
Daryl Sew ('13)

During my four years at Stuyvesant, Mr. Geller ruled the math team. Like many others of us in the tribe of the mathematically minded, he had a strong desire to have things in their right place. He patrolled the hallway on the fourth floor, ensuring that everyone was present and accounted for, that math was being done, and that anarchy wasn't breaking out in the rooms led by math team captains. As far as I can tell, this same instinct informed his interests in mathematical problem-solving and in maintaining calm in the classroom and hallways, his awe-inspiring fairness and his ability to almost single-handedly manage roughly 200 of us spread over a half-dozen rooms taking dozens of different competitions each semester.

Stuyvesant math team was for me, and I hope for many of my peers, a unique and wonderful experience. I will always be indebted to Mr. Geller for making it possible. Math is #1!

—Joel Lewis, Math Team Captain ('01-'03)

# *Reflections*

The news of Mr. Geller's passing unexpectedly brought tears to my eyes.

Unlike so many of his students, Mr. Geller did not achieve outwardly "great" things. He won no grand prizes, and received no fancy appointments. In fact, sitting in his classroom as he animatedly shouted at us, I doubt many of my peers, ambitious as we were, plotted to follow in his footsteps.

And yet, as the outpouring upon his passing shows, he has made a deeply personal mark in far more lives than many of us ever will. It seems Mr. Geller was able to do this because he was not only great at what he did but was also overflowing with love. One couldn't sit in his classroom for more than a week before realizing that Mr. Geller loved his family, math, and his students.

Mr. Geller's early passing robbed future students of the chance to see that greatness doesn't preclude love. Mr. Geller will remain in my memory as one of the few teachers who was unapologetically great at what he did, while heartwarming zealously in his sincere affection. His influence has extended far beyond his classroom.

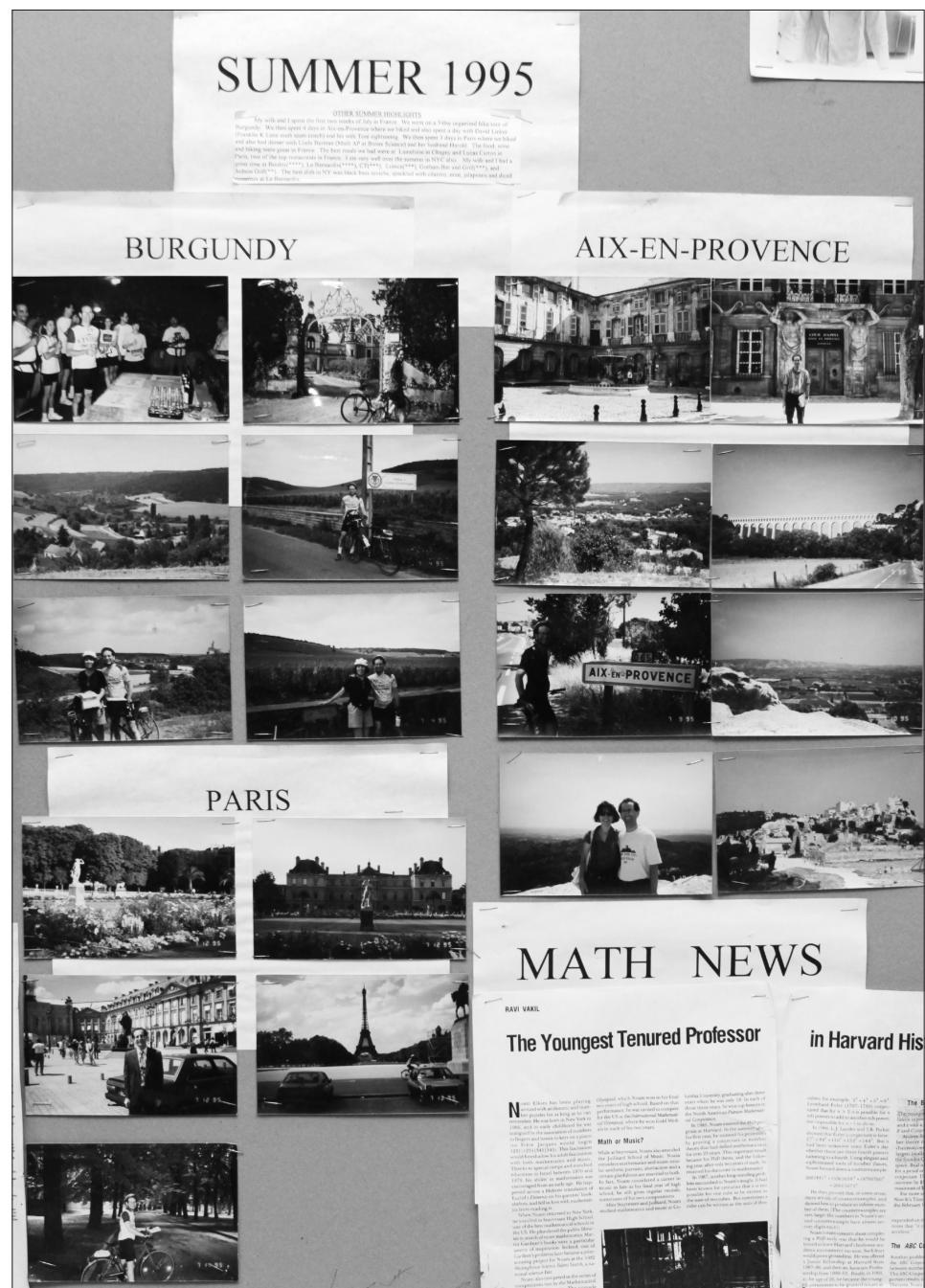
—Jeanette Park ('98)

Dear Mr. Geller,

Although I've never had you as a teacher and although I didn't know you on a personal level, your passing has touched the lives of so many, including myself. When I was informed of your passing by my gov. teacher, I was stunned and automatically thought back to exactly a week ago when you rushed me off the fourth floor. It amazes me of how unexpected life is. Last year at graduation I was there when you gave your commencement speech at the Class of 2011 graduation and listened to every word. I went home and watched the same speech over again and could see your humor and passion for teaching. The loss of such an inspirational figure is not only felt by the Stuyvesant community but the thousands of students you've impacted in and out of the classroom. RIP Mr. Geller, 11/1/11 at 1 p.m. Math is #1.

With much respect,

—Nabila Khatun ('12)



A year with an insane math teacher who knows how to teach has inspired me to learn. His crazy speech before tests about no cheating and his view about math has caused wonders.

Before his tests he would jump and shout out "STUDY, MATH IS NUMBER ONE!"

- Oscar Cheung, Haiku Journey, 2010

- Oscar Cheung, Haiku Journey, 2010  
Four months ago after graduation, my mom asked who

Four months ago after graduation, my mom asked who “That’s Mr. Geller, one of the best math teachers I had.”

"He's quite energetic at his age."

"He's quite energetic at his age."  
"Yeah, he's battling cancer too!"

“From his energy, I can say he’s winning”

From his energy, I can say he's winning.  
Today, it can be said that this assumption was wrong.

I hated him. He was strict and forbid any freedom in the class. However, after a few weeks, I began to like him. He always checked homework, his tests were a bit of a challenge, so why did I begin to appreciate this teacher? I guess it's because he knew how to teach, and did it better than other teacher I had. His classroom strictness (and occasional hallway confiscation of cards, and kicking loud people out of the halls) ensured that we learned what we needed to. Missing homework? I'd have until the end of the term to make all of them up, with only a small deduction for lateness. He forced us to do homework so we understood what he taught. His tests were structured so that we'd have to utilize everything he taught us.

So he was doing his job right. A lot of other teachers in Stuy do their jobs right too.

But I've never had any teacher who adored what he taught so much. Math is Mr. Geller and Mr. Geller is math. Math is number 1. Therefore, Mr Geller is number 1. I really love how he showed that he's not just a crazy math teacher by telling us about his personal life. Three years ago on Halloween, he dressed up as a chef with "Chez Geller" stitched on his back. He told us about how he loved to cook and how his wife got him this outfit from a restaurant they loved. At the end of the term, he told us about his family and his interest; he had two children and he loved to bike. Mr. Geller hoped that we would find something we love doing as much as he loved teaching math and ended by saying, "Family is actually #1," something unexpected from him at the time. I had him for two terms, and I've felt the same emotions when I heard his speech the first time as well as the second time.

At graduation, he ended his speech the same way—with energy, hope, and happiness.

At graduation, we ended his speech the same way with energy, hope and happiness.

Mr. Geller inspired many kids throughout his years. Future Stuy students will miss out on the irreplaceable experiences that we all had.

- Oscar Cheung ('11)



I was saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Richard Geller. He was my math teacher at J. H. S. 143 Manhattan from 1973 to 1974 before he transferred to Stuyvesant H. S. I was in an advanced math class in which I took the 11th grade math regents/Algebra 2 in 9th grade. We had six periods of math, and Mr. Geller was always available for additional help before classes began. He also facilitated the study course for the exam for specialized high schools that I attended. I went to Bronx Science, as many of my peers did. Even then his dedication to his students and his love of math was so evident. "Math is number 1." He will be missed by all who knew him.

—Lynn Rothschild

## Reflections



I never knew Mr. Geller. I remember seeing his smiling photograph in a Spectator article last year. I knew that he was going through troublesome treatment to fight the cancer. I knew he was the greatest math teacher I'll never have the opportunity to learn from.

I transferred from Stuyvesant to Phillips Exeter Academy this year as a sophomore. Even though I don't attend Stuy anymore, seeing this flood of heartfelt messages about Mr. Geller has really struck a chord in me. I understand that overcoming hardships and suffering can be difficult. It is, however, hard for me to imagine how others, whose lives have been affected more by Mr. Geller's presence, must be going through now. It's amazing how much of an impact a stranger to me has made upon me.

This event has probably helped me appreciate my relationships with the people I do know more and has spurred me to build friendships with those I don't know yet.

Thank you, Mr. Geller.

—Lloyd Feng

Dear Mr. Geller,

I never really liked math all that much. I always looked at it as a really complicated subject. I was never all that great with numbers. I remember when I first heard about you. I was happy that I didn't have you at the time. Your line, "Math is number one!" is after all, and there really isn't another way to say it, legendary. Students leave after four years in Stuy with uncertainties, but you made them remember how important math was. A kid like me, who didn't like math, wouldn't seem to fit with a math god as yourself.

They were me two years ago. Me, with my ignorant mind. When sophomore year came around, I remember talking to my friends, asking who that had for math. A good number of them said they had you. At first, my ignorant mind felt pity for them. However, as the year progressed, I noticed that their test scores, compared to mine, were significantly better. I would ask how they did so well, and they would all reply some variation of, "Mr. Geller is a really great math teacher." I started to then get a little jealous. Now that I think about it, I always have admired you. It takes a real passion to stick to one thing, such as teaching students mathematics.

This brings me to your bout with lung cancer. When I first heard of it, I figured you would retire. But you amazed me. You kept at it, and I don't think I'll ever be able to understand your passion for math. I don't believe anyone can. But I would bet my life that everyone respected and admired it.

Today's a tragic day, November 1, 2011. You moved on. At 1 o'clock on this day, you passed away. Is it odd that I find it fitting that it happened at such a time? Today's filled with a lot of ones. And your catch line, what you were possibly best known for, was "Math is #1!" Just thought it was something worth pointing out. I guess the math god needed his number one worshipper. Regardless of the reason, you have moved on. But you haven't left us, those who loved and admired you, behind. It goes without saying that you left a good chunk of yourself behind. You left yourself scarred in the mind of every man, woman, and child to have ever walked through the front doors of Stuyvesant High School. You left a little bit of yourself in each and every one of us. You've impacted all of our lives through some way and if we hold on to these memories and lessons learnt, you can never, truly have left us. It just isn't possible.

So I guess you're with the angels now, looking down from a better place. I'm going to do my math homework in a bit, right after I'm done with this, no worries. My mom once told me, though, that when you're on the verge of going to sleep, an angel comes to your ear and sings you a lullaby. Can I ask one favor, Mr. Geller? Teach them a new tune, because I'm getting zero sleep nowadays. You should start off with the quadratic formula song! Wouldn't that be awesome, having us learn math in our sleep?

I spent the last half hour just randomly going over memories and thoughts, and I guess I should wrap it up. I still have that math homework to do. But I do want to say one final thought, Mr. Geller, and I know that everyone else will agree with me with this. You're wrong, Mr. Geller. Math is not number one. It's number two. You were number one.

—Dipu Rahman ('13)

I was not fortunate enough to have Mr. Geller as a math teacher, but I accompanied my friend to his tutoring sessions after school, the first of which was held on the day that he announced his cancer to his classes. Even though I wasn't a student of his, he helped me when I was really struggling, and for that I will be forever grateful. The Stuyvesant community has truly lost someone special, but through all this grief, I hope we can continue to celebrate the wonderful man he was.

—Rabia Rashid ('13)

**Unless otherwise noted,  
all photos were taken from  
Room 437 and were reprint-  
ed with the permission of  
Richard Geller's wife, Bar-  
bara Geller.**



# Arts and Entertainment

## Nickle-and-Dine: Atomic Wings



Atomic Wings is located at 321 9th street in Park Slope

By MATTHEW DALTON

Walking into Atomic Wings, one experiences a sudden sensory overload. Four TVs with each showing a different football game, three computers, a foosball table, and a "claw" game adorn the neon orange room. Part man-arcade, part wing joint, Atomic Wings, a popular New York franchise, strives to serve big meals to hungry people.

The perfect place to combat cravings, Atomic Wings and its quick service ensure that five minutes are all one waits for delicious wings, which are ordered in three easy steps. First, choose the style of wing. Options include the original Buffalo wings, the hand-battered boneless version, or a combination of the two. Next, pick your size. A single portion (10 wings) goes for \$8.49, a double helping (20 wings) for \$16.49, a bucket (50 wings) for \$39.99, or a party platter (100 wings) for \$76.99. Finally, choose your sauce. Spiciness comes in two categories: the "sane" category includes the usual mild, medium, or hot, while the "insane" includes intensities such as

"abusive," "nuclear," and "suicidal." Usually, the burn does not linger for long with any of their tamer sauces. One can also choose from eight other sauces, including BBQ, Garlic Parmesan, and a more exotic Thai Chili. Six or seven of these sumptuous wings are bound to fill one up, so one should consider sharing.

Aside from their specialty wings, which are served with celery, carrots, and blue cheese, Atomic Wings offers an extensive menu that includes appetizers, salads, soups, chilis, burgers, wraps, and sandwiches, all for under \$10.

Atomic Wings is more than just a wing joint. It is a haven for people of all ages and walks of life. Its delicious, bold wings satisfy hungry students just as

**Part man-arcade,  
part wing joint,  
Atomic Wings, a  
popular New York  
franchise, strives  
to serve big meals  
to hungry people.**

they do football-loving, corporate men who just want to watch to kick back and watch the game.

By CHRISTINE LEE

Most remakes disappoint. Most comic book remakes? Let's not even talk about it. Surprisingly, the premiere of the second season of "The Walking Dead," which aired on AMC at 9 p.m. on Sunday, drew in huge crowds of zombie-lovers. With its emotionally charged plot and haunting scenes, the series spins all the overplayed elements of typical

gut-wrenching gore and makes them new again. Watch out; the zombies are coming.

Based on the comic book series "The Walking Dead," by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charlie Arland, the series revolves around a small group of survivors in a small town in Georgia under the leadership of Sheriff Deputy Rick Grimes and his family in a post-apocalyptic, zombified world. AMC revitalized

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

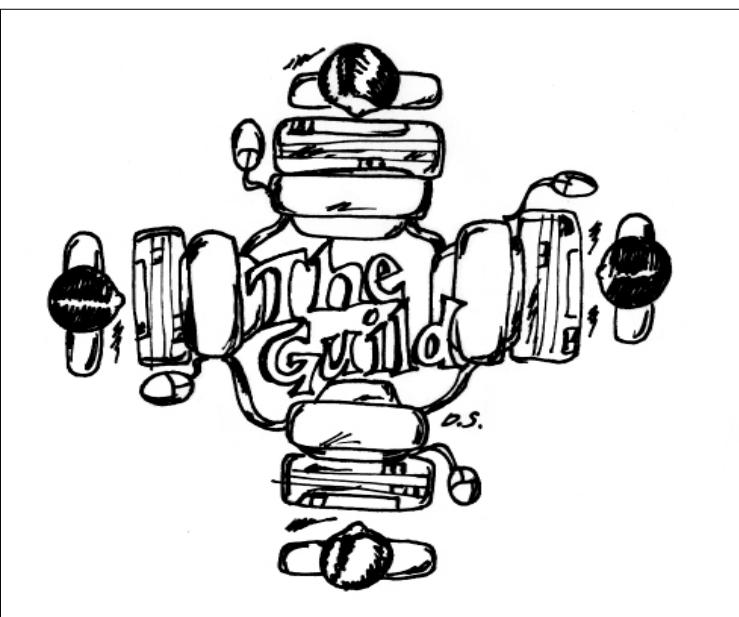
Exasperatedly staring into a webcam, doe-eyed, red-headed game addict Cyd recounts her awkward and amusing experiences of the day with surprising honesty: despite the misery of catching her last boyfriend cheating on her with another man, losing her job as a violinist, and an inability to maintain stable friendships, she attempts to remain happy by immersing herself in an imaginary world. She resorts to playing a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), similar to World of Warcraft. Her video gaming guild is called the Knights of Good and consists of five equally desperate, obsessed companions. Through their gaming, the friends circumvent social and romantic frustration in the web-series "The Guild."

"The Guild," which just finished its fifth season, began in 2007, starring actress and creator Felicia Day as Cyd. Known for her roles in Joss Whedon's "Buffy: the Vampire Slayer" and "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog," Day had previously been addicted to online gaming, and adapts her experience into the refreshing and hilarious series.

Presented in brief, several minute episodes, each beginning with one of Cyd's webcam monologues, "The Guild" tells an internet-age story that is both unique in presentation and amusing in content. Throughout the series, Cyd attempts to make her guild members become friends in real life, in an attempt to ameliorate her misfortune, as well as to help them conquer their own eccentricities.

The development of Cyd's romantic life—tragically introduced with the story of her boyfriend's infidelity—throughout the series further illustrates her struggle to overcome her loneliness. At the same time, it entertains viewers with her lack of fortune and almost unbelievable

## Gaming With The Guild: Trials of a Friendship



failures. In the first season, she is pursued by her guild-mate Sujan (Sandeep Parikh), who believes the two have a fated romantic connection due to his misinterpretation of internet cues, such as a winking smiley-face. He locates her apartment, camps inside, and refuses to leave until he is recognized. In the fourth season, she mistakes a one night stand for the beginning of a relationship, a misconception that leads to much embarrassment.

Cyd searches failably for romance, her lack of which makes her seek emotional connection in her guild's friendship. Another member of the guild, Clara (Robin Thorsen) is a stay-at-home mother of three who uses gaming to relieve her boredom. Her unconventional attitude toward child-rearing is both scary and amusing. For example, she often locks her kids up in a pen so that they do not disrupt her long hours of gaming. Through Clara's caricature of an unfulfilled mother, the series creates a compelling parody of abusive online gamers.

Cyd's efforts to unite her guild into a more socially functional group of friends adds another dimension of emotional warmth

to the series. Through bitter rivalries with other guilds, like the Axis of Anarchy, the six—including the sarcastic college girl Tink (Amy Okuda), who refuses to share her real name; the malicious teenager Simon (Vincent Caso); and the grotesque middle-aged guild-leader Holden (Jeff Lewis)—build their friendship through gaming. Though they all have quirky behaviors, and a lack of understanding when it comes to social convention, they are able to become comfortable with one another's eccentricities. They experience something uncommon for themselves: having friends involved in their personal lives.

"The Guild" is a dynamically entertaining web-series that shows the unorthodox development of a connection between several people who, other than their gaming, have little in common with each other. More than a parody of the stereotypical online gamer, "The Guild" is an unexpectedly heart-warming tale about the overcoming of social adversity.

Episodes can be found on [watchtheguild.com](http://watchtheguild.com)

## The Zombies Are Back

es the typical horror movie scenario and creates an emotional whirlpool.

The actors capture the characters' emotions successfully, making each persona seem relatable and realistic. What the viewer sees is a group of people desperate to survive, but on the brink of collapsing as they face their bleak reality. In a moving scene, the survivors stumble into a church while looking for Sophia (Madison Lintz), the daughter of a group member, Carol (Melissa McBride). Carol sits down in a pew and begins praying out loud to Jesus for the safety of her daughter. Her pleas are filled with the heart-wrenching sound of maternal desperation.

The setting in this scene is unsettling and disturbing. The church room is filled with empty pews facing an ivory statue of Christ, hung from a large wooden cross and wearing his signature crown of thorns. The camera closes up on him to end the scene, and it almost looks as if tears are rolling down his cheeks. The disturbing image captivates the audience in a moment of grim silence, capturing Carol's grief and the haunting possibility that Sophia might have been

eaten.

Another powerful scene is when Andrea (Laurie Holden) faces the decision to cling to hope or give up and die as a zombie invades her RV. The scene is beautifully depicted,

**The disturbing image captivates the audience in a moment of grim silence, capturing Carol's grief and the haunting possibility that Sophia might have been eaten.**

with fear pulsating in every shot. The cramped space of the RV bathroom, the close-ups of the hideous zombie's crazed slams against the door, and Andrea's terrified shaking all make for a nail-biting scene. When a fel-



low survivor, Dale (Jeffrey DeMunn), throws her a weapon—a screwdriver—from the sunroof, Andrea instinctively picks it up to fight. She viciously mauls the zombie, and when it finally falls, the viewer can almost hear her sanity snap as she sinks to the ground in hysterical sobs. Redness stains her clothes and pools on the floor. Beside her, the corpse is unmoving.

Holden's acting is startling as she shifts from a tough female to a broken mess on the floor. Holden wears Andrea's heart on her sleeve, revealing the disgust and guilt she feels for her actions afterwards, thereby garnering the sympathy of the show's viewers.

While "The Walking Dead" has the basic premise of every zombie film or television show, its realism and emotive acting set it apart. Thoughtful and provoking, the show makes viewers feel everything from sheer terror to disgust to overwhelming sadness. It also tempts them into imagining themselves in the characters' blood-splattered shoes. Would you pick up the screwdriver? Or would you give up and let the door open?

# Arts and Entertainment

## Ten Years Later: Remembering Tragedy With Their Eyes



Joann Lee / The Spectator

The cast members of the fall drama, *With Their Eyes*, perform on Saturday, October 22.

**By MATTHEW DALTON,  
MOLLIE FORMAN  
and OTHILLA WLODARCZYK**

"Sometimes your rationality fails you during a time of crisis," says sophomore Tony Qian (junior Haymar Lim), wringing his hands and looking around with shell-shocked eyes. "I never believed that until that day."

A collection of monologues compiled by English teacher Annie Thoms based on interviews with members of the Stuyvesant community, "With Their Eyes," this year's STC fall drama, ruminates on the events of September 11 and their aftermath. Directed by junior Ivy Marcella, sophomore Teddy Becker-Jacob, freshman assistant Mitchell Teper, and produced by junior Neeta D'Souza and senior Viktoria Hallikaar, the show was performed on Thursday, October 20 through Saturday, October 22 in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the attacks. By focusing on emotionality and a wide range of perspectives, this

production transcended those ten years to create a tapestry of sentiment and experience, resulting in a comprehensive view of a seemingly incomprehensible event.

Set in Stuyvesant's third floor atrium, the unfinished looking backdrop consisted of a painting of the large quilt that adorns the actual atrium, lockers, and the window view onto the river. The lighting consisted almost solely of steady spotlights, a fitting choice for this stationary show.

The play opens with a spotlight on a line of nine characters, who proceed to give short statements that shed light on their personalities and show their unique views on the events of 9/11. This served as an impressive hook, transporting the audience back to the months after the attack.

Following this introduction, the lights dimmed and the curtain opened on two new performers, junior Muki Barkan as senior Max Willens and sophomore Oliver Lipton as senior Ilya Feldsherov, who alternated the delivery of

their monologues.

Though Willens's story line was initially hard to follow, Barkan delivered his lines about losing his home with solemn conviction. Lipton evoked the naïve Feldsherov's fear with a perfectly faltering voice, though his mannerisms did tend to get repetitive as the monologue went on.

In each scene, a group consisting of five or six actors all in black accompanied the main characters. At first, their role on stage is unclear, but it is eventually understood that they help support the characters' stories through mime, carrying flags at a commemoration in Battery Park and jostling a monologist who is walking down the stairs at Brooklyn Tech. Though the group's role is minor, they added a welcomed extra dimension to the performance.

The majority of the play consisted of long monologues performed back to back, which were generally powerful and evocative, though at times faltering. By dispensing with plot and formal

structure, this play rested almost exclusively on the actors' shoulders. With no narrative to follow, the audience was allowed to focus solely on the words being said, and the success of each monologue was determined almost entirely by the quality of the actor.

Senior Josiah Mercer, as social studies teacher Matt Polazzo, perfectly captured the use of humor to cope with the tragedy. When describing the multitude of free gifts that the faculty was sent after the attack, Polazzo said, "It's almost as if they were testing some of this stuff on us [...] You expect a certain taste when you eat popcorn, but this, this was sweet." His swaggering yet vulnerable performance was one of the highlights of the show.

Senior Jackie Krass also stood out as building manager Renee Levine, who describes comforting students fleeing up the West Side Highway while also reassuring herself: "Okay, you're going to hold someone's hand. I don't care if you know them or not, you're going to hold their hand and not look back. And I didn't look back."

This powerful statement embodies the fear felt by the Stuyvesant community, and like many other exceptionally memorable lines in the play, exposed the raw emotions of the students and faculty during the attack; from bitter anger, shown by sophomore Kevin Zhang (senior Brandon Foo) criticizing his friends for laughing when the first plane hit, to the shock of becoming aware of one's own mortality, as described by security guard Juan Carlos Lopez (senior Ravtej Kohli). Kohli's understated delivery of his lines as he explains that his son was the last thing he saw as his life flashed before his eyes was one of the most powerful moments of the show.

Sophomore Israt Hossain, as junior Aleiya Gafar, delivered another achingly subtle performance. A bubbly Big Sib and Red Cross volunteer, Gafar initially conveyed infectious optimism, discussing her pride in the maturity of her little sibs, and the cute firemen who came all the way

from Ohio. Then she mentions, almost as a side note, that one of her aunts went missing. Hossain didn't over-dramatize the moment—her voice faltered, broke, but then she continued. More than any other actor, through body language and an expressive voice, she succeeded in creating a fully fleshed character.

The show also explores students' feelings of sudden displacement upon being forced to move to Brooklyn Tech after the attacks, while the Stuyvesant building was being used as a triage center, as well as their joy upon returning to the building in Tribeca. Alejandro Torres Hernandez (freshman Razwan Miah) summed up these emotions with the emphatic proclamation, "I LOVE STUY!" which earned Miah a standing ovation on Friday.

Senior Lilja Walter delivered the final monologue as Kenneth "Kern" Levigion. Kern tells the story of Stuyvesant's American flag, which vanished after the attacks only to be rediscovered when he chanced on a picture of it being hoisted by firemen at Ground Zero. Tactfully placed, this monologue leaves the audience with hope, as the flag—a symbol for the Stuyvesant community—is seen surviving the attacks and continuing its legacy, having traveled with the U.S. Military to Afghanistan. Walter delivered her lines with endearing earnestness and simplicity.

"With Their Eyes" is a unique and unconventional play, and should be approached as such. By making the viewer work to braid all the moving pieces together, it is almost like that awful day is being reconstructed in one's own mind, making the stories of these disparate people all the more personal.

Through the many different views each monologue provides of 9/11, "With Their Eyes" conveys a massive, tangled chunk of humanity. Overall, the very moving performances allowed the audience to look back on that day with a new perspective, providing a consolidated vision of September 11 for a whole new generation of students.

## Submerged in the Shadows

**By NIKI CHEN  
and NICOLE SANCHEZ**

When all the lights are out, and it's so dark you can't even see your own hand in front of you, it is very easy to feel frightened and alone. It's easy to be unsure of every step you take, never knowing who or what is behind you. Fear surrounds you from head to toe, closing you off from the rest of the world.

This is what the blind deal with every day – they must navigate through a world of complete darkness on their own, with only a cane or an animal to guide them.

The exhibition "Dialog in the Dark," located at the South Street Seaport, is a brilliant presentation that strives to show sighted people what it feels to be blind, if only just for an hour. Guests are given a cane, lead into a room, and forced to navigate with only the voice of their guide for help. No light seeps through cracks in the walls of the exhibition room, and it is impossible to see the person you keep bumping into, or the poles and walls your cane bumps against. Your only hope is your guiding stick, and the steady reliable voice of your tour guide.

Though this is the first time Dialog in the Dark has been shown in New York, exhibits of its kind have previously been featured at venues around the world. The exposition that began it all

was unveiled in Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in 1988 in Frankfurt, Germany. Andreas Heinecke, a German journalist, filmmaker, and the man behind the initial opening, developed the idea for the show after gaining insight to the hardships that blind people had to face. In 1986, his colleague from the broadcasting corpora-

crimination and difficulties the blind face each day. He began the project with stern intentions – he wanted people who felt superior to be forced to rely on others they may have thought to be inferior. Though the original location has long been closed, many others have been inspired by it, and there are a total of 19 exhibits of this kind worldwide.

For most of your "Dialog" experience, you are guided through various simulations of New York City in complete darkness. Each tour begins with an introductory video that explains the usage of the cane (one is supposed to swing it back and forth on the floor from in a tight arc) and the infrared security camera system that the exhibit uses to ensure each visitor's safety. Then, visitors move into the immersion chamber in which they are slowly submerged into total darkness. From there, a legally blind guide introduces him/herself to the group of people he/she will guide and leads the group through the door to the simulation "sights". There are the roads of Central Park to walk, the shelves of Fairway Market to slip about, the stairs to the subway to tackle, and the streets of Times Square to maneuver around. Even with a cane swishing around in front of you, every step is a difficult one, but a challenge you soon learn to accept.

Challenges like these are what truly open the eyes of sighted



The "Dialog in the Dark" exhibition is located at 11 Fulton Street.

people to life in total darkness. Though you know that you really aren't in Central Park or Times Square, it's very easy to believe the illusion. Air blows on your neck to simulate wind, drops of water that escape from the fountain in the park land on you, and you can hear the rapid bustle of Times Square as clear as day. But without being able to see any of these things, one must rely on only smell, touch, and sound that guide the way. And when that isn't enough, and you realize that you cannot do everything alone, you learn to accept the hand of a stranger to do something as "simple" as going up a flight of stairs.

"Dialog in the Dark" teaches us how valuable our senses are. The exhibit forces you to use only

your sense of touch, sound, and smell. Without eyesight, you are able to realize how helpful and treasured these other senses are. Stumbling through the pitch-black rooms, one grows to appreciate their abilities and becomes more understanding of the situations the blind community must face on a daily basis, expanding their horizons as a person.

"You get to appreciate more the smile of a baby, the eyes of a loved one, the color of the rainbow after it rains, the watery reflection of the sky, and the color of the most lovely rose," guide Angelo Quinones said at the end of one tour. "Sometimes we take those things for granted, when in reality, vision is a gift."

Vivian Huang / The Spectator

# Arts and Entertainment

## A Child Soldier's Story



Lisa Lee / The Spectator

By MEG PALMER

Do you remember what you liked to do when you were seven?

I do. When I was in first grade, I played dress-up. I learned to print, read, and do basic math.

When he was seven, Emmanuel Jal was not playing cops-and-robbers or watching cartoons. He was using real guns and watching his family and country be torn apart. Unfortunately, Jal's story is no work of fiction.

Jal recalls his harsh past in his memoir "War Child: A Child Soldier's Story" and his rap/hip-hop album "Warchild". With an undecorated style that makes his reality all the more difficult to read about, Jal writes eloquently about the disturbing world he lived in. His memoir starts with his childhood in the Sudan and follows Jal to a refugee camp in Ethiopia where he is trained as child soldier. In his music, Jal sings of war, rape, sorrow, and other lessons he has learned. Though Jal was eventually saved by an aid

worker, his time in the Second Sudanese Civil War has shaped and continues to shape his life.

In 1882, after Britain helped quell resistance from the natives and separated Egypt from the Sudan, the Sudan was split into two colonies that were ruled independently by Arabs in the north and Christians in the south. Years after the Arabs gained control over the south, the discovery of oil there lead to the eviction of many southern tribes from their ancestral lands, sparking rebellion.

In 1983, civil war broke out. The Christian and Animist Sudanese banded together to form the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and fight the tyranny of the North. The SPLA initially recruited willing volunteers, but the passion that led men to leave their families behind and fight for their freedom was not enough. The SPLA soon began looking to younger and younger boys to fight for their country.

Emmanuel Jal was one such boy. When he was seven, a soldier came to his home and told him he would be given food, an English education, aviation training, and honor if he left his home and joined the SPLA. He, along with hundreds of other six to nine year olds, began the long walk from the Sudan to the training camp in Ethiopia. On the way, many boys died of starvation, dehydration, or were left behind after collapsing from exhaustion. Hunger was Jal's biggest torment, so much so that, as he recalls in his memoir, he was tempted to eat the rotting flesh of his dead friend.

When the child soldiers

reached Ethiopia, they found not the training camp they had been promised but a squalid refugee camp. Food was scarce; sickness flew around the cramped quarters; rapists and thieves ran rampant. Jal survived by befriending the aid workers from other countries who had come to the camp—one such woman was Emma McCune, the wife of a prominent guerrilla leader, who would eventually help him escape.

Jal was trained to kill with an AK-47—the gun was larger than he was. He learned to steal, murder, loot, and attack. He was, as he recalls on his album, "forced to sin to make a living." It was a little more than a year before McCune took action to get him out; in the interim, Jal took part in many raids and battles. In his book, he relays these memories, including crushing people's facial bones with a machete, and his friend plunging a bayonet into the stomach of an enemy.

McCune brought Jal with her to Kenya, a neutral country, sent him to several European boarding schools (he was often kicked out for fighting the other students) and tried to protect him from the horrors that had filled his childhood. Jal was about eighteen when he began to write and perform music about his horrifying experiences.

Using strong beats and powerful lyrics, Jal's music blends memories of the past and hopes for the future. Starting out with the idea that he was "born to be a warchild" and "forced to sin," "Warchild" shows the darker sides of his life as a child soldier.

dier. He sings about his new life, the woman who saved him, and his renewed humanity: "Now that I got a chance to stand my ground/ I'm gonna run over mountains, leaps and bounds./ I ain't an angel, hope to be one soon,/ And if I am, I wanna be like Emma McCune."

Though his lyrics are eloquent and powerful, the writing in his memoir is lacking in stylistic maturity. His simple sentences, although they work well to tell his story, lack the sophistication a story like this should be dealt. Though the writing is of middling quality (which is expected as English was not his first language, and he did not learn it until he was in Europe), it is difficult to say something bad about a memoir that deals so well with such dark and important material. His music, however, makes the simple, clear writing more memorable. Jal, though no longer a child soldier, is still a child of war and, as such, uses his music and to teach and inspire.

In his memoir, Jal recalls the life he led before the war with fondness and writes with a melancholic nostalgia about the friends and family he never saw after the war. "War Child" also describes his personal triumphs, such as helping to bring together money to help other Lost Boys after McCune's death in 1993. Jal writes about his first song, "Gua," which won him international attention as a rapper for peace. Following in the footsteps of Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr., Jal uses messages of peace and forgiveness to spread the idea of nonviolence and a new, unified Sudan.

## Heroic Africans Exhibit: A New Look at African Art

By EMMALINA GLINSKIS and ELIZA MITNICK

Freestanding, deep brown sculptures depicting ancient leaders and gods line the long aisles of the dimly lit room. Ashen shadows reflect the figures in a larger scale, highlighting their regality and adding to their mysteriousness. What sounds like the description of a classic Roman temple or an Aztec pyramid in its prime is actually the artwork of an ancient culture much underappreciated in the modern art world—the West Africans.

The "Heroic Africans: Legendary Leaders, Iconic Sculptures," special exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, running through January 29, features sculptures and artifacts from eight distinct Western African cultures from the 12th century to the early 20th century—right before the Western colonization known as the "Scramble for Africa" occurred. Organized by curator Alisa LaGamma, the purpose of the exhibit is to challenge the mindset of only finding value and merit in Western art, and to spread awareness of the uniqueness and sophistication of the sculptural traditions of pre-colonial Africa. The common misconception that African art is primitive has been greatly circumscribed by political and social disruptions wrought on by colonialism and by the belief that the West African artistic culture merely consisted of oral traditions.

The "Heroic Africans" ex-

hibit is far from primitive. Each sculpture, whether made from limestone, brass, ivory, copper, terracotta, or wood, boasts the artist's skill level and displays an impressive attention to anatomical structure. This exposition offers a visual expression of the values and traditions of eight distinct cultures in West and Central Africa.

**"As a person not from this country, spirituality helped me overcome challenges in my life."**  
—George Pabi, security guard

The cultures featured in the exhibit are mostly from the Gold Coast, a region in West Africa. They include the Akan of Ghana, the Ife civilization, the Benin Kingdom of Nigeria, the Bangwa and Kom chiefdoms of Cameroon, the Chokwe of Angola and Zambia, the Luluwa, the Hemba,

and the Kuba of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Each of the four rooms is divided between the eight regions and their respective artwork—whether it be a king on a throne, a burial figurine, or a bust of a female goddess.

The artwork of the Akan culture of Ghana is especially unique. Created by female artisans and molded from terracotta, their pieces were used for highly spiritual and ritualistic burial ceremonies. As a result, the artwork is smaller, meant to be buried with the deceased, and was modeled after the person it would be buried with. The signature trait of these burial sculptures is closed eyes and parted lips, symbolizing death and spiritual life.

At the center of the Kom grassland kingdom room stands two majestic figures, the Chief Tufoyn and Queen Mother Naya. These two figures are made of rounded and fully defined copper and wood, and feature a human hair wig and intricate beaded jewelry in blue and white. The contrast created by the vivid blues and whites of the beads against the dark wood produces a beautiful effect; even the faces display carefully carved lines contouring their defined features. The detailed carving of their faces is evidence of the fallacy of the misconceptions many people hold about African art: that it is simple and animalistic, lacking the sophistication and realism often found in Western art.



The "Heroic Africans" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art features sculptures and artifacts from eight distinct Western African cultures.

The Hemba display features twenty-two standing wooden sculptures, all illuminated by a dim light. Standing together in a circular formation, the group of figures creates a powerful image of the Hemba tradition. The Hemba people lived in isolated clans and maintained a traditional lifestyle, even when faced with harsh droughts and guerrilla warfare. In this final room, the unity of the Hemba people is evident—each sculpture is replete with anatomical detail and poignant symbolism. After colonization, many men and women in the Hemba community, which underwent a particularly large amount of damage and displacement, kept these sculptures in their homes to hold onto the fleeting Hemba culture.

George Pabi, a Ghanaian

Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

# Arts and Entertainment

## A Record Company's Worst Nightmare

By ADAM LIEBER

When is the last time that you ventured out to a record store, slammed a twenty on the counter, and walked out with a CD? With all of the Web sites and computer applications, such as YouTube, Pandora, and Spotify, that legally let you listen to music for free and the accessible illegal downloading sites, like torrents, record companies are witnessing a drastic dipping of album sales. But this is not the only endangering factor; news has recently surfaced about a law that, starting in 2013, would potentially allow artists to "recapture," or regain, the rights to their songs from the record companies that have owned them for 35 years.

This law, the 1976 Copyright Act, which only applies to songs published from 1978 to present, is shrouded with ambiguity. It states that "authors" of songs have the right to file claims in order to gain back rights to their music, but does not specify who qualifies as an author. When an artist writes a piece of music, it is not yet a product that can be distributed to the public. The artist must first go to a recording studio where he works alongside session musicians, producers, and recording engineers. The session musicians, the musicians hired for a recording session, may be asked to improvise or play parts that the artist did not compose while the producers and engineers may contribute their own ideas regarding instrumentation and arrangement. Because of this process, an artist's original template for a song is usually different from that of the finished product. By this principle, a producer, engineer, or session musician might each claim that he is a partial "author" and is therefore entitled to royalties, or portions of a song's revenue, once the new law comes into effect.

Many record company executives have been anticipating the inevitable disputes over the impending law for decades and feel that they have a good defense argument. The executives say that most of the songs that artists will try to reclaim rights to are "work made for hire" songs. In other words, they are the songs that an artist is obligated to write in order to fulfill his contractual song or album quota and receive compensation.

According to Jay Cooper, a Los-Angeles-based entertainment lawyer and former president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), these record executives are making false claims. Cooper says that under copyright laws, there are nine categories that qualify as "work made for hire," but "sound recording" is not one of them. A qualifying example he cites is "audio/video production," which is when a movie production company commissions a composer to write a piece for a film's soundtrack.

In fact, in 1999, the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America), a coalition of label executives and distributors, tried to change this law via Mitch Glazier, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives at the time. Allegedly in the middle of the night, Glazier tried to sneak into the bill four words, which made "sound recordings" a tenth "work made for hire" category. Once reports of his act surfaced, NARAS cried out in opposition, and Congress repealed Glazier's change. Had Congress not repealed it, artists would not be entitled to recapture their songs, so Glazier remains a notorious figure among musicians even today. Despite committing an act of fraud, Glazier was interestingly able to leave the House of Representatives unscathed to take a job at the RIAA, where he still works as an in-house lawyer.

Due to the 1976 Copyright Act, which would allegedly grant artists the right to complete control over their music, there is sure to be chaos within the music industry in the upcoming years. Record companies will likely instigate court hearings over the matter, and there is even word that the issue would reach the Supreme Court. There are rumors that artists like Bob Dylan, Bryan Adams, and Tom Petty have already filed pleas to recapture their song rights. If these artists do succeed in stripping the record companies of their rights to these songs, certain companies will probably go out of business due to a lack of revenue. It is impossible to predict how this might affect our access to music, but we can definitely expect a further transformation of the way music is distributed and presented to the public.

## Thus Mimed George Valentin

By JOSHUA BOGATIN

With screens that stretch 50 feet long, 3D glasses that make blue cat-people appear to jump out into the audience, and blockbusters concerned more with merchandising than the actual movie, finding a modern film that delights its audience with pure, joyful storytelling—rather than distracts them with gimmick—is hard. "The Artist" isn't fit for the IMAX. Its dimension count stops at two, and it lacks exclusive Happy Meal toys—it doesn't even have sound, let alone color. But the film feels fresher and more fun than most films due to its simple ability to make you fall in love with the movies again while putting a smile on your face.

It is that simple pleasure of watching a movie, falling in love with its characters, and living in another world for 90 minutes that French director Michel Hazanavicius' new whimsical romantic-comedy "The Artist" is dedicated to. The movie is set right in the place to which it pays tribute—the magical late 1920's Hollywood, just before the development of "talkies," films with sound. Charming silent film star George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) is at the height of his career and arguably the luckiest man in the world. He seems to have everything going for him: a huge mansion, an irresistibly cute jack-terrier sidekick, and a burgeoning love affair with rising star Peppy Miller (Berenice Bejo). However, trouble soon arises when the studio boss alerts him that talkies will soon supplant silent films. Refusing to conform to this new medium, George soon finds himself a broke relic while his beloved Peppy sees her career soar to new, fruitful heights with sound films.

"The Artist" is not the only movie that has tried to capture the old school charm of the silent era, but it is one of the few that does so without relying on gimmicks or pretension. The film never tries to convince us that silent films are better, nor does it try to lampoon the genre's shortcomings. Instead,



Sophie Pan / The Spectator

it chooses to celebrate the limitations that the era's simplicity brings as well as its charming advantages. Lovingly self-aware, the film takes much of its charm from its almost fourth-wall breaking moments—title cards can take on double meanings, leading to laughable confusion when sounds such as "bang" come to stand for unexpected actions; the barks of George's dog tellingly fail to alert a policeman in one scene; a constant motif is tap-dancing, but without sound, the movements take on a different simpler sort of grace.

Many actors seem to get by on no more than a wink and a smile, but few can pull it off with such charismatic charm as Jean Dujardin, whose infectious smiles are themselves Oscar-worthy. Dujardin gives nuance to his pantomime, making every gesture feel natural and realistic while heartfelt and meaningful. His performance almost seems contrary to the classic performances of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, men who overwrought their emotions. Dujardin's performance is immaculate, but if Oscars were given to dogs, it's likely that his canine companion would be the real on-screen attraction. Quite literally the man's best friend, the little pooch follows George around wherever he goes. The dog appears in all of the actor's movies and consistently comes in

handy, even going so far to save his owner's life from time to time.

Of course, it shouldn't take a French director to make something as celebratory of American filmmaking as "The Artist," but only Michel Hazanavicius could do it so well. Without sound, the movie becomes focused purely on the images, making every aspect of the direction, from the set details to the camera angles, readily apparent, and Hazanavicius directs with aplomb, paying tribute to Keaton, Sergei Eisenstein, and the like, but refuses to limit himself to some of the more outdated techniques and mainly stagnant camera work. Hazanavicius makes use of a square 1:33 aspect ratio, frequent angled shots, and beautiful black and white photography to bring out the best of his actor's performances.

It's a constant complaint of many a movie buff that "they just don't make them like they used to." Hazanavicius' film is there to happily disprove those complaints and prove that this film will always be just as wonderful as it ever was. "The Artist" isn't some sort of whine about what we have been missing, but instead, a love-letter to the joys of film-making in general and ultimately, a message about how change can prove to be just as great as the past that we all know and love.

## Learning to Cope

By CLARISSA SORENSEN

A bedraggled-looking teen, garbed in a dirty sweatshirt, walks past the school football field, his shoulders hunched and his eyes set straight ahead. Though normally invisible to his peers, he catches the attention of a group of teens. "That's the boy with cancer," they whisper. "Isn't it sad?"

"Norman," directed by Jonathan Segal, is named after its depressed 18-year-old protagonist, who struggles to get through the daily grind. His problems stem from the death of his mother in a car accident and his father's stomach cancer. In an attempt to cover up his father's terminal illness, Norman (played by Dan Bird) accidentally spreads a lie that he himself has stomach cancer. As his lie grows more elaborate, so do the repercussions. Most notably, the unspoken truth creates a barrier in his blossoming romance with Emily (Emily VanCamp), a charismatic girl with unwavering optimism. Though Norman possesses a charmingly dark sense of humor and great intelligence, he has trouble grasping his full potential in the face of his hardships, a blind-sightedness that both Emily and his dying father attempt to help him overcome.

The cornerstone of the movie is the consequences of the lie Norman tells. Hoping to hide his father's illness from his best friend James (Billy Lush), who demands to know why Norman is acting so strangely, Norman states that he, not his father, has cancer, though he becomes distraught when he learns that the other students know of his alleged illness. However, his fake claim allows him to express his internal troubles through the visible suffering of a cancer victim. Segal masterfully exhibits the real reasons behind Norman's fabrication without bogging down the



Tamara Kahan / The Spectator

movie with its moral implications.

Byrd is an incredible actor, portraying Norman's deep-rooted sadness through subtle facial expressions and a convincingly somber demeanor. VanCamp also plays the role of Emily well, especially with the little she had to work with; the character's lack of lines and development make it difficult to have a powerful presence in the film. The teenagers' relationship, however, is engaging.

Emily is the first in Norman's peers to show faith in him, telling him that despite his self-doubt, he can get through his problems. In one scene, Norman admits to Emily that his nights of self-inflicted physical harm ended with the start of their relationship. The revelation demonstrates how pivotal love is to his recovery.

The movie also shows the importance of letting go of what one cannot change. Norman's father (Richard Jenkins) has already come to terms with the gravity of his situation and wishes his troubled son would do the same. Norman's attempts to deny his father's probable

death are the cause of much of his distress, and it is not until he finally comes to terms with it that he can truly enjoy their last days together. Similarly, he overcomes the fear of driving caused by his mother's fatal crash and allows his father to teach him how to drive.

While the movie's cinematography is fairly good, the soundtrack, created by indie-folk singer Andrew Bird, really topped the movie off with dissonant violin strains and haunting whistling. Sometimes melancholy and sometimes uplifting, the songs written by Bird are the perfect match for the movie.

Overall, Norman is a beautiful movie that demonstrates how leaving the past behind and being optimistic about the future can help one overcome even the greatest hardships. Though Norman's struggles are extreme, his relatable self-doubt makes the movie all the more appealing, and viewers walk out of the cinema believing that love can fill the gaping holes left by loss.



Margot Yale / The Spectator

# Halloween



# Halloween



By The Photo Department

# Opinions



Victoria Stempel / The Spectator

By SARU NANDA

In my two years, one month, and some odd number days at Stuyvesant, I have never seen a bulletin board that did not have at least one poster taped to it. Freshman year, I took my time reading the posters that stood out to me: the ones that had cool names, or creative designs. All these posters called out to me, inviting me into each and every club and team. It was my freshman year: I could do anything. But freshman year is not the only year to do what you wish.

As cliché as it may sound, there is no better way to put it: it's never too late. I'm not the only one who found new niches later in high school. When I tried out for the Girls' Varsity Tennis Team there were six non-freshman girls who tried out. When the roster went up of who made the team, there

were eight new members: seven freshmen, and one sophomore. The returning members did not care what grade the new players were in. They were interested in how we played, who we are as people, and how we treated others. I made some of my best friends after trying out. Older players helped me out in classes I had trouble in; they were a second group of Big Sibs to me. The sophomore is now one of three team captains and someone I would have regretted not meeting.

In past years, when I asked my friends to come with me to interest meetings, they told me that they had to study and do homework. When I begged my friends to come with me to the first Open Mic of the school year, their excuse was that they'd never gone before, and it was too late to start going now. Homework and studies were always a fallback. I was stuck going with returning members rather than my best friend with whom I wanted to share the experience. Not only did this mindset affect me, but it also hurt my friends. It's their junior year, and they've never joined a club. You can't go through high school simply thriving on getting good grades. It is illogical and a destined to lead to unhappiness.

I had never been to Open Mic. I had heard of it, but I never actually went until this year. I even took a chance and

signed up days beforehand to speak. I was beyond nervous. When it was my turn to speak, I introduced myself and mentioned that it was my first time speaking. Suddenly, the entire library erupted with applause

**It's a huge blow to the ego: rejection. But you can't find rejection at Stuyvesant. Not without a fair fight.**

and welcoming phrases of encouragement. That minuscule moment made me feel as if I was returning to these meetings, rather than going for the first time. No one looked at me with a question on their face asking why I never came before. Everyone was good-humored and either commented on my piece, or welcomed me to the monthly event.

This feeling of contentment washed out the concern over competition or fear. Fear of judgment, fear of nerves, and fear of rejection. It's a huge blow to the ego: rejection. But you can't find rejection at Stuyvesant. Not without a fair fight. There is no crew, no club, and no group of students that will reject you because you didn't join in previous years. Prospects of joining a publication, a theater group, a dance crew, a club or a team are always there; the door is never closed, and there is no sign that says "Freshman Only." Rather than rejection, you find friendships. You're walking into a room full of students who love doing exactly what you love doing.

During my freshman year, I joined the Girls Varsity Tennis team, and I danced in Stuy Squad, as well as in SING!. This defined me as the dancer who played tennis. It would seem odd and out of place to my friends if I ever auditioned for the Fall Musical or the Spring Comedy. Freshman year defined me, but that should not be an unalterable mold. There is always room for change in high school. I've been a junior for two months, and currently, my defining quality is my writing. Yes, when people look at me, they still think of the dancer who plays tennis. But they also see that girl who wrote something for Open Mic, joined the Opinions section of

the Spectator, and whose nose is always in a book. I was redefined.

Rather than letting myself get defined in one year, I'm redefining myself in every moment.

**Rather than letting myself get defined in one year, I'm redefining myself in every moment.**

to continually define yourself. We don't walk into high school the same way we walk out. It changes us: high school, all four years of it, is our defining moment.

## Remember the SHSAT?



Karen Zheng / The Spectator

By OLIVIA FOUNTAIN

I can already picture my household the morning of Saturday, October 29. I'll roll out of bed at 6:45 and slouch into my kitchen, grumbling to myself over the early hour – only to find myself in the midst of a whirl of activity, centered around my younger sister, Emma. She'll be sitting at the table, just finishing up a big breakfast, looking alert and clean and smiling nervously. She'll greet me, and I may grunt in reply, unless I'm still too busy rubbing the sleep out of my eyes. I'll eat a hasty bowl of cereal and take an even hastier shower, pull on my Big Sib shirt, and wait for my Mom to finish giving Emma a hug. The two of us will find ourselves on the A train, hurtling towards Chambers Street: me dozing, her drumming her fingers. For me, it's just another

volunteer event, a chance to rack up brownie points with the Big Sib Chairs, but for my thirteen-year-old sister, it's the morning of a test with the potential to change her life for the next four years: the SHSAT.

The Specialized High School Test, administered to upwards of 30,000 eighth graders every year, is a milestone that all Stuyvesant students remember well: one must get one of the top 1,000 scores to get invited to attend Stuyvesant. Not to toot my own horn, but this is a pretty big deal – which is becoming more and more clear to me every day as I realize how much work my sister is putting into this test (not to mention the work thousands of others are doing, too). With her tutor and the prep class she's taking, it sometimes seems that she doesn't have time to do anything else. In the evenings, I've always taken a perverse sense of pride in how much homework I have compared to my sister – a way of showing her how much older I am older, and of course, how superior. Usually, her middle school workload is no comparison to the amount I'm doing at Stuyvesant, but suddenly, she seems to be catching up. Though she's not pulling all-nighters, she's definitely been clocking out a lot later than she used to.

And it's not as if she has her heart set on Stuyvesant, either. She isn't one of the kids who has been attending summer programs for the last three years to prepare for the

SHSAT. She has no proverbial Tiger Mom breathing down her neck, pressuring her to get in. She liked Stuyvesant when she attended the open house, but there were other schools she liked, too. I worry sometimes that, even though she has yet to commit to Stuyvesant (or any of the other Specialized High Schools, for that matter), the amount of work she's done for the SHSAT will take away from her efforts to get accepted to other schools in the long run. She's pretty amazing, I must say, but even I worry when she tries to fit in tutoring, ballet classes, practicing her monologue for LaGuardia, writing an essay for Millennium, and regular homework into one night.

As a jaded junior, the SHSAT is to me nothing but a distant memory – and the only reason the experience hasn't slipped my mind entirely is the fact that someone in my room actually broke down crying during the test. But I'm an upperclassman now. I care about the SAT, not the SHSAT. As a sophomore, seeing freshmen on the first day of school would bring back a wave of nostalgia mixed with more than just a tinge of the relief that I am no longer in their shoes. As a junior, however, I looked not to the freshmen on that first day, but to the seniors – I've stopped worrying about what I was and started to worry about what I will become.

Emma, too, is worrying about what she will become, and I'm afraid that she's worrying too much. She's an A+ stu-

dent. She's passionate about dancing and making things with her hands, and, like me, she has an addiction to the show Community. She's written a book. She's traveled to the Grand Canyon. Robots and cars fascinate her. She has so much personality and promise that sometimes, as I see her la-

**Throughout the whole process, all Emma Fountain will be to them is a test grade, and it will either be high enough to deem her acceptable or it won't.**

boring away at her study book, it strikes me as ridiculously unfair that Stuyvesant will see nothing of this whether or not she gets accepted. Throughout the whole process, all Emma Fountain will be to them is a test grade, and it will either be

high enough to deem her acceptable or it won't. Isn't there something wrong with this picture? I get it: tests are important in the Stuyvesant community, and in the rest of the SHSAT schools as well. But just one exam? It doesn't matter what kind of student she is. When it comes down to it, if she makes one too many stupid mistakes, then that kid who has mediocre grades but has been taking classes to prepare for that fateful morning will get in, not her.

I don't want to seem like I'm whining. I don't want it to seem like I'm making excuses for my sister and everyone who has been rejected from Stuyvesant in the past. The system may have worked out for me, but it doesn't mean I agree with it. Now that the issue is so close to home in a way that allows me to examine it as a third party, I find myself questioning Stuyvesant's admissions process.

So why do I plan on getting up at an ungodly hour on a Saturday morning to help out at the SHSAT? The volunteer credits are definitely a part of it, because with college looming in the not-so-distant future, I'm trying to bulk up my extracurricular activities. But I'm also doing it to support Emma, and to let her know that no matter what happens when she walks out of the testing room, I'm proud of her. And that whatever school she ends up going to, Stuy or otherwise, will be proud of her, too.

# Opinions

## Hookers and Blackjack



Sofia Pidzyralo / The Spectator

By ADAM SCHORIN

This year's Stuyvesant Halloween featured an array of costumes, including cross-dressing cheerleaders, "one percent" investment bankers, parodic student doppelgangers, one caustic television robot, and a socially conscious incarnation of Bert from Sesame Street.

Missing from this year's Halloween crop, however, was the level of dress-up participation that has characterized the day in past years. My health teacher, surveying our unenthusiastic class, said she missed the days when she couldn't even identify her students due to the complexity and diversity of their costumes.

Another teacher, in costume (and in character), was equally put off by the lack of Halloween cheer, and told me

that what this school needs for re-enervation is "hookers and blackjack." Though he was kidding, or at least I think he was kidding, hookers and blackjack would certainly be a step up from the current levels of apathy and halfheartedness.

Perhaps the egregious lack of enthusiasm this year stemmed from a lack of creativity. Was it possible, I wondered, that New York City's "Best and Brightest" couldn't think of enough good Halloween costumes?

So I thought I'd help. Here, carefully determined and meticulously thought-out, ranging from the political to the profound, are my suggestions for Halloween costumes.

Godfather's Pizza Delivery Guy – This one's pretty simple. Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain boasts years of administrative experience in running Godfather's Pizza. The company's website boasts that Godfather's is "no ordinary pizza." At Godfather's, and apparently at no other pizza place, the customer gets to decide what goes on the pizza. "You're the boss," the website says. Revolutionary. This costume would therefore have to be no ordinary pizza deliveryman. I envision a somewhat mystifying cross between Herman Cain, Peter Parker, and Anthony of Portobello's Pizza fame. An optional accessory would be to advertise Godfather's \$9.99 large pie special, in lieu of Cain's 9-9-9 economic plan. They both have about the same value, but per-

sonally, I'd choose the pizza. Materials: Pizza box, Godfather's Pizza shirt, loud voice. No experience necessary.

**Missing from this year's Halloween crop, however, was the level of dress-up participation that has characterized the day in past years.**

and buy a red cape, red horns, red boots, a pull-on goatee, and a pitchfork. Once dressed up, it's not a bad idea to go around stabbing fellow classmates with your pitchfork, if only for the sake of authenticity. You may also want to hang a picture of Snoopy around your neck, if only to hide your underlying perniciousness.

Member of the Student Union – Just don't come to school. Or if you do, be invisible. The Student Union, often heard but never seen, is ideally represented by a loud student enveloped, Harry Potter-style, in a cloak of invisibility. If you have the means to purchase such a cloak, then this is the costume for you.

Todd and Sarah Palin – This one was funny in 2008 and it's still funny now. Todd prancing about in his snowmobile leather and Sarah in her high-heeled cluelessness are just too funny to be true and, in light of the September publication of Joe McGinniss's Palin-slaming tell-all book, now is the perfect time for a Palin costume revival. For the ideal couple's costume, the lady can dress as Todd and the gentleman as Sarah for an added effect. Inclusion of children Piper, Trig, Willow, Track, or Bristol is optional.

Newt Gingrich's Campaign Staff – See costume for Student Union.

Senator Scott Brown in College – In order to pay for law school, Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown modeled nude for

Cosmopolitan Magazine. Costume is self-explanatory.

The Third Floor Bathroom – This costume requires a lengthy period of preparation and dedication – this is not for the faint of heart. Halloween is on October 31 so as of, say, March 15, you should stop showering. Accumulate as much dirt and human waste as physically possible.

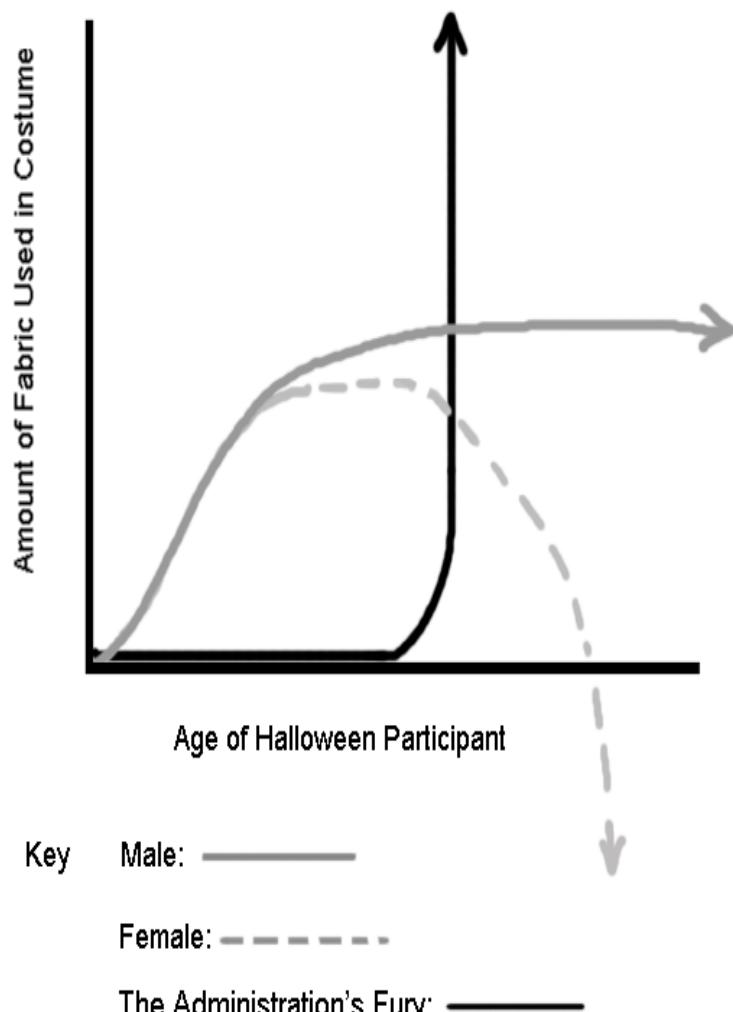
The Buffet at China Red – See costume for Third Floor Bathroom. Include Chopsticks.

Ron Paul's Grandfather – Browse the market for a long gray beard, false teeth, and caveman sash. This costume is very similar in appearance to an archaic Fred Flintstone – you are dressing as the grandfather of the oldest man in politics, so try to be authentic. Investing in a pet dinosaur may not be a bad idea.

Generic Republican Presidential Candidate – If you're already failing a few classes, then this is the costume for you. Be sure to avoid all pretenses of proper grammar, sound judgment, and professionalism. Consider purchasing a pizza company, picking up witchcraft, denouncing gay marriage, or converting to Mormonism in order to be better qualified for the position. Don't be daunted by the enormity of the preparation; whether you are a fan of horror movies, politics, or Halloween, this costume is sure to be the scariest.

### OP-ART

#### Amount of Fabric Used in Halloween Costumes vs. Age of Costume Wearer



Myra Xiong / The Spectator

# Humor

# Humor

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

## Teachers Defend Against Parents at Conferences

By MUKI BARKAN

The biannual parent-teacher conferences took place on Thursday, October 27, and Friday, October 28. These conferences are often a source of stress for the teachers, and many took the initiative to

there are always a few who manage to get through," English teacher Jonathan Weil said.

Some teachers, such as social studies teacher and dean Daniel Tillman, tried to take advantage of the anxious and impatient attitude of parents. Tillman met with one parent for the whole evening, while allowing others to wait outside. "They got more and more antsy outside until they began debating and bargaining with each other, thus enabling me to slip out just as the night ended, without having to face more than a single parent," Tillman said.

A pervasive attitude of fear seemed to grip the staff, who have described the parents as "meanies," "scary," and "aggressive."

Many teachers recruit students and hold them as guards to defend the classroom, explain the meaning of a waiting line, and, "when necessary, use a very forceful and assertive tone of voice."

Parents were confused by the often vague and confusing responses of the teachers. "I was told by a teacher that my daughter doesn't even go to Stuyvesant," said the parent of an unnamed junior. "I was pretty sure that the teacher just didn't want to admit not knowing my daughter."

"I sometimes find I don't know the names of all the students in my classes, so I've started telling parents that their children are missing their dental forms and that conferences can't continue without them," math teacher James Cocco said. Several parents also mentioned being directed to room 330, a men's bathroom, as well as to rooms 795 and 498, which do not exist.

"I understand the teachers' fear," junior Daelin Fischman said. "If I had to tell my parents about my grades, I'd freak out too."

**"I paint my door to look like a maintenance closet, but somehow there are always a few who manage to get through."**  
—Jonathan Weil, English teacher

lessen the burden of the evening. Some teachers created defense mechanisms, ranging from simply holding brief meetings with parents to hiding in the bathroom for extended periods of time.

"I usually paint my door to look like a maintenance closet, but somehow

a

## Red China Communists Found at China Red



China Red was recently uncovered as the base of operations for a Chinese Communist covert intelligence group known only as "Red China."

By ADAM SCHORIN

It was discovered last week, during a combined Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Health and Sanitation (DHS) sting operation, that members of a covert Chinese Communist intelligence agency have been using the restaurant China Red as a base

of operations for the last year and a half. The group, known only as Red China, has taken advantage of the rustic décor and home-style meals offered at China Red and converted the restaurant into living quarters, high-tech intelligence labs, and a weapons armory—all of which are in direct violation of DHS health code 843.C.

In charge of the FBI/DHS task force was special agent Lance Fleinschtein, an agent with years of experience in the field of covert health code violation operations.

When asked what prompted the sting, Fleinschtein said, "Well, a lot of things just didn't add up. For starters, the name 'China Red' always seemed too politically aligned for one of the filthiest culinary establishments in the city. And when I saw that the restaurant received an 'A' on its sanitation rating, I immediately suspected foul play. At 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday [November 2], we busted down the doors. By two, we had discovered five Commie spies hiding in a basement alcove. And at three, we treated ourselves to one of the most satisfying, albeit intestinally inflammatory, meals I had ever had the pleasure of [digesting]."

With the future of the restaurant still in question, members of the Stuyvesant community reacted to the sting with outrage.

"If the DHS decides to close the restaurant, the entire Tribeca community will be at risk of fragmentation. Personally, I don't think the downtown area can survive without this cornerstone of Chinese [food]," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Junior and avid China Red patron Charles Kramer said, "I like to go there after hanging

## Stuyvesant Spectator Publishes This Article

By JAMES FRIER  
and ELI ROSENBERG

The Spectator, Stuyvesant High School's student newspaper, broke new journalistic ground on Wednesday, November 9, by publishing this article, which is already being touted by critics as one of the finest works of meta-journalism of all time.

This article, positioned on the top right of page 32, includes 432 words and is accompanied by a picture.

This article was written by Spectator Humor Editors James Frier and Eli Rosenberg, who are known for their avant-garde approach to humor journalism. "I am happy that The Spectator took the time to detail the hard work and effort that goes into writing and publishing an article of this sort," Frier said.

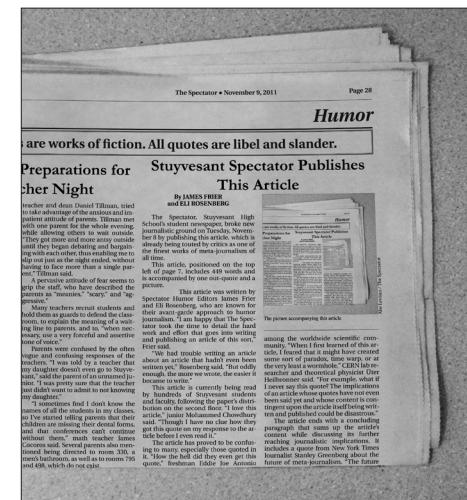
"We had some trouble writing an article about an article that hadn't even been written yet," Rosenberg said. "But oddly enough, the more we wrote, the easier it became to write."

This article is currently being read by hundreds of Stuyvesant students and faculty, following the paper's distribution on the second floor. "I love this article," junior Mohammed Chowdhury is saying. "Though I have no clue how they got this quote on my response to the article before I even read it."

The article has proved to be confusing to many, especially those quoted in it. "How the hell did they even get this quote," freshman Eddie Joe Antonio says, pointing at this paragraph angrily. "I never even said this. Wait a second..."

"I'm not sure what to feel about this article," You say. "I do think that the subject matter is interesting, and it certainly is well written, but it is a little bit wack at times."

This article is also causing a stir



The Humor page from the November 9 issue of The Spectator

among the worldwide scientific community. "When I first learned of this article, I feared that it might have created some sort of paradox, time warp, or at the very least a wormhole," CERN lab researcher and theoretical physicist Utter Heilbronner is verbalizing aloud. "For example, what if I never say this quote? The implications of an article whose quotes have not even been said yet and whose content is contingent upon the article itself being written and published could be disastrous."

The article ends with a concluding paragraph that sums up the article's content while discussing its further-reaching journalistic implications. It includes a quote from New York Times Journalist Stanley Greenberg about the future of meta-journalism. "The future of meta-journalism has been forever altered by the publication of this article," Greenberg has said.

restaurant," said Fleinschtein. "That's when I knew my department's hunch about Red China was right. Due to the nature of the group's activities, it should come as no surprise that the shower water contained high levels of radioactive material and toxic waste."

Jenny Xu, a chef at China Red, claimed that only a fraction of the shower water actually goes into the food at the restaurant. "Most of our ingredients actually come from other half of bathroom," she said, nodding coyly at a kerplunk latrine in the far left corner of the room.

Junior and neurotic germanophobe Adam Lieber shared his thoughts on the scandal. "I just feel really, really cheated," Lieber said. "I mean, I've always been worried about the typical health code violations—vermin in the kitchen, unfrozen meat, and communist spies living in the basement—but I never really thought any of these would actually happen so close to home. Just really puts everything into perspective, you know?"

In light of Red China's discovery at China Red, the leader of the group released a brief statement regarding its future: "We may be forced out of China Red, but I feel comfortable moving in with our supporters down at Zuccotti Park."

**"And when I saw that the restaurant received an 'A' on its sanitation rating, I immediately suspected foul play."**  
—Lance Fleinschtein, FBI

really going to miss that."

The China Red shower was recently demolished by the DHS. "At first, I was just shocked to find a shower in a Chinese

**Sports**

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# Sports

## Girls' Soccer

### Rookie Coach Francis Adjusts to New Role with Mimbas



By JORDAN WALLACH and MAGGIE YUENG

When English teacher Hugh Francis heard that the coach of Stuyvesant's girls' soccer team, Suzanne Lendzian, left to become a dean at another school, he asked Athletic Director Larry Barth if he could fill the vacancy.

Though he is a passionate soccer fan, Francis had no previous coaching experience, and he struggled to adapt to his new position. "There were a lot of things to learn: knowing what the girls had to do in turning in their paperwork, figuring out when they would be available, working out permits to make sure we had practice space," Francis said.

He also realized that the high school style of play was very different from that of professional soccer teams he watched as a fan on television. "For example, if you watch the World Cup, you see guys heading the ball all the time. In high school soccer, there's not as much heading," Francis said.

At the start of the season, seniors and co-captains Zoe Goldstein and Emma Hoffman organized practices, planning various drills for the team. "We usually started with a run and then got into sets of shooting drills and passing drills," Goldstein said.

Krit McClean, senior and co-captain of the boys' soccer team, also helped manage the team in the first weeks of the season, forming the starting lineups in conjunction with Hoffman and Francis. "We have two very strong senior captains who took the lead and I had some assistance from one of the boy's team captains," Francis said.

Francis also had an unorthodox way of coaching games early in the season. After a game, Francis would give the players a few quick notes and send them an e-mail later reflecting on their performance and noting what he wanted the team to focus on during practice.

As the season progressed, Francis took charge of the team by giving more constructive critique in person, putting together lineups, and making substitutions during games.

"I went through a couple of different ways of doing substitutes and, by the end of the season, I was very comfortable and happy with the way substitutions were working," Francis said. "After every match, I

also write out a rough draft of my next starting lineup."

His e-mails to the team were also more detailed, outlining what to do for practice and listing strategies before a game. "He connected more with the team, e-mailing us links of YouTube videos, and telling us what we need to focus and work on more," Goldstein said.

In addition, in the Mimbas' first match, Francis noticed that almost every time the goalie kicked or punted the ball, the opposing team took possession. To help prevent this, "early on, we spent a lot of time focusing on winning 50-50 balls," Francis said. "Toward the end of the season, we spent a lot of time focusing on shooting and finishing."

He and the Mimbas feel that going forward, the team's offense needs to develop before they can move up in the standings next season. "The thing we struggled most this year was getting the ball forward so that we could take shots," Francis said. "In the last match against [LaGuardia Athletics on Monday, October 24], even though we didn't score, we got the ball forward a lot. What I really want to work on is moving the ball forward from the goalie all the way up to the strikers and taking shots."

Francis is content with the Mimbas' results this season though he is disappointed that he could not spend more time with the six seniors in their last year. "There's a part of me that wishes the season was longer, that this was the end of our preseason, because I just got to know them. For some of them, this is their fourth year on the team and unfortunately I don't know them any better than a freshman," Francis said.

The new players though, felt welcome to the team and were satisfied with Francis's coaching strategies. "When you start with any team, there is an adjustment period because every team has a different dynamic, but all of the rookies were able to fit in well," freshman Sophie Gershon said. "He is very supportive and dedicated to the team."

Francis is already looking forward to next season. "I'm hoping that we could get freshmen [next year], and I know that I'm going to miss the six seniors, but I think we could play a match tomorrow with the team we have now."

*continued from page 36*

the-park home run, to charging the mound after being hit by a pitch, Morgan infuses the game with an NFL attitude, which is exactly what baseball needs.

While his voluminous rap sheet certainly piqued my interest, I was undecided on what I thought of Morgan. For more thoughts on the issue, I turned to two experts on the matter: my Baseball Purist self and my Baseball Rebel self.

Baseball Purist Me: I strongly believe Nyjer Morgan is a detriment to the values and discipline taught by the greatest game in the world. The game has no place for his antics and the MLB is going to have some serious problems if it doesn't deal with him soon.

Baseball Rebel Me: Oh

**Morgan's entertainment value is priceless. The guy is so eccentric that he makes Manny Ramirez look like a Puritan.**

please. Morgan's entertainment value is priceless. The guy is so eccentric that he makes Manny Ramirez look like a Puritan. He can bring a whole new audience to the game.

Baseball Purist Me: Well, if you want to see America's national pastime devolve into a popularity contest, then you might have a point.

Baseball Rebel Me: If "America's national pastime" wants to retain that title, it needs the

### An Appetite For Attention

popularity. We all know that football has a lot more followers right now. Nyjer Morgan infuses the game with an NFL attitude, which is exactly what baseball needs.

Baseball Purist Me: The NFL? Don't tell me that the world is better for the behavior of guys like wide receivers Terrell Owens and Chad Ochocinco.

Baseball Rebel Me: Oh, admit it. The fans eat that stuff up. People love characters—they add to the intrigue of the game.

Baseball Purist Me: So you're telling me that feuds between players and extravagant displays of pride are healthy for a team?

Baseball Rebel Me: Sure! They sell tickets, and often serve to keep fans interested in an otherwise lackluster season.

Baseball Purist Me: Okay, okay. At least agree with me that Morgan's "gentleman alter ego," Tony Plush, is absolutely ridiculous.

Baseball Rebel Me: That's just extra eccentricity. If you think Nyjer Morgan is entertaining, wait till you see Tony Plush do an interview.

Baseball Purist Me: All right, but if he's going to run his mouth so much, he better play well enough to back it up. His stats are okay, but he's no star. A .288 career batting average certainly doesn't earn him the right to do all of this.

Baseball Rebel Me: All you need to do is Google Morgan's name to see what an impact this guy has made on baseball culture. I don't care whether he's a star or not; he's the ultimate commercializing force that baseball needs right now, whether it knows it or not.

Baseball Purist Me: Okay, this is just absolutely outrageous. Baseball is a time-tested, honored, long-standing tradition that is being dirtied by a scourge called Morgan, and the fact that you are trying

to defend this guy.

Baseball Rebel Me: Woah, woah, woah. Calm down, man. When did a game become such a sacred institution anyway?

Baseball Purist Me:...

Regardless of which of my two colleagues is correct on this issue, it is worth it to consider the effect that egos in sports have on aspiring athletes. Antics such as Morgan's garner such consistent media coverage that people—high school sportsmen like myself

**Antics such as Morgan's garner such consistent media coverage that people—high school sportsmen like myself included—often mistaken them for part of commonplace sports culture.**

included—often mistaken them for part of commonplace sports culture. We tend to imitate these "professionals," and the results can often be detrimental to team dynamics and even performance. With the stereotypical high school jock image existing as it does, we certainly don't need more self-centered players.

So there you have it. Morgan and people like him have their critics, their supporters, and a hugely disproportionate amount of media coverage. We would all be better off if we stopped caring about them so much.

## Girls' Golf

### Birdies Fall Short on Flight to Second Consecutive PSAL Championship

*continued from page 36*

of four starting seniors only made the loss more devastating.

With an exciting performance in the semifinals, the Birdies came into the game with momentum. "As City Champions from last year, in my mind I thought we would win since I knew we had the potential to," said captain and senior Sarah Soo-Hoo.

After losing the first and third matches, the Birdies managed to tie up the game in the fourth to bring it down to the final match. In that match, senior Suzy Kim fell to an early two-hole gap, and after five holes, she was down by one.

Later, with only two holes remaining in the match and the Birdies anxiously watching, Kim was unable to battle back,

only tying her opponent in strokes in those holes. Had she made up the one-hole deficit, the match would have come down to a tiebreaker, in which the Birdies would come out the victors, having won more overall holes than Tottenville.

Despite the loss, the girls do view this season partially as a success. "We've put in a lot of work as a team, and since it is my last year as a member of the Birdies, I'm happy to say we have been overall pretty successful," said Soo-Hoo.

"Overall the season was a success on paper. But it was a difficult season. We weren't always focused on golf. I had girls miss multiple matches due to studying for the SAT/ACT," coach Emilio Nieves said. "We went all the way to the finals because of sheer talent, but I never felt we clicked on all cylinders

during the season, though they gave me as much as they could, under the circumstances."

Right now, the Birdies have to cope with the fact that they are losing five seniors to graduation. "It will be disappointing to see my seniors graduate because I got to know them so well on a personal level as well as athletic. I still will have a competitive team for next year, with promising players such as current junior Rosen Jeong, her talented sister Jane, who will be a sophomore, and current freshman Sabrina Chan, a player with so much talent and potential. I also have a lot of reserves who have shown dedication to improving their skills," Nieves said.

Without a doubt the Birdies will be back in 2012, seeking vengeance and a return to supremacy atop the PSAL.

# Sports

## Sports-in-Brief

**Boys' Soccer:**  
**Stuyvesant Schoolers 4,**  
**South Shore Vikings 0**  
**By ODREKA AHMED**

The Stuyvesant Schoolers headed into their first playoff game on Tuesday, November 1. The team had been struggling with several midseason injuries, but entered the game only with an almost complete team, missing only junior and centerback Matthew Hoffman. Nevertheless, senior Rolando Schneiderman replaced Hoffman, proving the versatility of the team.

"We weren't really worried. We had a better record going in and we were confident we'd win. We expected to win," senior and left-back William Haack said.

The high morale of the teammates was immediately evident in their playing. Senior and co-captain Krit McClean dominated from the start, taking shots on goal as early as two minutes into the game. Though McClean, junior Asa Conover, and freshman Ethan Lochner had impressive

setups, they were unable to score early in the first half.

Goalkeeper junior Maxwell Berkow first saw action 20 minutes into the game. Berkow saved the shot easily, but Stuyvesant freshman and center-back Sean Fitzgerald was injured in the collision. The game resumed, and four minutes later, Conover scored the first goal of the game.

Stuyvesant scored again a mere six minutes later with an unassisted goal from the other forward, Lochner. Capitalizing on the Vikings' goalie's temporary weakness, he scored again minutes later.

Going into the second half, there was clear tension between the two teams as the plays got dirtier. McClean had several confrontations on the field with South Shore junior Shauneil Smith. Four minutes into the second half, Smith was awarded a foul shot, but Berkow saved it with ease.

With the team resting in a comfortable lead, coach Vincent Miller switched a couple of starters out, leaving the second half

with little action. Lochner, McClean, Conover, Haack, and junior Horia Popa all took more shots, with no luck.

"We were a little bit wasteful in front of the goal," senior and co-captain Neil Maheshwari said.

Maheshwari, who had played an integral part in the midfield the entire game, scored off a key pass from senior Jamie Oliver 15 minutes before the end of the second half, ending the game at 4-0.

Though the Schoolers dominated the match, their performance left much room for improvement. "We need to try to be a little quicker and sharper, but I mean, we played a good game," Maheshwari said.

**Girls' Swimming:**  
**Stuyvesant Penguins 63,**  
**Bayside Lady Commodores 31**  
**By GABRIEL SUNSHINE**

The Penguins, Stuyvesant's girls' varsity swimming team, defeated the Bayside High School Lady Commodores on Thursday, November 3, to advance to the

second round of the citywide playoffs. Winners of three consecutive City Championships, the Penguins out-swam the competition yet again to finish with a 63-31 victory, giving the team its highest score all season.

Going into the meet, there was little the team could do to prepare for the competition because the Penguins had never faced Bayside. "We were uncertain of whether it was going to be a hard or easy meet," senior and co-captain Sharon Romero said. In addition to Romero, seniors and co-captains Maggie Yeung and Hana Yampolsky led the team.

The Penguins got off to a good start by finishing first in each of the first four races. Junior Phylisia Rodriguez Chu and freshman Sappha O'Meara were especially strong in the second event, the 200-yard individual medley, finishing first and second, respectively, with times of 02:29:76 and 02:32:50.

"We took the lead in the beginning, and that helped us out," coach Kristen Sabala said.

The early boost of confidence was all that the team, which has not lost a meet since 2008, needed. "When we start strong, we swim strong, and we feel strong," Yampolsky said.

The most dominating performance came in the seventh race, the 500-yard freestyle, in which the girls had to swim a distance equivalent to 20 laps. Senior Cynthia Lock and sophomore Lydia Goldberg were able to finish with times of 06:21:96 and 07:04:35, respectively. They were not only able to come in first and second in the race, but both managed to lap each of the other two Bayside swimmers.

Though they won by a large margin, "people didn't really do their best times," Yeung said.

Regardless, Yeung noticed that the girls were more energized than they had been all season. "I saw a lot of racing. The girls were really racing each other, and they were really pumped up and excited," Yeung said. "This was probably our best meet this season."

## Boys' Soccer

**By ODREKA AHMED**

Stuyvesant's boys' varsity soccer team's promising season ended prematurely on Thursday, November 3, as the Schoolers lost to the Tilden Educational Campus Blue Devils in one of their closest games this season.

"I told our team before the match that, if we go out, to do so with a fight. And that's exactly what we did. It could've been 4-3 either way. Unfortunately, today just wasn't our day," senior and co-captain Krit McClean said.

The Schoolers played with four defenders, five midfielders, and one offender, a change from their usual 4-4-2 line-up, in order to compensate for the Blue Devils' powerhouse junior forwards Peter-Person Barreau and Roody Pierre, who

## Schoolers Finish Season One Goal Short

still managed to finish the game with two goals each. The Schoolers had applied this strategy once earlier in the season, in a lost match against the undefeated first seed, the Martin Luther King Jr. Knights.

As soon as the game began, it was clear that the Blue Devils' strength lay almost entirely in their two forwards. The rest of the team's inconsistency resulted in the ball having very little ground time, making it difficult for the Schoolers to set up any plays.

Seventeen minutes into the game, the Blue Devils scored a goal on a header off of a corner kick. Faced with an overcrowded box, junior and goalie Maxwell Berkow had little chance to block the shot.

The first half was littered with fouls, and the Schoolers were awarded opportunities to score throughout, but did not make use

of them until the 31st minute, when McClean took one of his many shots in the game. Freshman Thomas Susecki was in the box to receive the ball, and he scored Stuyvesant's first goal, ending the first half 1-1.

During the second half, the Blue Devils began to pull ahead, having possession of the ball on the Schoolers' half of the field for the majority of the period. The Blue Devils scored two minutes into the second half, in another crowded situation in which it was difficult for Berkow to react quickly enough.

At this point, the Blue Devils suddenly became prone to injury, as three players found themselves seriously injured and had to be escorted off the field, wasting ample time, only to be ready to play within minutes.

"If the games had been five minutes longer, we would've

scored," said Susecki, who scored a second time 11 minutes into the second half, and a third time 38 minutes in, both times off a pass from McClean, completing a hat trick after having scored only once during the rest of the season.

However, both of the Blue Devils' forward scored to put Tilden up 4-3.

With a minute left in the game senior and co-captain Neil Maheshwari took a corner kick with the entire Stuyvesant team at the Blue Devils' goal, including the entire defensive line and Berkow, in response to Coach Vincent Miller's order: "Everyone up." The ball was played for 30 seconds before the final whistle, ending the promising season.

"I'm still thinking about what could've happened. I'm disappointed, but that's soccer. I thought we had a nice group of

players this year," McClean said.

"It was a tough loss, but we played well," junior Horia Popa said. "We're going to do better next year."

But for seniors McClean and Maheshwari, Thursday's game was the end of a four-year run. This season, McClean, who was a successful striker last year, played in the midfield with Maheshwari. "He and I developed a great relationship," McClean said.

As he and the rest of the seniors leave varsity soccer behind, they are grateful to their teammates and especially coach Miller, for having brought the team so far. "He is a truly great coach and friend," McClean said. "He was always there for us, on and off the field. I really wish him all the best for the seasons to come."

## Boys' and Girls' Cross Country

## Both Greyduck Teams Win Borough Championships Again

Championships on Wednesday, October 26 as the top seed in the borough. All of the team's seven runners finished in the top 20, with four in the top 10. Pertsovskaya led the team, finishing in fourth place with a time of 22 minutes and 31.7 seconds, while Zheng, junior Dina Levy Lambert, and sophomore Stephanie Liang occupied places seven through nine, respectively, with times under 24 minutes.

"Our performance hinged on our fourth and fifth man," said Stevenson, as the three captains were virtual locks to finish in the top five.

The next step for the male Greyducks is competing for the City Championship, followed by the State Championship. Going forward, "the competition is much tougher," Stevenson said. "[It] should be closer than usual."

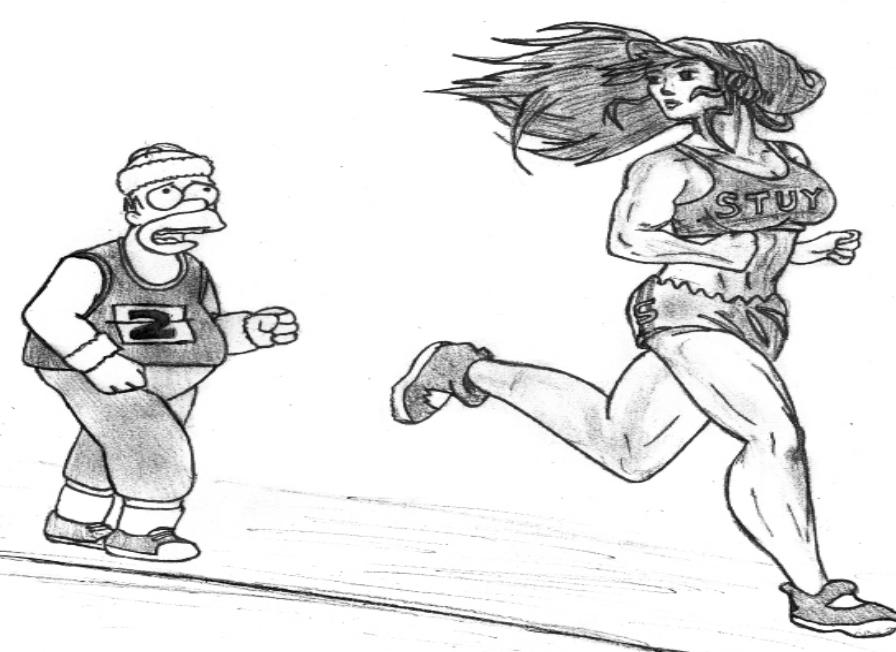
Their female Greyduck counterparts entered the Borough Championships ranked fourth in the city by the PSAL. Coached by Kristyn Pluchino and captained by seniors Karen Zheng, Jenny Fung, and Hema Lochan, the Greyducks matched the success of the boys' team.

"The biggest challenge was pushing yourself, both mentally and physically, to the limit," sophomore Vera Pertsovskaya said.

The hard work has worn on the runners throughout the season. "Injuries have been a recurring issue," Lochan said.

"Runners tend to get a lot of overuse injuries such as tendonitis and shin splits. We've also had some unexpected injuries during races, from twisted ankles to sprained shoulders," Pluchino said.

Despite the injuries, the Greyducks entered into the Borough



**By YASIRU JAYAKODY**

Stuyvesant High School's boys' and girls' cross country teams, the Greyducks, have dominated the Manhattan competition for the better part of a decade. Their streak of successes continued this week, as the boys won their 13th consecutive Borough Championship, and the girls defended as Borough Champions.

The boys' track team, captained by seniors Konrad Surkont

and Mark Schramm, and junior Jack Stevenson, came into the season as the number one ranked team in the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL). The Greyducks did not falter in the four weeks prior to the Championship, cementing their position as the team to beat.

Coach Mark Mendes attributed their decade of success to a team full of "smart kids who work hard and follow a scientifically based training program," and Surkont simply cited the team's "mentality to win."

The Greyducks were boosted

by the return of Surkont following a two-meet suspension for frequent lateness to school. "At first, I was really devastated," Surkont said. "But running [fewer] races actually has helped in a sense, because I feel more focused and less tired."

In his first meet since returning, the Manhattan College Invitational held on Tuesday, October 11, Surkont helped the Greyducks post the fastest overall time for a PSAL team.

Surkont's return only improved the already overpowering lineup.

"We're deeper than we've ever

been," Stevenson said. The Greyducks proved that at Boroughs, as they took seven of the top 11 spots in the 5K race; Schramm, Surkont, and Stevenson were the three fastest runners, finishing with less than a second between them.

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# Sports

## Boys' Football

### Homecoming Game: Peglegs 0, Owls 20



Nathaniel Biggs holds onto the ball during the homecoming game.

By WASIF ISLAM

Stuyvesant's boys' varsity football team, the Peglegs, returned home to Pier 40 on Monday, October 28, after playing three consecutive away games, to take on the Wilian C. Bryant High School Owls. The 4-2 Peglegs had gone 5-0 at home since last season and looked to keep this streak alive.

The Peglegs were also trying to win their last three games to cement the fourth seed in the division and a playoff berth. However, the disappointing shutout loss, 20-0, to the Owls ended the streak and probably their playoff hopes, as well. "We really didn't live up to the 'Fear the Pier' expectations that we have for ourselves

at home games," senior Sanjit Gill said.

The Peglegs showed signs of a poor performance from the opening kickoff. After a short kickoff return, they botched an exchange on a toss to the running back on the first drive of the game, costing the team several yards.

The team was shorthanded in the running game without junior Werner Zhanay, who had been suspended, once again, due to lateness. Zhanay leads the team with 329 rushing yards and three rushing touchdowns.

Later in the game, after a long run, senior, co-captain, and running back Ian Chan fumbled, and Bryant gained possession. A long touchdown pass put the Owls on the board before

they missed a two-point conversion.

Though the Peglegs' defense performed well, holding the Owls to just 169 total yards, the team's offense struggled to amass just 128 total yards. After making it down into the red zone at the end of the half, junior and quarterback Alen Makhmudov threw an interception, sending the Peglegs to the locker room with nothing to show for their efforts.

"We knew we could come back, seeing as how our mistakes had been stupid mistakes, such as fumbles and interceptions that should be easily fixed," senior and co-captain Robert Bennett said.

The Owls began the second half with an 80-yard kickoff return for a touchdown, putting them up 14-0. "It was a bit demoralizing," Bennett said.

The Peglegs tried to come back, but were intercepted again following a 70-yard drive. Makhmudov threw two more interceptions in the second half, finishing with four interceptions on the night, three of which were inside the red zone. His performance was especially disappointing, considering he threw a total of eight picks in the previous six games.

The six total turnovers were impossible to overcome. "No team is going to win games if it can't hold onto the ball," Chan said. The Peglegs were unable to score in the second half, and the Owls tacked on another touchdown later on to make the score 20-0.

"This homecoming game was very emotional for the seniors, seeing as how it was the last homecoming game for us," Gill said.

### A Different Type of Artist



Suzy Kim, senior and third degree black belt, in her Taekwon-Do uniform.

By KATIE MULLANEY

Taekwon-Do is a Korean form of martial arts that requires the use of hands and feet without weapons. The main goal of Taekwon-Do is to achieve total mind and body control," senior Suzy Kim said, word for word as her master had taught it to her, in the quiz component of her black belt test. Along with sophomore Luke Morales, Kim is a third degree black belt, meaning she has reached the highest skill level one can before age 21.

Taekwon-Do fights are usually judged by the strength and location of each hit in a two-minute round. "A good match shouldn't get more than seven points. But if it's a really bad match where one person's a lot better than the other, it can go really high, up to 20 or 25. But those are no fun," Morales said. Though two-person competitions are the most common, martial artists also compete in other events, such as organized five-on-five fighting, and board-breaking.

Serious Taekwon-Do training is, in short, intense. Kim trained with a master at a martial arts school starting at age eight. In order to stay in shape, she did three-mile runs, endurance drills, and simulated fights with protective gear. "Our master was really harsh and he wouldn't let us drink water too often. I'd actually end up dying at the end; it was just so tiring," Kim said.

As a result of its Korean origin, martial artists must treat their

masters, called saesongs in Korean, deferentially. "Taekwon-Do is really disciplined and you need to have respect for those of a higher rank and for your elders, no matter what," Kim said. She speaks not only as a student, but as a teacher in her own right, for both she and Morales instruct younger students in their Taekwon-Do schools.

Kim trains at the Eagles Taekwon-Do Center in Flushing. She has competed since she was eight, and started competing nationally when she was 12. She got her black belt when she was 10. Over her long career, she has earned over 20 total medals from various tournaments and competitions; 15 of these medals are gold.

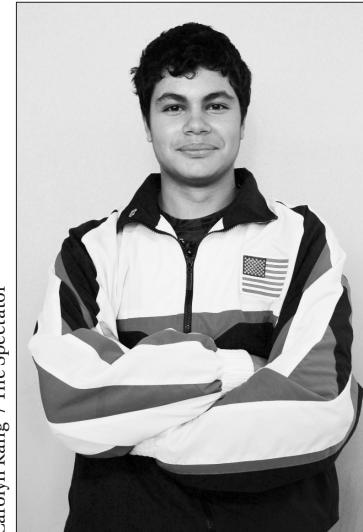
The last competition she took part in was the 2009 Junior Olympics, in which she won a silver medal. Previously, in the 2008 Junior Olympics, she won a gold medal.

Though she has not competed in tournaments or competitions recently, she still practices and trains, albeit less frequently than before. According to Kim, Taekwon-Do is no longer high up on her list of priorities due to other obligations. "I'm really busy with school now. I'm president of this and that and captain of this and that and I really don't have the time to train every single day," Kim said.

Morales, however, is still an active Taekwon-Do artist. He started competing locally when he was five, just half a year after taking his first martial arts class, and on a national level when he was 13. His personal training at the Queens Taekwon-Do Center is focused on speed. "I'm not the biggest person and I'm not the strongest person, so I use my speed to dodge other people's techniques. I don't rush in and I'm more of a counter-force," Morales said.

In August of 2010, he competed in the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) National Championships in San Jose, California in which he was ranked number one in the nation for the junior division, which includes all males under the age of 18.

Since then, he competed in the March 2011 ITF World Championships in New Zealand as part of a five-man team for a kicking competition in which the competitors had to jump in a specified way to hit a target with a designated part of the foot. For this competition, he trained



Luke Morales, sophomore and third degree black belt, in his Taekwon-Do uniform.

every day after school starting in January. Training with the United States national team proved difficult because his teammates, who were spread out across the country, could only communicate through e-mail, and had to practice the specific kick they would each have in the actual competition on their own. Morales's team ended up losing to the Canadian competitor, but was ranked third in the world.

Though Kim does not see herself competing in events in the future, Morales wants to continue training and developing his martial arts skills. He hopes and expects to qualify for the next ITF World Championships in 2013, his last chance to participate in the junior level, since the World Championships only occur every two years. His ultimate goal is high. "Obviously I would love to say that I'm the world champion, so I hope that happens some day," Morales said.

Whether or not Kim and Morales decide to continue their Taekwon-Do careers, both have enjoyed their experiences with the martial art. Morales likes the physical aspect of fighting and says that it "helps him get his mind off of things."

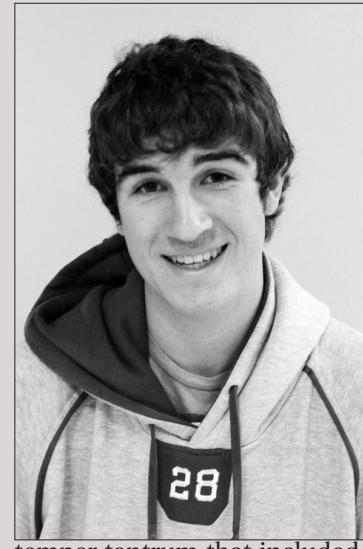
Kim sees how much Tae Kwon Do has impacted her life. "It made me more athletic and gave me more endurance for pain. It gave me a mental mindset which helped me for lacrosse and in my life overall," she said.

### An Appetite For Attention

By MICHAEL SHELDON

As the 2011 Major League Baseball season came to a close, I found myself more compelled by Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Nyjer Morgan than I was by the World Series matchup between the Cardinals and the Rangers. After all, it seemed that not a week went by without another article being written about the controversial player's growing list of misadventures.

He has swept Major League Baseball with his calculated insanity, including explosive tweets, stand-up routines during post-game interviews, and his alter-ego "Tony Plush." However, his off-field actions pale in comparison to what he does on the field. From a



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

temper tantrum that included throwing his glove at the centerfield wall after missing a fly ball, which led to an inside-

*continued on page 34*

### Girls' Golf

### Birdies Fall Short on Flight to Second Consecutive PSAL Championship

By AARON COPPA

#### Quarterfinals: Stuyvesant 4, Bronx Science 0

On Tuesday, October 25, the Birdies, Stuyvesant's girls' golf team, defeated the Bronx Science Wolverines for the fourth time this season, by a score of four matches to none. This is the third time since 2008 that the Birdies have reached the semifinals round of the playoffs.

Although their first starter, senior and co-captain Sarah Soo-Hoo, fell behind her first round opponent by three holes and failed to give the Birdies an early lead, she later managed to come back and tie her match up with a strong par on the ninth hole.

"Today, we played the most complete match of the season," coach Emilio Nieves said. The whole team contributed, though junior Rosen Jeong, who won her match by four holes, had a particularly strong performance.

"As last year's city champions, and with a returning team, there was not a doubt in my mind that we were going to win," Soo-Hoo said.

#### Semifinals: Stuyvesant 4, Susan Wagner 1

After defeating Susan Wagner on Tuesday, November 1 by a score of four matches to one, the Birdies advanced to the girls' golf PSAL final, where they hoped to remain the city champions.

After some trouble at a practice, captain Sarah Soo-Hoo addressed the team in an unsportsmanlike manner—the exact content of her address is undisclosed—and was suspended for the semifinal match. Nieves adjusted the lineup accordingly by mov-

ing everyone up one spot and having senior Catherine Choi, previously a non-starter, play in the number five spot. Despite the hole in the lineup, the Birdies showed that they had a well-rounded team, as the back-up Choi, playing only her second game this year, won her match by four holes.

"I was impressed that everyone played against higher ranked players from Wagner and we managed to dominate. That was very impressive and shows how deep of a lineup we have," coach Emilio Nieves said.

"Everyone really stepped up knowing that they had to play better than usual," senior Melissa Watt said.

Senior Jessica Plotnikov took up the challenge of playing in the number one position, winning by three holes against Wagner's best player. In addition, Watt won her match by two holes, after winning the fourth hole in three strokes to break a tie.

The horizons looked bright for the Birdies with Soo-Hoo returning for the finals against Tottenville, a team they had defeated in last year's semifinals.

#### Finals: Tottenville 3, Stuyvesant 2

On Tuesday, November 1, the Birdies fell to Tottenville in their closest match this season to take second place in the city championships. With victory and a championship in their grasp, they staggered, and lost the fifth and final match, with the final score ending three matches to two.

Having already defeated Tottenville in last year's semifinals en route to a city championship and having been undefeated this season with a team

*continued on page 34*