



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

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Newsbeat

- This year, 125 seniors were named semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Competition from the results of last October's PSAT examination. This is the largest number of semifinalists for schools in New York, and second highest in the United States.
- A group of British high school students visited Stuyvesant on Wednesday, September 11. Social studies teacher Matt Polazzo and his students spoke with the British students about the events that occurred on September 11, 2001. The students were the winners of a writing and video contest regarding the tragedy.
- Director of College Counseling Casey Pedrick won the "Shining Star" award by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). She is recognized for her "exemplary excellence and dedication" in College Counseling.

City to End Electronic Regents Scoring

By ARIEL LEVY
and DAVID MASCIO

The Department of Education (DOE) will return to a system of grading Regents examinations on paper this January. This reversion comes in response to the failure of the new system of electronic grading introduced in June 2013.

The new system was implemented to replace the grading of students' tests in their own schools. The change came after a 2011 Wall Street Journal analysis found previous test scores suspicious. For example, on the U.S. History and Government Regents, students were 14 times more likely to score 65—a passing grade—than they were to score 64. In response, the State Board of Regents mandated that teachers could not score Regents exams from their own school starting June 2013.

In compliance with the state mandate, the DOE opted to create Regents scoring centers in school buildings across the city, each recruiting teachers from various schools. The

DOE agreed to a three-year, \$9.7 million contract with CTB/McGraw-Hill to create an electronic "distribution" scoring system for the Biology, Global History, English, and U.S. History and Government Regents. Other Regents exams were graded by hand in the scoring centers. Each electronically distributed test would be scanned in Connecticut, downloaded in scoring centers, and randomly distributed to teachers. These teachers, paid on an hourly basis, would sit at computer terminals in the centers for hours, grading exams.

Almost immediately after the system's implementation, technical and logistical problems emerged. Some exams were not picked up from schools until days after they had been administered. There were various delays with scanning the tests themselves, including slow download times. Frequently, graders arrived at scoring centers only to be turned away because so few tests were

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Sandler Wins National Award for Exemplary Teaching



History teacher Robert Sandler was named Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year.

By SAM MORRIS
and ADA MUI

United States History and Jewish History teacher Robert Sandler was named Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the year by the National Council for the Social Sciences (NCSS). Since 1921, the NCSS has given out annual awards to the country's most outstanding elementary, middle, and secondary school social studies teachers.

According to the NCSS award criteria, strengths in a

teacher should include creatively and effectively using instructional material, incorporating innovative strategies into lessons, fostering inquiry, and encouraging the development of democratic values. To apply for the award, a teacher must submit a professional resume, a lesson plan, a reflection on student learning, and four letters of support.

Sandler was nominated for the award by Assistant Principal of Social Studies Jennifer Suri. "[He] brings an enthusiasm to his teaching that is infectious," Suri said. "I often leave his classroom wanting to read and research the topic he taught that day. He is always looking for creative and challenging ways to present the material for his students."

Sandler believes that his participation in numerous historical programs, such as the Japan Society, the China Institute, the Goethe-Institute, and the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History, helped him to win the award. "I've been able to build a pretty impressive resume and I think all the programs that I've done really helped me win this award," he

said. Sandler was commended by the NCSS for using texts to illustrate different viewpoints, for inviting guest speakers to present to his classes, and for having students role-play and debate.

Sandler will receive \$2,500, a one-year membership to the NCSS, and a trip to its annual conference, which will be held from November 22 to November 24 in St. Louis, Missouri. At the conference, "I have to do a sixty minute presentation, and I'm going to teach about 9/11, because I won an award last year for teaching about 9/11, and I think that, having been here [during that time], I have a lot of ideas about how it should be taught, and that could really help other teachers," Sandler said.

"It feels really great to be recognized for all my hard work, from writing recommendations to planning lessons," Sandler said. "I'm also excited to hear everyone speak and to meet all of the people who are going to be there." Guests at this year's conference will include Congressman John Lewis and director Oliver Stone.

Tabone Takes on APO Responsibilities

By ALEXANDRINA DANILOV
and ANIQA SHAH

Saida Rodriguez-Tabone, former Assistant Principal of Organization (APO) at Forest Hills High School, was hired to fill the same position at Stuyvesant for the 2013-2014 school year. The spot was left vacant after former APO Randi Damesek became Assistant Principal of Guidance (APG) at the conclusion of the last school year.

Though her new job description is similar to her old one, Tabone is embracing the prospect of change. "I don't like to do the same thing for too long. Some time last year, I was already looking for different positions and started applying," Tabone said. She is the third former Forest Hills administrator in the last two years to come to Stuyvesant, joining Principal Jie Zhang and Assistant Principal of Safety, Security, and Student Affairs Brian Moran.

Tabone has taken over the official APO's duties, which include budgeting, building permits, staffing, human resources, scheduling, testing, and supplies. Coordinating testing is new for Tabone, as she was not in charge of it at Forest Hills. To accommodate this change, Zhang has volunteered to assist Tabone with the testing process.

As the new APO, Tabone will also take on the smaller, day-to-day responsibilities, including maintaining the bell schedule. In the past, the bells were programmed to ring on regular days and were rung by hand on irregular days. During the first two weeks of school, many students and faculty noted the bells either did not ring or were not on time. Tabone, however, has rectified the situation: technicians fixed and reprogrammed the bells for each type of schedule. Since the third week of school, the bells have been back on schedule.



New Assistant Principal of Organization, Saida Rodriguez Tabone, looks forward to her first year at Stuyvesant High School.

Sam Kim / The Spectator

When Damesek was APO, she would consistently announce train delays, asking teachers to excuse tardy students due to external factors. Tabone said that she was unaware of this policy, but is fully open to adopting it. Moreover, Tabone explains that her door will always be open to student concerns.

"That's how I see any AP's job. You try to take care of things. It's a place to resolve issues," Tabone said. "You will only ever see my door closed if I'm doing something special."

Tabone will also be responsible for coordinating larger school events, such as proms and semi-formals. The entire cabinet, composed of Principal Zhang and the Assistant Principals, will help her in organizing these events from now on.

Many students have also since wondered who will be responsible for coordinating SING! and Big Sib events, as Damesek previously managed them despite the fact that they were not officially part of her job description.

When asked if the APO would continue coordinating these events, Tabone said that

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New Teachers on the Block

By EMMA LOH and
ARIELLA KAHAN

After a relaxing summer, many students return to Stuyvesant noticing barely any changes: the air conditioners are still broken, the escalators continue to work sporadically, and the swimming pool remains closed. A few unfamiliar faces have been roam-

ing the hallways, though, and they are definitely not incoming freshmen (though they might feel that way). Get to know the newest additions to the faculty and discover how these seven teachers, of completely different interests and educational backgrounds, have ended up at Stuyvesant.

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Want to join The Spectator?

Recruitments are Tuesday and Wednesday, October 1 and 2, in the library after 10th period.

News

City to End Electronic Regents Scoring

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available to grade. Some exams were lost completely. These issues made it impossible for CTB/McGraw-Hill to meet the contract's deadline.

The impact of these issues varied from school to school and grade to grade. In many high schools, scoring extended past graduation times, leaving thousands of graduating seniors without diplomas. At Stuyvesant, students who took electronically scored Regents exams faced delays in receiving their results. "I hope that they'll find a balance between efficiency and accuracy for grading," said junior Patrick McConnell, who faced delays in getting results for his Global History Regents.

Once the exams had finally been graded, there were many noticeable discrepancies between students' scores and class performance. Many schools, including Stuyvesant, began to make use of the little-known appeals process, which allows teachers to request that tests be re-graded by hand. However, the number of appeals per school is capped at five percent of test takers, forcing many Assistant Principals to choose certain tests to ap-

The DOE announced that it was cancelling its contract with CTB/McGraw-Hill on Friday,

"The appeals process is surrounded by ambiguity. There is no word on how the appealed scores will be graded, or when they will be returned."
—Eric Grossman, AP of English

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peal out of a large number of requests received.

This was particularly dismaying for students taking the English Regents, which saw lower scores than usual from Stuyvesant. Teachers and students suspected faulty grading, but the limits of the appeals process made it difficult to fix the scores. "Many students were very unhappy and confused with how they did," Assistant Principal of English Eric Grossman said. "I feel terrible for students whose scores were lower than they should have been. In addition, the appeals process is surrounded by ambiguity. There is no word on how the appealed scores will be graded, or when they will be returned. This is problematic for many Stuyvesant students applying for scholarships and other special programs, like QuestBridge, who will probably not receive their revised scores in time for application deadlines."

September 13, CTB/McGraw-Hill "failed to properly prepare their document review, scanning and digital uploading and processes for the contracted volume of Regents exams," DOE spokeswoman Erin Hughes said in an interview with WNYC. "These failures, combined with the aggressive timeline in which our students need results on these exams, necessitate that we cancel the remaining portion of the contract." The city will return to paper-and-pencil scoring for all Regents exams in 2014.

Many members of the Stuyvesant faculty opposed distributed scoring. "I understand the impulse of not letting teachers or schools grade their own students' Regents, since there has been corruption, but that has never been an issue here," Grossman said. "After grading and supervising Regents here for over a decade, if anything,

Teachers and students suspected faulty grading, but the limits of the appeals process made it difficult to fix the scores.

teachers here expect more from students on Regents, since we teach above the Regents level."

Boutique Changes Prohibited During Program Corrections

By BRENDA LIN
and JAMIE WU

The first week of a new academic term at Stuyvesant is usually a hectic one, particularly due to program changes and corrections. Last year's two-day program changes were notoriously inefficient, with hundreds of students forced to wait in the auditorium for extended periods of time, only to be told there was not enough time to address their concerns. Hoping to avoid a similar situation, Principal Jie Zhang sent out an e-mail to the student body on Thursday, September 5, detailing the way in which program change requests would be handled.

Zhang allocated three days for program changes, beginning at two p.m. in the auditorium. Seniors were given the first day, juniors the second, and sophomores and freshmen the third. The e-mail also mentioned that students would not be allowed to seek "boutique" changes, which include switching teachers or lunch periods for personal preferences. Students' schedules would only be changed if there were errors made by the programming office. In the past, the ban on "boutique changes" had been more or less assumed and practiced, but was never an official policy.

Students have been known to work around the "no-boutique rule," usually through good personal relationships with their guidance counselors or excuses given to Assistant Principals, who must approve the program changes.

"The guidance counselors were frustrated," Zhang said. "It was more important to handle the mistakes. We hope the students did not use that time to make any special requests."

Zhang maintains that this was not a new policy, just one that was never put into writing. Zhang met with all the counselors and Assistant Principals before the start of the 2013-2014 school year. Together, they reached a consensus on the details of the official policy and drafted the e-mail eventually

sent by Zhang. The administration wanted to avoid a large influx of students asking for changes that were not urgent.

"Basically, this is to make students understand that [if] you are given a program that is educationally sound, you should stick with it," Zhang said. "It's just to let students know that if there is a request that is very reasonable [...] we will make accommodations."

During the first three days of school, Zhang worked with Assistant Principal of English Eric Grossman to meet with students who had legitimate reasons for making non-error scheduling changes. These reasons included babysitting responsibilities, religious lunches, and medical notes.

Still, there have been complaints that some changes remain subjective. "There is no black-and-white rule [saying] I will not change it. Guidance counselors too will run [requests] by me to say, 'Is this reasonable to change?'" Zhang said. "As we move forward,

environment for the student." Zhang offered the example

"Basically, this is to make students understand that [if] you are given a program that is educationally sound, you should stick with it."
—Jie Zhang,
Principal

of honoring a student's request to switch a teacher whose class the student had previously failed, though this has been a long-standing policy within the school. She maintains that her goal, however, is to help students do better, which allows her a certain flexibility that some students claim to be subjectivity.

In terms of improving the program change process, Zhang says she learned a lot from last year and especially from Spring 2013 program changes. Looking forward, Zhang is considering extending schedule changes to two days for seniors, who usually have the most requests.

Despite the seeming disorder around program changes for the past few years, there is actually little to no difference in the number of program changes processed by the administration, according to statistics compiled by Assistant Principal of Technology Edward Wong. "The numbers didn't go up or down. It's very similar every year," Zhang said.

"The guidance counselors were frustrated, and it was more important to handle the mistakes."
—Jie Zhang,
Principal

we actually do make adjustments to make sure it's not about [a] personal favor, but providing a possibly better en-

Tabone Takes on APO Responsibilities

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she did not know who would take that on and wondered why students were concerned about it so early in the school year. It is likewise uncertain who will take over Camp Stuy. Tabone explained that, because Stuyvesant is currently missing an APG, it is unclear as to how these additional responsibilities will be divided among Moran and herself.

Some students have therefore expressed doubt in Tabone's new management. "I don't even know what [Tabone] looks like and she doesn't seem to have established a presence here so far. The procedures and values at her old school are probably not the same as those at Stuyvesant, and I'm not sure if she or any of the other newly-instated administrators care

Because Stuyvesant is currently missing an AP of Guidance, it is unclear as to how these additional responsibilities will be divided among Moran and herself.

about many of the things that are really important to us students, like SING!" a senior requesting anonymity said.

Despite these uncertainties, Zhang demonstrates faith in the school's new APO. "When you are new to a building, there will be confusion, but [Tabone] has an outstanding track record for the last ten years. I am very confident she will be outstanding, due to her one-of-a-kind reputation," Zhang said.

Some Stuyvesant administrators agree with Zhang's sentiment. Assistant Principal of English Eric Grossman said that Tabone has been doing "very well, especially considering the vast number of responsibilities that she has taken on and the need to learn so many practices, structures, and procedures that were set up before her."

Features

Meet the 2013-2014 ARISTA Executive Council



The ARISTA Executive Council (from left to right): Danielle Polin, Christine Xu, Eric Zhang, Tiffany Tsai, and Michele Lin.

Sora Kim / The Spectator

Christine Xu, President

Surprisingly enough, when senior and President of ARISTA Christine Xu was a sophomore, she was not even aware of what ARISTA was. She only joined ARISTA because Edward Cho ('12), the President of ARISTA at the time, urged her to do so. One thing led to another, and Xu was accepted into the ARISTA events committee, contributing to the organization by organizing information, leading events, and communicating with other ARISTA members.

It was not until Xu began going out to events and actually experiencing what ARISTA was like that she realized what a great society it was. "I was talking to people who were war veterans and had amputated legs to people who were breast cancer survivors," Xu said. "I learned a lot and I felt like this was a good organization that I wanted to get involved in." Interacting with people who had battled war and disease and being able to help their cause is what made ARISTA so special to Xu, and propelled her to join the Executive Council.

"I was talking to people who were war veterans and had amputated legs to people who were breast cancer survivors. I learned a lot and I felt like this was a good organization that I wanted to get involved in" — Christine Xu, senior and ARISTA President.

As the President of ARISTA, Xu acts as the bridge between ARISTA and the administration, and a current project that she is working on with Principal Jie Zhang is Student of the Month in which she reports the hardest working ARTISTA members to Ms. Zhang. Xu also spends a lot of time searching for and talking to new organizations to team up with ARISTA, along with just generally helping out her Vice Presidents.

An all-around student, Xu is a competitive ballroom dancer and teacher, participates in SING!, is a member of the Student Union, and is a co-chair of Relay for Life, a brand new organization at Stuyvesant that teams Xu up with the presidents of Red Cross and Key Club in order to support disease research by putting together the leaders of the three largest volunteer groups in Stuyvesant.

Eric Zhang, Executive Vice President

As the Executive Vice President, Zhang's job is to make sure that the events, tutoring, and communications committees are functioning with full efficiency. "The President, other VPs, and I discuss any problems ARISTA might be experiencing, as well as enforce all the credit and strike policies," Zhang said. "The most important job, however, is probably reading the applications of prospective members so that ARISTA can be comprised of the best individuals Stuyvesant has to offer."

Outside of ARISTA, Zhang has either coordinated or produced SING! for his past three years at Stuyvesant, is the Captain of the Biology division of Science Olympiad, and loves being a Big Sib. One thing Eric wishes ARISTA could work to improve would be the fact that many members stress credits over actual pride in doing service work. Zhang hopes that every ARISTA member can develop a real passion for volunteer work. Looking toward the future, Zhang hopes to have a great year and said: "The most important thing you can have

"The most important thing you can have in life is a good work ethic. If you have that, everything else will follow. Work hard for ARISTA and be passionate about what you do." — Eric Zhang, senior and ARISTA Vice President

in life is a good work ethic. If you have that, everything else will follow. Work hard for ARISTA and be passionate about what you do."

Danielle Polin, Vice President of Events

Like most of the council, Polin was on the events committee during her junior year, an experience she accredits to be what propelled her to apply for the Executive Council. Along with ARISTA, Polin is one of the captains of the girls' cross country team. This year, she is also a Big Sib homeroom leader. Because many of her activities entail helping others, Polin said, "I spend a lot of time answering emails and telling people everything will be okay."

Polin is in charge of supervising and organizing the Events Committee. "I look over the events committee, I have to choose them, and they now have to find events and I make sure they know what's up. We have spreadsheets set up and I make sure they are giving everyone credits," Polin

By RABIA AKHTAR

The satisfaction of helping those in need, completing mile-long walks in support of cancer research, and helping underclassman succeed academically is what distinguishes ARISTA from the plethora of other service organizations in Stuyvesant and beyond.

Stuyvesant's chapter of ARISTA, or the National Honor Society, has hundreds of dedicated upperclassman looking to help others and uphold their reputation as the brightest of the bright. Here is where the ARISTA Executive Council comes into play, as they are the thread that binds ARISTA together. Seniors Christine Xu, Eric Zhang, Danielle Polin, Michele Lin, and Tiffany Tsai handpick ARISTA and committee members, search for new events for members to help in, and make sure that each tutee is matched with a tutor. That said, the ARISTA Executive Council is eager to kick off the 2013-2014 school year to a great start.

said. Polin also helps out with executive decisions but said that right now these decisions are limited since the school year has only just started. Polin advises everyone in ARISTA to keep working hard and to send her an e-mail if they have any problem or even a joke to share.

Michele Lin, Vice President of Communications

A major aspect of ARISTA senior and Vice President of Communications Michele Lin wants to change is the lack of a sense of unity within ARISTA. "Outside of events, members don't frequently come in contact with each other aside from mandatory meetings," Lin said in an e-mail interview. "I hope that through the course of this school year, we can have more opportunities for ARISTA members to socialize with each other and create a greater sense of unity within our organization."

Her inspiration for applying to be on the Executive Council came from working in the committee as a junior. "I saw the importance of the work we had to do, so it encouraged me to apply to become a part of the Executive Council to help improve ARISTA," she said.

Lin ensures that there is smooth communication between the Executive Council and ARISTA members, as well as between ARISTA and the general student body. She is the person that keeps everyone updated on events by advertising, sending out e-mails, and working on the website. Along with being an ARISTA Vice President, Lin spends her free time drawing and reading, and has worked in The Spectator's very own Art department for over two years now.

Tiffany Tsai, Vice President of Tutoring

To senior and Vice President of Tutoring Tiffany Tsai, tutoring is not a job but an opportunity to give people just like her a chance to succeed academically. "There has been many times when I simply can't grasp a concept, and with a single hint from a friend, I felt as if I suddenly walked out of the cave into the sunlight," Tsai said. "I want to give this chance to Stuyvesant kids as well as

underprivileged kids outside of Stuy." Tsai's jobs entail matching ARISTA tutors to tutees and overlooking credits. But when members faked credits, Tsai felt hopeless. "During summer vacation, I thought long and hard about what I could do as an ARISTA VP of Tutoring, instead of complaining," Tsai said. "I came up with the names of several non-profits that cater to students from underprivileged backgrounds, and contacted them to start tutoring outreach programs with them."

Beyond ARISTA, Tsai loves hiking with her dad, drawing, and reading. She has met people in multiple programs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that have become like family to her, and have expanded her viewpoint on what art and life are. Along with volunteering at a nonprofit that serves free legal service to immigrants, Tsai is also a part of Junior Statesman of America. Speaking to her fellow ARISTA members, Tsai said: "Never sign up for what I call 'free labor' jobs. Sign up for events you believe in and tutoring opportunities that actually inspire you. Use ARISTA as a springboard to help others change the world."

"Sign up for events you believe in and tutoring opportunities that actually inspire you. Use ARISTA as a springboard to help others change the world." — Tiffany Tsai, senior and ARISTA Vice President of Tutoring

Pithy Edits

Premier College Admissions Essays

"Daniel is a **superb editor**. He is also a gifted writing teacher. He uses his gift for teaching to guide the writer through the process it takes to achieve masterful work. His procedure for editing includes strategic brainstorming. I was amazed at how he patiently led our son towards excellence, never once changing the essay's intent or personal voice. In the end, the work was honest and true, but pithy, polished and precise. He pushed our son until he reached deeper and found his best writing. Sometimes that meant challenging him out of his comfort zones. I would highly recommend Daniel's editing services for essays, applications and scholarships."

Mother of Jake C., Harvard '17

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Samuel L., Harvard '17

"Daniel was **instrumental in helping me perfect my college essays**. He was able to take any piece of writing I submitted, and condense it so it met the word limit while retaining substance. Daniel helped structure all my essays, without removing my own voice from the piece. His turnaround time was extremely fast, and I was never worried about deadlines. I appreciate his help through the stressful time of college applications."

Kevin M., UChicago '17

"I sent Daniel my essays expecting edits on grammar and structure, and was surprised to get feedback and analysis on every aspect of my essays. His guidance and intuitive scrutiny helped me develop my essays to a level I had never anticipated. I am **extremely grateful for Daniel's honesty and punctuality** in editing since they pushed me to work even harder."

Japjot B., Wesleyan '17

"Daniel's ability to write and edit is undisputed. He is able to quickly and effectively transform ideas and drafts into well-developed writings. Also, Daniel's very responsible and conscious of project deadlines so clients never have to worry about lateness. Overall, he's **one of the best in this industry**. Thank you!"

David Z., UPenn '17

Meticulous and dedicated, Daniel is a professional editor who has transformed each of my essays into an influential and polished piece. Experienced in the application process, he went beyond marking simple spelling and grammatical errors and made my essay sell who I was as a person. Daniel is extremely committed, having gone through countless drafts on every short answer and essay with incredible response time. Thanks for all your help man!"

Kevin Z., UChicago '17

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Features

Bring Back the Cubes!

**By ARINA BYKADOROVA,
MICHELLE CHAN,
and WEI HOU WU**

What's the address of Stuyvesant High School? It's not just 345 Chambers Street. It's also Mount Vesuvius, Sri Lanka, Moscow, Berlin, Revolutionary America, Mount Fuji, and historic 15th Street in Stuyvesant Town. Because of the Mnemonics Project, also known as "Stuy Cubed," students can see a glimpse of far-away countries and eras without leaving the halls of Stuy.

Stuy Cubed was a project started by artists Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel in 1992, when Stuyvesant had just moved from its old location on 15th Street to its current one. "The concept comes from the fact that the much beloved old school building was to be abandoned and all the memories of SHS graduates would be left in the walls of the building," Jones said.

In addition to the memorandum added by graduating students, such as the blue with yellow font Metrocard added by the class of 1996 to commemorate its first practical usage in replacement of the unwieldy token, there are many souvenirs from around the world. An iron fragment of the Eiffel Tower rests inside a test tube on the eighth floor; two containers of water from

the Upper Nile River sit on the first floor; snow from Mount Fuji has since melted after its collection in 1990.

The process of filling the class cubes is quite simple, beginning in the September of senior year and ending in May. Seniors must gather materials that best signify their time spent at Stuyvesant. After the items have been carefully picked out, students must contact the administration for access to the Mnemonics cabinet. The cabinet contains the necessary tools: a floor plan showing locations of the cubes, written instructions and guides for cube-filling, and special fasteners. Once the graduating class finishes their mnemonic, it is sealed with a one-way screw, so no changes can be made to it in the future.

The next empty cube belongs to the class of 2014. "I hope our graduating class gets a cube because it would show our legacy at the school and we could show what was important to our grade," senior Carolyn Fisher said. She was concerned that few of her fellow seniors know about the process of putting one together.

"If someone explained to me how the cube business is done, I would definitely be for it," senior Josephine Chun said, confirming Fisher's words.

Nevertheless, other senior activities take precedence. "I feel like it's just something nice to do, but when I come back to school to visit when I'm like a ten-year alumni, I'm not going to find the cube."

The Senior Caucus, however, definitely has Mnemonics on its agenda. "It is one of our priorities," senior class president Thoasin Bari said. In fact, it was part of his campaign for the Caucus elections last year.

Bari's plan to fill the class of 2014's cube is a lifeline for a tradition that might otherwise fade. Few of the past grades could get back together to fill their time capsules after graduation. "If you don't get it done, then we rely on reunions and some of them sadly, for ten years, haven't been filled," Senior Activities Advisor and technology teacher James Lonardo said.

The challenge now is to assemble a committee to start the cube project for the class of 2014. Bari is confident that this will be done within the next month, and is looking forward to beginning the process. "I think the most difficult part is figuring out what we're going to put in it, but I also think that's the most fun and the most entertaining part," he said.

Currently, Stuyvesant students are blessed with over 400 blocks of history that can



Laura Eng / The Spectator
be found around any corner within the building. Yet, in a way, the 67 cubes reserved for the future grades inspire as much wonder as the ones that are already filled. We might not even live to see some of them. What will they hold? Where will we be? What will Stuyvesant, and the world, look like then?

Adventure Time: What They Saw From Their Bikes



Luna Oiwa / The Spectator

**By SANAM BHATIA
with additional reporting by
EMMA LOH**

The bike wheel was dipped carefully into the Atlantic Ocean, glistening as rays of sun bounced off the rubber material. Six weeks later, the very same wheel was carefully dipped into the Pacific Ocean, representing the end of a unique journey and a meaningful summer. Throughout history, Americans have dreamed of their nation reaching from sea to shining sea, and eventually achieved this with the contiguous 48 states spanning east to west.

This summer, junior Adam DeHovitz experienced mani-

fest destiny for himself, traveling from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean on his bicycle and passing through nine states—South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. "The importance to me was what [the wheel on my bicycle] stood for, that I got this wheel all the way across and this wheel has touched every inch across [...] nine states' worth of dirt and grime," DeHovitz said.

DeHovitz developed an interest in biking when he received a bike for his birthday during freshman year, frequently biking around Prospect Park in his spare time. With junior Justin Strauss, he

started the club StuyCycle, which allows Stuyvesant students who enjoy biking to find time to do it together. DeHovitz found a passion for biking the instant he started. "A lot of my friends get annoyed because I bring up biking a lot, but's hard when there's something you're so passionate about," he said. In addition, he recently biked more than 100 miles in the New York City Century Tour.

Over the summer, DeHovitz participated in America Coast-to-Coast, a six-week program organized by Apogee Adventures, with ten other teenagers and two experienced adults. Their biking trip began in Charleston, South Carolina. From that point on, the group

went straight into biking. They also had their phones taken away, with access only once a week. Though this might seem daunting, "It was nice not having everyone stuck in their little screens. It forced us to talk to each other and become better friends," DeHovitz said.

On the first day, the group biked 70 miles. However, the daily experience consisted of waking up at four a.m. and biking on average 85 (but up to 109) miles a day. A few small breaks and a 40-minute lunch were sprinkled throughout the day, and they repeated a pattern of getting off and grudgingly getting back onto their bikes until five p.m. Before bed at eight, they relaxed and ate dinner. Essentially, the group biked, slept, ate at convenience and grocery stores all over America, and biked again.

While biking a total of 2,800 miles through the nation, the group stopped at community centers, churches, campsites, and high schools to sleep.

DeHovitz explained that through this program, he realized that New York City is a bubble. Living in it often leaves its residents oblivious as to what the rest of the United States is like. "If you go out of the city and, say, to the south, it's a very different America than the one you know. Different culture, different people," he said. For example, he mentioned that southern hospitality is real, as the bikers were often given water, food, and

kind greetings by people and families.

"Seeing and experiencing America was definitely a feature of the trip," DeHovitz said. Besides the physical aspect of the journey, DeHovitz said that they were hit with the realization that certain areas in America are not financially well-off at all. In addition, the group passed through obscure towns like Jacksboro and Brownsfield rather than major cities like Austin, providing a new view of America.

According to DeHovitz, the best parts of the trip were crossing state borders and time zones. The group took pictures of the beautiful scenery, such as the Rockies, as it passed by. Nature is not what DeHovitz remembers most, but it was impressive to "find yourself biking in the middle of a grand mountain range, or going through the desert at night and watching as dawn illuminates the sandy fields," he said.

Naturally, there were some difficulties in the trip. There were close calls in areas with many cars, like Arizona. Plus, due to everyone's exhaustion, arguments often left them even more exhausted, both mentally and physically. However, nothing could be deemed worse than the saddle sore received from biking for long spans of time. But DeHovitz believes that the saddle sore validated the trip and made the accomplishment so much more commendable.

Features

Roving Reporter: Who Do We Want?

By MAISHA KAMAL
and ARIEL LEVY

She used to be seen guarding the bridge entrance, carefully watching waves of Stuyvesant students flow through the doors. Careless hem lengths would be reprimanded, and ringing phones would be confiscated. The same person who made school events like SING! and prom possible patrolled hallways disciplining unruly students, planned Camp Stuy, and oversaw administration of standardized testing. Who was she? Assistant Principal of Guidance Randi Damesek. Can the school be run successfully without her? Do the students want her back?

Throughout her years at Stuyvesant, Damesek, former Assistant Principal of Organization, has inspired many conflicting views about her. These have been highlighted since her recent ban from entering Stuyvesant as a result of the June 2012 cheating incident. An investigative report by the Department of Education (DOE) concerning the cheating scandal claimed that she and former Principal Stanley Teitel inappropriately handled the situation. As a consequence, Damesek has been asked to report to a "rubber room" during school hours.

Many students who knew Damesek personally had nothing but positive memories of her. "I don't think [Stuyvesant] will be the same without Ms. Damesek. She was a figure in [Stuyvesant] who truly cared about us, the students, and was willing to sacrifice so much for our welfare," sophomore

more Danielle Segall said. "I lost a few really important items this year, including my iPad and my wallet, and she spent entire days helping me search all over the school to find them. When I couldn't find my wallet, she was there to help make sure I got home safely."

Junior Rosemarie Amelia Gamarra-Muñoz's experiences with Damesek were similar to Segall's. "When I met [Damesek], I had entirely negative opinions of her. But after a personal incident passed which occurred outside of school, [Damesek] took care of me and I got to know her. A lot of people might say [she's] different, but she's truly kind and cares about her students and [is] doing the best job she can. Stuyvesant without her is incomplete," Gamarra-Muñoz said.

Even students who had little to no interaction with Damesek believed she was a positive influence in the school. "[During] my time [at Stuyvesant], I've seen a lot of hate and love for Damesek, before and after she got fired. I liked having her around since it made the school function more easily. I'm not sure what the requirements for her job [were], but I feel like she went past that to make [Stuyvesant] work efficiently as possible," an anonymous student said.

Other students even went as far as to organize a protest against Damesek's removal, led by senior Sweny Venderbush. In reference to the event, which took place on Monday, September 9, Venderbush said, "I organized the protest because I felt it was the only

option the student body had left. We'd tried organizing meetings with the Chancellor, our Network leader, and our superintendent, but no one wanted to meet with us. The DOE didn't want this to be a big deal, so we know the only way we were going to have any impact was to make it a big deal."

Venderbush, who has worked closely with Damesek in the past, added, "She wasn't nice. She was a rule-follower and a rule-enforcer. But she knew how to get things done better than anyone else, and she would do anything that anyone needed, regardless of whether or not it was her job. She was the backbone of [Stuyvesant]."

Other students have more negative memories of her. "Last year, I was playing chess on the fifth floor," an anonymous sophomore said. "[Damesek] approached us with an intimidating glare and demanded that we stop. She was scary, especially for me, as a freshman, being new to the school."

Alumnus Muki Barkan ('13) had even stronger unfavorable opinions. "She was an antagonistic woman who enforced discipline sporadically. She was verbally abusive to large portions of the student body and seemed to have a need to control every aspect of their extracurriculars. She took over and neutered the Student Union, censored SING!, and tore apart the STC. She removed all the small plays from the STC—which now seem to be gone forever—and placed teachers who heavily censored the oth-

er shows. They weren't allowed to show teen pregnancy in Grease. She may have been an effective administrator, but she was awful for the administration's relationship with the student body and for the student body's ability to govern and flourish by itself," Barkan said.

Many students, regardless of Damesek's personality, believe that she should not have been fired. "Reasons [in the report released by the DOE] stated for firing [Damesek] were misrepresented," sophomore Krzysztof Hochlewich said.

Sophomore Wenxi Zheng agreed. "I don't think she should be fired unless there's a legitimate reason that the DOE makes public," Zheng said. She, like other students, believes the DOE is using Damesek as a scapegoat to appease the press, instead of addressing the issue directly.

Another anonymous sopho-

more has a more distanced take on the matter. "I believe that the students should not be part of this scandal because they have no idea what really happened. It's an adult problem; this is for the adults to decide," the sophomore said.

Regardless of the student body's variety of opinions concerning Damesek, it is undeniable that she was perceived as a crucial member of the Stuyvesant community and significantly impacted many students' experiences at the school. Her controversial removal has stirred up passionate feelings of support and opposition, many of which have been publicly displayed via Facebook, online petitions, and the protest. Nevertheless, the students of Stuyvesant are continuing to adjust, and it is doubtful that Damesek will be forgotten anytime soon.



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

Ronn Torossian: From Bronx to Business Giant



the story the way you want to tell it. To help clients be seen as what they want to be seen." Though it started off small, the company now occupies an entire floor in a midtown Manhattan corporate building. His agency represents a wide range of celebrities and brands, including rapper Lil' Kim, Puff Daddy, McDonald's, Whole Foods, IHOP, Luna Park, Shiseido, and Snoop Dogg.

Torossian never would've dreamed of such success if it weren't for Stuyvesant. At first, however, he wanted to go to John F. Kennedy High School, located a five minute walk away from his house in Bronx. "You never know what's best for you until after the fact... now I'm a successful self-made entrepreneur," he said.

Torossian remembers his high school days as ones full of studying, basketball, little sleep, and a lot of hard work. He lived in a much different world. A child who lived in the Bronx with his single immigrant mother, Torossian had to take train rides that were upwards of an hour every day, which was "very interesting, because the trains during the 80's were like the zoo," he said. Those daily train rides "made [him] more mature [and] confident." On top of his lengthy commute, he worked 40 hours a week delivering pizza since he was 12. He was focused and wasted no time. "My schedule was from eight to one, if you take the classes back to back... [with] no breaks, you could leave school early," Torossian said.

Though Stuyvesant is known for its sciences, Torossian preferred the humanities, choosing to fill his senior schedule with English and social studies classes. However, the most important thing Stuyvesant taught him was to think critically. For him, one plus one plus one isn't always the

only way to get to three; he always finds an alternative path to reach his goal. In the field of public relations, it is creativity and gumption that brings success in giving clients strategic plans to achieve the results they want.

But the work and long train rides didn't deter Torossian from dedicating whatever time he had to playing basketball. Some of his most treasured memories are from being a member of the Runnin' Rebels, travelling with his teammates and competing in the basketball invitational. "If you were to ask [Mr.] Barth right now, who he, then, would've pointed his finger to [be] the most successful, it wouldn't have been me," he said. "I was a troublemaker, wise-ass... strong, assertive, outgoing."

Being on the basketball team let him "meet people and develop socially and athletically," Torossian said. "Meeting smart kids all over the city [was memorable]... [it's] good for your development." For the first time, he saw a world bigger than Bronx. During the late 1980s, "it was hard then for an immigrant kid to go somewhere, [but] Stuy taught me that even a small kid can get somewhere... [I] have a successful business," he said.

Not surprisingly, Torossian dreamt of becoming a professional basketball player—but how did he go from shooting hoops to media? "It's very normal not to know what you want to be," he said. "What you want to know is that you want to be the best damn thing you can be." He ended up working in politics for a number of years. From there, "there was a natural progression towards media, which morphed into public relations," he said. And now, he's in a profession where law, journalism, media, and politics are all mixed together.

His company started off with him and an intern in a four hundred square-foot rooftop office serving only three clients in 2003. Four years later, he had to move to his current headquarters with a much larger workforce, and he had already established a two-year old office in Los Angeles by then. According to Torossian, 5WPR's rapid transformation was due to three qualities that every aspiring entrepreneur should keep in mind: the uniqueness of the brand, the ability to be resourceful, and staying faithful to customers.

When asked what he thought about the pressure at Stuyvesant, Torossian had one thing to say: "Life isn't a cakewalk. What's harder today is that we live in instant gratification; if you don't call your friend back in four hours they think you're dead." At Stuyvesant, he learned to work hard, and it was hard work that got him to where he is. But he's quite certain that, compared to other New York City public high school students, Stuyvesant students will lead successful and more satisfying lives. "Pressure is a part of life; if you want to go to one of the best high schools in the city, expect pressure. Don't complain if you want to get ahead," he said.

So the next time you get a grade below 90, it's definitely not the end of the world. One 85 isn't going to ruin your chances of a great future ahead of you. The key to success is to "have an open mind. You shouldn't be surrounded by people who are exactly like you," Torossian said. "Step out of your sweet spot and challenge yourself," like how he stepped out of the world of pizza delivering as a kid and into a bigger world as a CEO chair with countless possibilities.

Courtesy of Ronn Torossian

By LON YIN CHAN

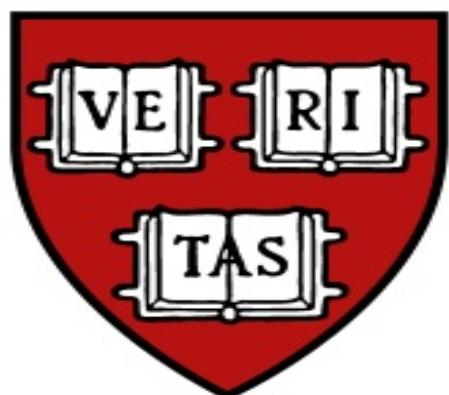
Here's a tip: don't go to the extremes for that one point that might just increase your chance of getting into Harvard. While it may signal the apocalypse for some at Stuyvesant, an 89 isn't so bad. In fact, an alumnus graduated with that average. And guess where he's at?

That's right. At McDonald's.

He's the face of McDonald's to be exact.

Ronn Torossian ('92) is the founder and CEO of 5WPR, which was selected as the 2013 PR Agency of the Year by American Business Awards. The name 5WPR was inspired by the five W's of journalism: who, what, when, where, and why. His profession involves "building a brand via the media, utilizing the magazines, newspapers, and internet to tell

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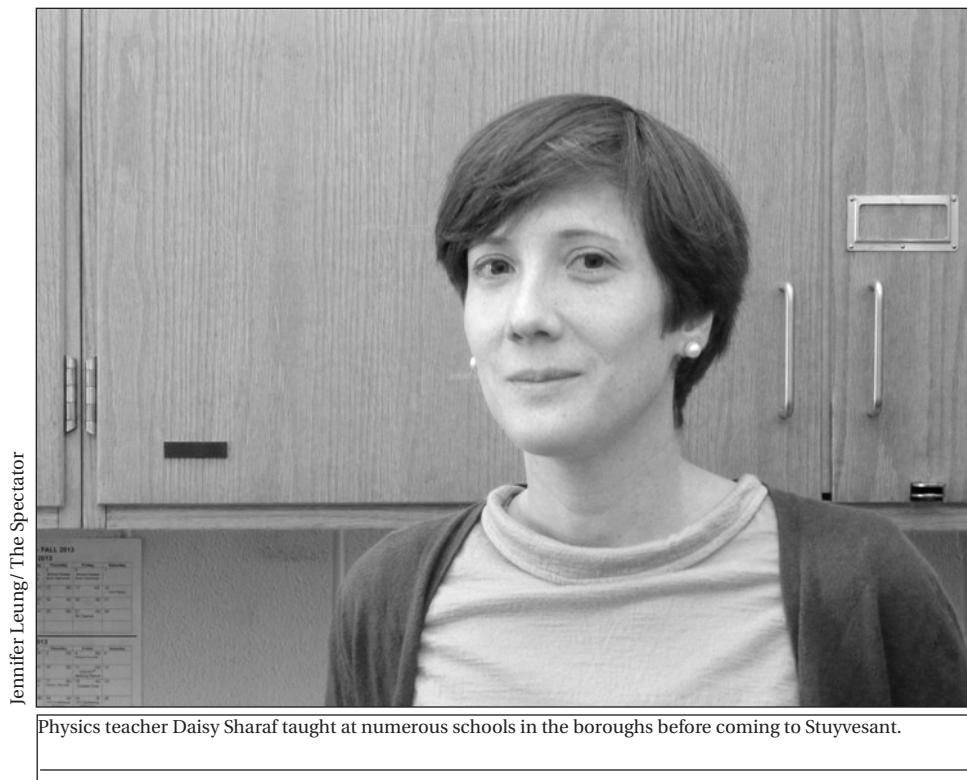
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Features

New Teachers on the Block



Daisy Sharaf, Junior Physics

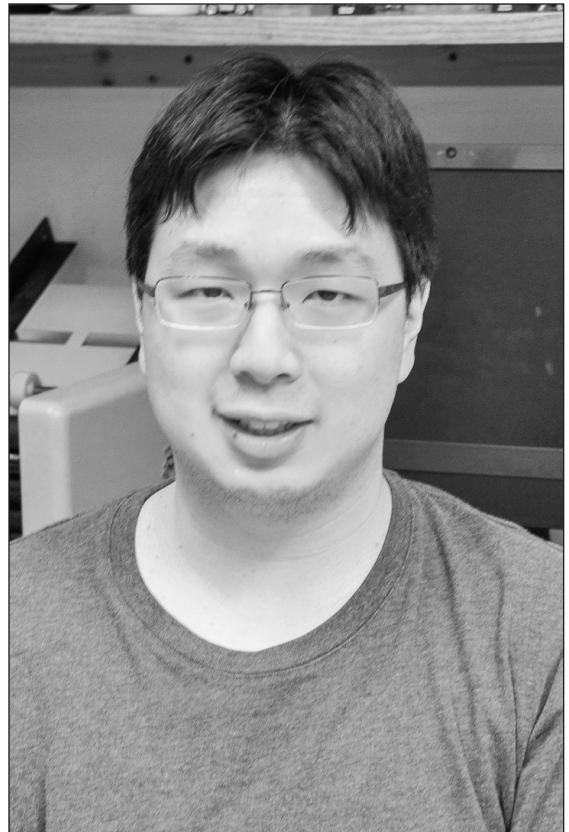
"People always ask me why I didn't go to Stuyvesant," Physics teacher and native Brooklynite Daisy Sharaf said. As a teenager, Sharaf attended Murrow High School before pursuing a B.A. in Philosophy at St. John's College and receiving her Master's in Engineering from the University of Chicago. When asked her reasons for teaching Physics, Sharaf says that she enjoys investigating and discovering "how the world works"; her own teaching style reflects this philosophy, as she often takes things apart in class.

Prior to Stuyvesant, Sharaf taught in almost every borough at multiple schools, ranging from Dewitt Clinton High School to Bard High School Early College Queens. When she's not teaching, Sharaf's favorite hobbies include running, rock climbing, spending time outdoors and on the Internet, and traveling. This past summer, Sharaf traveled to Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, and Transnistria, and in the past has been to the Soviet Republic, Turkey, and South America. In the future, Sharaf hopes to expand her travels to West Africa, the southern tip of South America, and mainland Asia. Looking ahead, Sharaf is most excited to teach a larger curriculum outside of Regents Physics.



Gilbert Papagayo, Freshman Biology

Biology teacher Gilbert Papagayo traveled 2,852 miles from his hometown in Seattle, Washington to New York City, but his latest move, from the New Explorations into Science, Technology and Math High School (NEST+m) to Stuyvesant High School, totaled just three miles. After graduating from Columbia University with a B.S. in Biomedical Engineering, Papagayo entered the New York City Teaching Fellows, through which he began his teaching career at the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. After leaving LaGuardia, Papagayo taught Living Environment, Chemistry, and AP Environmental Science at NEST+m for three years. Papagayo, when asked why he teaches, said: "I really enjoy teaching, students seem to respond well to me, and I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else at this point."



Jonathan Cheng, Introduction to Computer Science

Some may recognize math teacher Jonathan Cheng from his days as a substitute teacher or as part of the Computer Service Technology staff. However, 10 years ago, Cheng didn't think that he would be teaching mathematics and computer science as he does now in Stuyvesant. While studying for a Ph.D. in Applied Math and Statistics at Stony Brook University, Cheng did "not see the light at the end of the tunnel" and realized he was not fond of the constant research necessary to complete his Ph.D. Cheng's advisor recommended that he pursue a career in teaching because his aptitude and love for teaching was apparent. After receiving his Master's degree, Cheng began working as a substitute teacher at Stuyvesant, later joining the Computer Service Technology department. Cheng enjoys his new position at the front of the classroom, explaining, "It's different, but I like it."

Features

New Teachers on the Block

Jin Hee Yoo / The Spectator



With experience as a computer programmer in the finance industry, Introduction to Computer Science teacher David Holmes brings his love for computer science to Stuyvesant's classrooms.

David Holmes, Introduction to Computer Science

"No matter how much I like computer science, I like people more," computer science teacher David Holmes remarked. Holmes had not always planned to be a teacher. Before teaching at Stuyvesant, he had three jobs in the finance industry designing computer programs. In one project, Holmes and a friend "made a computer language that landlords used to project income from leasing office space under squirrely New York leases." Later, Holmes worked with a programmer in Israel to write a system in which one could buy and sell future stocks with real money. Despite Holmes's fascination with the projects he worked on, he enjoys teaching more because humans are "his species." Holmes has a tremendous appreciation for the Stuyvesant community as well as an admirable love of teaching and sharing his love for computer science, specifically recursion. Recursion, the concept of solving large problems in terms of smaller ones, was the first concept which drew Holmes to computer science. "Now I get to introduce that thought process to people who haven't played with it before, in the hope that some of them will like it as much as I do," Holmes said.



Anne Duncan / The Spectator

Aimee Hill, Junior Biology and Nutritional Science

Though not exactly a new teacher, Biology teacher Aimee Hill is a little-known presence on the seventh floor, having taken a four-year hiatus before returning to Stuyvesant this year. Hill started her career as a teaching fellow at the Bronx High School of Science before teaching at Stuyvesant for three years. During her leave, Hill traveled to and taught in San Francisco, Alaska, and Nicaragua. In California, Hill participated in an urban farming program run by Hayes Valley Farm, which rehabilitated a vacant lot by the Central Freeway into a community garden. She also worked with the Philadelphia Seed Exchange, an organization that hosts free seed and plant exchanges, preserves seeds, and conducts discussions about preserving biodiversity. Hill has returned to the East Coast to pursue more urban agriculture, establish a similar seed exchange in New York City, and continue teaching the subject that she loves. All who are interested in teaching or gardening can find Hill selling organic vegetables at the McGolrick Park's Down to Earth Farmers Market with Great Road Farm every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Anne Duncan / The Spectator

Meng-Ping Tu, Freshman Biology and Vertebrate Zoology

Born into a family of educators, biology teacher Meng-Ping Tu says that teaching "is in her blood." After earning her B.S. and Master's degree at National Taiwan University, Tu immigrated to the United States to participate in a Ph. D. program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with the intention of becoming a professor. However, during this program, Tu learned that a majority of the graduate students she worked with had decided to study biology because of the influence of either a middle school or high school teacher. Tu also observed that some of the most important skills in biology are difficult to teach to "kids who are 19 or 20 years old," and subsequently decided to start a career as a high school teacher. Before coming to Stuyvesant, Tu was the Assistant Principal of Biology at Bard High School Early College Queens for five years. Her favorite parts about teaching biology are the subject of anatomy, the dissections, and that "teenagers are wacky and cool!"



Jin Hee Yoo / The Spectator

Freshman Composition and European Literature teacher Maura Dwyer ('04) finds being on the other side of the classroom interesting.

Maura Dwyer, Freshman Composition and European Literature

English teacher Maura Dwyer ('04) has returned to Stuyvesant nine years after her graduation. Dwyer attended Oberlin College and, upon graduating, participated in the New York Teaching Fellows program. This program found Dwyer a position at a small, relatively new school in Brooklyn, where she taught for five years. She had kept in touch with Assistant Principal of English Eric Grossman, enabling Dwyer to receive an interview for a teaching position at Stuyvesant. Dwyer cites her experience in Grossman's English class during her senior year as the inspiration for her dream of becoming an English teacher.

Not surprisingly, Dwyer is still adjusting to her new position. "I am still having a really hard time calling former teachers by their first names," she said. She also "finds it really interesting being on the other side of the classroom here, and is trying to incorporate the things [she] really liked about Stuyvesant in [her] classes." Nevertheless, Dwyer is very much enjoying her return to Stuyvesant, remarking that "it's pretty fun!"

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

What We Don't Talk About

All students' names have been redacted for the sake of anonymity.

"I first contemplated suicide in fifth-period [class name redacted]. My own thoughts scared me," an anonymous student said. "I went into the bathroom and cried. Not 10 minutes later, I had a washed face and was back staring out the window, disgusted with myself."

Depression is a serious issue for many teenagers, especially ones who attend a school that's notorious for heaping on work and pressure. Studies suggesting that millions of Americans suffer from depression have sparked countless national discussions. But such discussions have yet to permeate Stuyvesant. Stress and competition—including the mental issues that follow them—are often mistakenly viewed as what kids "sign up for" when they enter Stuy. With academics constantly taking center stage, students are often unaware of the school's resources to help them cope with any emotional distress. What's even more alarming is they're reluctant to speak up because of the stigma associated with personal problems.

At Stuyvesant, we're quick to brush off depression as a side effect of academic stress. We lack the open, positive environment necessary to help students overcome their emotional issues.

The guidance office is what first comes to mind when one thinks of a possible resource for depressed students. The American School Counseling Association and the New York City Department of Education state that the primary role of guidance counselors is to counsel students with academic planning, postsecondary planning and career development, and personal or social issues. But despite having some of the best guidance counselors in the city (almost all of the students who spoke to The Spectator had positive experiences), there are three fundamental problems with the guidance program.

First, at Stuyvesant, a guidance counselor's administrative roles often overshadow their support roles. "They [the administration] wanted me to understand that here, my job is to help basically all students graduate with a college of their choice, with everything else counseling provides," guidance counselor Di Wu said. "Programming and college is definitely a part of it," he said, but the administration also encourages Wu to help students on a more personal level. "I've dealt with depression, and I have referred students for a psychiatric evaluation or a mental health clinic," guidance counselor Jo Mahoney said.

Writing college recommendations and helping with programming changes make the guidance counselors' roles seem administrative and less welcoming to students who need to confide in an adult. A troubled student would likely be put off by the fact that he would have to speak to someone who'd end up writing his

Secondary School Report. Many students also feel alienated by guidance counselors who are known for being tough during programming, when they have to reject the majority of helpful requests. This initial interaction creates an impersonal, hands-off feeling.

Second, as one anonymous teacher puts it, "There are 10 counselors for 3600 students. It's not too hard to see the problem there." In a school packed with students, there is little chance a guidance counselor who must oversee hundreds of students can build a healthy relationship with each and every one. An amicable relationship with a guidance counselor is a critical thing for a student seeking help from a mature adult, but workshop meetings about the college process do little to establish the idea that every student should consider his or her guidance counselors helpful for more than program corrections.

Third, and most egregious, the rapid turnover in guidance counselors prevents students from building long-term relationships. "The most frustrating aspect of my experience at Stuy has been having my guidance counselor change every year. By the time I was able to build a relationship with one, I would end up having a new one," senior Hansa Sharma said. Members of this Editorial Board can attest to having had three or even four different guidance counselors over the course of only three years.

As a result of these issues, teachers often find themselves in situations where they're more involved in a student's personal life, given that they see their students daily. "Guidance counselors rely on teachers to make them aware of a situation. [Once aware,] the guidance counselors are definitely responsible to follow up," Principal Jie Zhang said. The legality and appropriateness of a person-to-person relationship between students and teachers is unclear, but teachers often have no choice but to console an anguished student. But it's important to note that teachers are explicitly hired to instruct students, not to guide them through issues like depression, anxiety, or suicidal tendencies. They are not necessarily the best equipped to handle these problems.

Many students also report turning to Angel Colon and the SPARK office for advice. According to its mission statement, "SPARK is a place where any student who is having a problem at home or is feeling socially and/or academically isolated can be helped." There is no one who has done more at Stuyvesant to make students feel safe than Angel, and we commend him for his effort. An anonymous student said, "The SPARK office is a smaller and more private area than say the guidance counselors' office. Angel always tries to help out the students as much as possible..." Angel is a one-man army, and Stuyvesant needs to increase its funding for the SPARK program so that it can expand its reach. All students

should be made more aware of the existence of this seventh-floor safe haven, if it means that less burden will be placed on an overworked guidance office and a greater number of students will have their needs addressed.

Advertising is important here. During the time-slot allocated for "guidance" at Camp Stuy, teachers all spoke about graduation requirements. This is the wrong message. The administration needs to make a clear attempt to expose students to SPARK and their guidance counselors. Signs around the school would help. Assemblies would help. At the very least, sessions dedicated to guidance should emphasize support for students' emotional needs—not just their academic ones.

Creative ideas may be helpful too. Some colleges dedicate resources and a whole week of classes to "take your professor out to lunch" days. Perhaps Stuyvesant should allow students take their guidance counselors out to lunch. Home-rooms also rarely bond with their guidance counselors, and as academically-driven Stuyvesant students may be, mandatory time-management classes or speeches about graduation requirements are not bonding experiences. Stuyvesant should create fun events that bring students together with the guidance office. Sports games, ice-cream outings, or even a math competition (this is Stuyvesant after all) would certainly help.

We'd also like to see major systemic changes to guidance. We are strong believers that online programming requests should replace the routine of pestering your guidance counselor until he or she helps you. Graduation requirements don't need to be drilled into our heads either—few of us forget these after all. Our guidance counselors shouldn't have to waste so much energy reminding us of this.

Recognizing depression and emotional issues extends past the guidance office. Though we acknowledge that teachers are not professionals in identifying students who seem to be struggling emotionally, the protocol a teacher should follow when confronted with an emotionally unstable student should be clearly communicated to teachers—and students.

Some of these changes are more plausible than others, but the bottom line is that Stuyvesant needs to open its doors to create a culture that accepts and helps students with depression.

But Stuyvesant students also need to be willing to take the first step in fundamentally changing the attitude towards admitting and talking about mental issues that may exacerbate other students' struggles. A student summed up the state of depression at Stuyvesant briefly: "It's not an uncommon thing. It's just that no one talks about it, and I think that needs to be changed."

We agree.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

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of the
Student
Body"*

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The Spectator

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

FOR THE RECORD

- In News article "Damesek Barred from School after Report," math teacher Melissa Protass, not English teacher Colette Brown, was appointed to represent teachers for the legal defense fund.
- In our Staff Editorial: Cheating Scandal Part II, it was incorrectly stated that Randi Damesek is the Assistant Principal of Organization. She is currently the Assistant Principal of Guidance.
- Photographer Philip Shin's name was spelled incorrectly in several Opinions portraits.

Opinions

Teacher's Take: New Teacher Evaluation Gets an F

Alice Li / The Spectator



By GARY RUBINSTEIN

Over the past few years, the country has been overcome by the belief that most schools in this nation are failing to provide a good education for our students, and that the bulk of the problem is that there are way too many teachers who are either incompetent or just too lazy to teach. A group of "reformers," most of whom have never taught before, declared that one easy fix would be to change the teacher evaluation system. As a result, New York City received a \$700 million grant from the United States Department of Education in exchange for, among other things, a teacher evaluation system that would include as a "significant" portion something ambiguously defined as "student achievement."

Under the old system, administrators—either the principal or the department Assistant Principal—would visit each teacher's class a few times a year and then have a conference with the teacher discussing the lesson and talking about what improvements could be made to it. This was pretty useful, since it is sometimes difficult for a teacher to have an objective view of how a lesson is going, as he is busy teaching the lesson and has little time to simultaneously self-reflect. Of the two possible

ratings, satisfactory and unsatisfactory, most teachers got satisfactory ratings and were, consequently, not fired.

Like every teacher I know, I don't mind being evaluated. The main thing I worry about when I am being watched by a supervisor is that my lesson will go uncharacteristically badly—the overhead projector bulb will burn out, nobody will raise their hands to answer questions—and the evaluator will assume that this is typical of my lessons. But, in a sense, I am being watched by 170 students each day, and if you've had me as a teacher, I hope you feel that I've tried to do my best each day.

Last June, the New York City Teacher's Union and the Department of Education were unable to agree on the details of the new teacher evaluation system, so they agreed to allow the commissioner of education of New York State, John King, to impose an evaluation system on the city. What he came up with is extremely confusing, highly arbitrary, and, most likely, will have little impact on actual student achievement.

Sixty percent of the evaluation is now based on principal evaluations, utilizing a new tool known as The Danielson Framework. Danielson requires administrators to judge teachers on some very specific teaching methods. Some of

these may or may not be appropriate for the lesson that the teacher is doing that day. For example, to be rated highly effective on component 3C, "engaging students in learning," the administrator would need to see students speaking to the class, other students raising their hands to ask the student who is speaking a question, the student who is speaking selecting a student to speak, and so on.

If the rationale is to prevent teachers from doing forty-one minute lectures with no student input, this is unnecessary, since under the old system teachers would certainly have been rated poorly for doing this. Like all the Stuyvesant teachers I've informally watched when patrolling the halls as a dean, it is important to me that my students have a healthy amount of participation in my class each day. But having students call on each other to ask questions is unusual for me, since most of the time I would not expect it to enhance my lessons, and it might even waste time that I would like to use to do another practice question. I am put in an awkward position, then, when an administrator enters my room. I must decide if I should run my lesson in a way that maximizes student learning or in a way that gives me the best chance of being rated 'highly effective.'

If I teach a Regents course, 20 percent of the evaluation is based on "student achievement," or students' Regents scores. It would seem that, since Stuyvesant students do quite well on the Regents, the teachers at Stuyvesant would be pretty safe with this 20 percent. Not quite. You see, it isn't how well the students do on the Regents, it's how well the students do on the Regents in comparison with how well a computer algorithm predicts the students will do on those tests. So if the computer pre-

dicts that my students should get an average of a 97 on the Algebra II Regents, and if my students then only "achieve" a 93, well, I might find myself rated as "developing" or even "ineffective" on "student growth."

For the remaining 20 percent, all teachers at Stuyvesant will be rated on how the entire school scores on all Regent exams relative to the computer's prediction (come on, 88!). A teacher committee that I was on chose this option, since it seemed the 'safest' of the limited list of options.

When a teacher does not teach a Regents course, that teacher's forty percent will be based on the school's Regents scores for all subjects and how they compare to what the computer predicts they will be. We don't know what the computer has predicted already, so teachers of non-Regents classes are completely at the mercy of this computer and also powerless to impact the scores on the Regents in subjects they do not teach.

One of the most effective teachers in the country is Stuyvesant's own chorus teacher, Holly Hall. There are students, too shy to open their mouths and sing when they came to this school as freshmen, who have eventually gone on to become Broadway stars. And when they get a chance, they say that without Hall, they would never have reached their potential. Under the new system, there is a chance that she could, based on Regents she did not teach and a computer's prediction that she did not confer with, not be rated as the 'highly effective' teacher that anybody who has ever watched her in action for 30 seconds would know she is.

This type of teacher evaluation can really bring down a teacher's morale. When I think about how the evaluators are mandated to look for certain things and to disregard other

things that are not on the list, I suddenly become very aware of how much time and energy I spend on things that I don't get credit for, despite those being the things that I pride myself on. For example, on the first day of school, with a million things to do before my first class, I saw a bewildered freshman searching for his homeroom. The boy asked me, in a panic, where room 420 was. Well, I knew there was no room 420. But rather than just tell him that his room didn't exist, I stopped everything I was doing and escorted him to the program office, where we learned that his homeroom met in an actual room (not 420), and then to his homeroom. That task took about 20 minutes, and though I'm not suggesting I'm a hero for doing this, it is a small example of the sort of thing that teachers do, and have done for years, because we want to help students. But in the back of my mind, I thought that it is too bad that this isn't being counted in my evaluation—something I would have never even considered thinking in previous years.

My hope is that this evaluation system doesn't, as a side effect, lower student achievement at this school. Will every teacher who teaches a Regents course spend a few extra days on test prep at the end of the year rather than teach fun lessons that could actually evoke deep thought? I hope not.

For students, I ask that you don't get stage fright when an administrator is evaluating your teacher, and also, please don't race to be the first to leave the Regents tests in June. You don't know what that computer has predicted you will get on that test, so that extra time rechecking your work could make the difference in your favorite teachers' ratings of favorable or unfavorable.

Don't Unleash the Beast

By HYUN JUN KIM

It's already past midnight, and you really need to start on your English and history essays due tomorrow. The situation, you think, would be a disaster if you didn't have your go-to chemical fluid of an energy drink that will "unleash the beast." You gulp down the magic solution, and, ready to pull an all-nighter, zip through your essays in a few hours. All's well that ends well. Or so it seems.

The truth of the matter is that energy drinks are not as safe as they seem. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not actively regulate these drinks. In fact, many energy drink labels are misleading—some drinks don't have labels specifying their caffeine content and potential health risks. The FDA must correct misleading labels to protect the most vulnerable consumers, and perhaps, as study after study seems to indicate the harm of these energy drinks toward mi-

nors, the FDA should ban the sale of energy drinks to them.

Energy drinks are, in fact, harmful. According to Howard Mell, who works as an emergency physician in the suburbs of Cleveland and serves as a spokesman for the American College of Emergency Physicians, "three energy drinks... is the equivalent of 15 cups of coffee." Excessive consumption of caffeine has sent about 20,000 people to the ER in 2011, suffering from palpitations, dehydration, elevated blood pressures, and even heart attacks. Still not concerned? Well, for 18 people last year, unleashing the beast proved fatal and resulted in a FDA investigation of the matter.

So why do regular consumers of these drinks remain uninformed? Labelling, as mentioned before, is a major issue. The labeling on these drinks makes consumers believe that they are taking about 70 to 150 mg of caffeine, while the entire bottle can contain up to

294 mg. Knowing that caffeine consumption in adolescents has been associated with an increase in blood pressure and other complications is impossible with the current labeling. Moreover, many teenagers even believe that the drinks are beneficial dietary supplements. Although energy drinks may contain ingredients, such as ginkgo or milk thistle, that are believed to deliver healthful effects, their modicum amounts hold no significant dietary benefit, according to Brown University.

More than the nutritional benefits or incredible ability to maximize focus and drive away fatigue, what these energy drinks really offer students is psychological dependency. In times of urgency and stress, the knowledge that you have the ability to consume a highly concentrated and caffeinated drink provides an artificial psychological support, a sense of relief and confidence.

In countries such as Latvia, the sale of energy drinks is

banned altogether for people under 18. In England, some school districts have banned selling energy drinks to students. If other countries are willing to take such actions to protect their children, it's high time for America to follow. With the state appeals court blocking Bloomberg's attempt to prevent NYC stores from selling sugary drinks larger than 16 ounces, we have lost one battle. But we should definitely not be

discouraged. The government should feel compelled to intervene, to treat energy drinks as controlled substances like tobacco and alcohol.

Hopefully, such a move will help students realize that what they should seek is not the wings to fly out of their work, but skills and habits that enable them to control it.



Philip Shin / The Spectator

Opinions

Point-Counterpoint: Nuclear Energy

No Bang for the Buck



By TINA JIANG

It is 3 a.m., and Yoshio Ichida, a fisherman, rises for his daily work. As his boat gently bobs in the Soma wharf and the sun rises, the otherwise beautiful scene is marred by dead sea life floating in the ocean. Approximately two years after the Fukushima meltdown, Japan still hasn't gotten back to its feet. The horrors of the past have stayed with the inhabitants, and radiation hotspots spell out danger, offering a consistent warning of the consequences of harnessing nuclear energy.

According to Jim Riccio, a Greenpeace USA Nuclear Policy Analyst, nuclear reactors, through the radioactive fuel that powers the plants, can potentially "devastate the region in which [they] operate." A meltdown could "kill and injure tens of thousands of people, cost billions of dollars in damages and leave large regions uninhabitable." Proponents of nuclear power argue that such a meltdown is next to impossible under the current safety standards of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The Union of Concerned Scientists, however, has found that the NRC excludes considerations of "sabotage"; "external events," such as natural disasters; and "human error," into the equation, thus resulting in a dangerously optimistic estimate of the possibility of a meltdown. In addition, the government has passed the Price Anderson Act, a law that has created an insurance pool of over \$12 billion to satisfy the public's liability claims in case of personal injury or property damage resulting from a commercial nuclear plant accident. If the government and nuclear industry were truly certain of the safety of these plants, why would the insurance pool exist? In the past, nuclear plant meltdowns were believed impossible, but they still occurred. These accidents clearly prove that the claims of proponents of nuclear power are contradictory with the reality.

Even if a meltdown does not occur, each step in the process of producing nuclear power releases radiation. The nuclear waste produced includes plutonium that will "remain toxic for thousands of years." According to the NRC, "Spent nuclear fuel is highly radioactive and potentially very harmful. Standing near unshielded spent fuel could be fatal due to the high radiation levels. Ten years after removal of spent fuel from a reactor, the radiation dose one meter away from a typical spent fuel assembly exceeds 20,000 rems per hour. A dose of 5,000 rems would be expected to cause immediate incapacitation and death within one week." According to the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), more than 58,000 metric tons of "highly radioactive" spent fuel has accumulated for which the US has "no permanent repository." Increased production of nuclear power would lead to an extremely large increase

in radioactive waste that would have horrifying aftereffects that could last for generations.

The risks presented by nuclear power do not outweigh its benefits. One such "benefits" is a decreased dependence on oil. The Examiner, however, states that since nuclear energy provides electricity, not fuel, which is what oil is primarily used for, there would be no deduction in oil consumption. In addition, nuclear power is only the answer in the short run. Uranium is not unlimited, and we will eventually run into the same issue that we did with oil: too much demand and too little supply. Another supposed "benefit" is a reduction in carbon emissions. The fact that a nuclear plant itself does not produce as much carbon as a coal plant is simply a facade that hides the truth. In reality, when considering all the steps leading up to energy production at the plant, the plant does, according to the Examiner, "create equal or greater amounts of carbon emissions." Of course, nuclear power isn't completely unhelpful. However, the small gains we receive from nuclear power are minuscule in comparison with the enormous wave of disaster awaiting us at the end of the road.

It is clear from evidence and reports that nuclear power is an expensive, dangerous, and unfeasible alternative source of energy without the benefits proponents claim it has. In each step we take towards a nuclear future, we are exposing ourselves to global devastation from radioactive fallout. In addition, all the risks are for nothing. Nuclear energy does not decrease our dependence on oil, will not last in the long term, and does not reduce carbon emissions. Some supporters of nuclear power say that any issues currently apparent will be solved in the future, but time is limited. According to Green America, we only have 10 more years to mount a serious effort towards global climate change. It is extremely unlikely, even with the current pace of technological growth, that problems presented by nuclear energy will be solved in the near future. We must turn ourselves away from the lure of nuclear energy and face what have been right in front of us; wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. These energies will not run out. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that solar, hydro, and wind power all emit less carbon than does nuclear power, making these energies cleaner and more efficient. There is relatively no danger involved in these alternative energy sources, and thus, they are the best answer to our problems.

If we continue to turn toward nuclear power and be lulled into the haze of safety and optimism that has been brought about by nuclear power's proponents, disaster will inevitably follow. Any plant that is in existence can have a meltdown right this moment. Imagine a world in which that occurs. Imagine the chain of events that would follow. Imagine if that happened in an urban center. Imagine leaving the home that the nuclear world we are turning to will touch in the future. Imagine the radiation that will sit there, waiting for its next victim. This is a future with nuclear energy, not a rosy picture in which our energy problems are solved, but one in which more and more problems arise. In the end, the question we have to ask ourselves is: Is it worth it?

Nuclear is the Future

By BRIAN DONG
and DANIEL KODSI

1.5 trillion watts. That's the amount of electricity Americans use annually. We satiate most of our need through oil (Americans consume 18.3 million barrels of oil per day) and other fossil fuels. We have powered our country with these ancient byproducts for over two centuries, but have also ignored the dire consequences that come with using them. Not only will fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas not last forever, but their heavy usage is also choking the planet to death. Global warming is very real and dangerous—the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change states that the total fiscal cost of global warming will be equal to those of World War I, World War II, and the Great Depression combined. Fortunately, there exists a form of energy that won't crash the economy or kill the planet. It's efficient, powerful, and safe. We speak, of course, of nuclear power.

Nuclear energy is easily one of the most cost-effective solutions available. According to the World Nuclear Association (WNA), it costs less to produce than nearly every other form of energy, including brown and black coal, hydroelectric energy, off and on-shore wind power, and solar energy. Moreover, it's getting cheaper by the day—even as the price of crude oil increased (it's now four times higher than it was a decade ago), the price of uranium has steadily declined.

In addition to being cheap, nuclear energy is one of the cleanest and most environmentally friendly power sources available. Unlike fossil fuel power stations, nuclear plants neither emit greenhouse gases nor release sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, or any other poisons into the atmosphere. They don't congest the atmosphere with smog and only discharge steam. Even nuclear waste is contained; according to the WNA, any waste created is prevented from leaking into the environment by being permanently transported to isolated underground geological repositories. Even if the waste does manage to leak through the protective canisters into which it is packed, the rock surrounding it prevents any radiation. These safety precautions all but guarantee that leaks are contained and don't induce environmental damage.

We must also increase our usage of nuclear energy to develop energy independence. While our dependence on the rest of the world has decreased since 2005, according to the Energy Information Administration, we still relied on imports for 40 percent of the petroleum we consumed in 2012. Any reliance on outside sources makes America weaker. It leads to trade deficits (we were \$85 billion in the red with Canada and Mexico as of 2011), and means that in the case of a trade disruption, like OPEC's 1973 trade embargo or the 1979 energy crisis, we would be left high and dry. Finally, we need energy independence because for every dollar we spend on oil in the Near East, we're contributing to terror-

ism. For instance, even as we buy 18 percent of our imported oil from Saudi Arabia, according to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Saudi regime is the single largest source of funding for Salafist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, and it is the biggest donors to Sunni terrorist organizations worldwide. If the United States is truly committed to saving the lives of its citizens, it must move toward energy independence.

Finally, contrary to public opinion, nuclear plants are safe. In fact, more people have died from coal mining than from nuclear accidents. Over the past 60 years, there have been 56 nuclear accidents in the US, but only nine people have died. In contrast, the Mine Safety and Health Administration states that coal mining has claimed nearly 9,000 American lives within that same time frame. It's clear that, in the United States at least, nuclear plants are secure.

And they're becoming even more so. After Fukushima in 2011, despite the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission's declaration that the plants don't pose any danger in the near future, the nuclear power industry still implemented further regulations to ensure that nothing similar could ever happen. According to the Nuclear Energy Institute, those regulations included

In addition to being cheap, nuclear energy is one of the cleanest and most environmentally friendly power sources available.

"additional instruments to monitor used fuel storage pools, to develop strategies to prevent damage from external events that may affect multiple reactors at a site and, for some reactors, to install hardened vents." The industry also adopted a strategy entitled "FLEX" that requires backup equipment to be stationed in multiple secure locations. Nuclear power plants are safe, and they're only getting safer.

The solution to our energy crisis is right under our noses. Nuclear energy is a cheap, safe, and plentiful alternative to fossil fuels. The government calls this country environmentally friendly, but it is saving pennies through its recycling programs rather than looking at the big picture. Pursuing green energy, like nuclear power, is the only real way to save our planet from cataclysmic climate change.

It's high time we came to the realization that we must harness the power of the atom.



Hayoung Ann / The Spectator

Opinions

Damesek: Why This Fight Matters



Maggie Wu / The Spectator

By RISHAM DHILLON

Here is the truth, as I perceive it.

The conclusion of the Office of Special Investigation's #12-15848 November 5 report is that "due to a lack of foresight, candor, and professional judgment, Mr. Teitel and Ms. Damesek failed to efficiently and effectively carry out the administrative duties entrusted to them during their handling of the "cheating incident" of June 2012."

This conclusion is erroneous because:

A. The report accuses Damesek and Teitel of not investigating claims that cheating occurred on exams previous to the Physics Regents. It states that "Ms. Damesek [was] responsible for investigating these claims" because she was testing coordinator. As head of the school, Teitel was responsible for this, but Damesek, subordinate to Teitel, is only responsible for everything that he asks her to do. He did not ask her to lead the investigation of this previous cheating. Nor did he ask her to report anything to State Education Department (SED), even though she mentioned that he should. If Damesek had gone ahead and reported anyway, then couldn't the DOE have accused her of in-

subordination? It was a catch-22 situation.

B. The report accuses Damesek of not properly instructing proctors. But before the DOE talks, perhaps it should find the list of responsibilities it provided to Damesek when she was initially appointed the testing coordinator. Where does it say that she should investigate cheating? Where did the DOE specifically list the steps of this investigation? If no such procedures existed, then isn't the DOE guilty of the exact same crime that it is charging Damesek with: the crime of not properly training and instructing people (e.g. proctors)?

C. If the superintendent can assume that Teitel knew how to proceed after informing her of the cheating, then why can't Damesek assume that her proctors knew how to proceed with proctoring?

D. The report argues that it took eight days for the incident to be reported to SED, when Director Steven Katz called Teitel based on a media inquiry. The Testing Administration Handbook states that cheating that occurs on state exams (not LOTE) must be reported to SED after an investigation has proven that cheating took place. However, there is no specific deadline as to when to report to SED.

If SED is at liberty to assume its own deadlines, then why can't the other party—namely, Teitel—assume his own?

E. If deadlines and taking action in a timely manner was of utmost priority to the DOE, then why is it that, even after this investigation was completed on November 5, 2012, Damesek was allowed to continue running PSAT testing, SAT testing, Regents testing, final exam testing, and AP testing for the rest of the year? Furthermore, when the Spectator interviewed Principal Jie Zhang late this summer, she stated that even though Damesek was to assume a new role as Assistant Principal of Guidance, she would be keeping her role as testing coordinator. If both the principal of Stuyvesant and the DOE could trust Damesek as a testing coordinator, then doesn't that indicate that they didn't think her guilty? And if they did believe her to be guilty, why wait so long?

F. In essence, the report states that "only after the incidents at issue began to receive coverage in New York media were they finally reported to SED on June 26." If the DOE can use this sentence, then so can Damesek. The DOE took action only after the incidents at issue (namely Damesek's guilt) began to receive coverage in New York media this August—after a DOE spokesperson insisted that it would take action to demote or fire Damesek. Again, isn't the DOE guilty of what it accusing Damesek to be guilty of?

F. (Here's a solution: Let's fire the DOE! Maybe that'll get rid of cheating throughout the NYC schools—like how getting rid of Damesek is supposed to magically erase cheating at Stuyvesant.)

How Stuyvesant Really Feels about the Issue

A. A large number of stu-

dents feels hurt by this scandal, and rightly so. The students assume that the cheating scandal of 2012 will forever haunt them, and that colleges may incorrectly believe that all of us are guilty in the crime. We will avoid any mention of the cheating scandal, and if fighting for Damesek means being in the press and having to probe into a past that we do not want to reexamine, we will avoid it as best as we can.

B. We were divided when it came to protesting in response to Damesek's fate. The large number of us who did not participate in the protest did so for one of the following reasons:

a. We did not want to give the media another chance to represent us negatively.

b. Some of us have grudges against Damesek for confiscating our cell phones, enforcing the dress code, etc.

c. We are afraid of suspension.

d. Some of us simply don't care. We're here to get into Harvard and become dazzling successes, not to fight for justice.

C. The handful of us who did protest do not know what we can do next and believe that we've done everything we can. We're close to giving up.

D. But as a student body, it's our responsibility to come together for issues that are in Stuyvesant's best interest. Saving Damesek's job is in our best interest.

E. We can't give up now.

What I Want

I am writing this article because I want justice. I can pretend that this is not my battle, but I know that it is every Stuyvesant student's battle. And if in my last three years there has ever been anything worth fighting for, this is it.

To the student body skeptical about fighting: I know that you're hurt by this scandal and

that you would rather not have anything to do with it. But this is a battle that is worth giving our best shot. I do not expect anything of you aside from reconsidering your position. Do you truly understand the magnitude of the situation?

To the student body willing to fight: I'm not in favor of disruptive protests, but there are other things we can do. Let's make the legal defense fund stronger. Let's do a letter-writing campaign to the chancellor. Let's talk to the media and show them the real situation at hand. Let's stand outside the DOE headquarters and demand an answer. Let's plaster Stuyvesant's walls with "bring back Damesek" posters. Let's start a website and gain support from alumni and parents. Let's talk. And let's bring her back.

To the DOE: If you think you've found the answer, you don't even understand the problem. Combating cheating is going to take a lot more than scapegoating an efficient Assistant Principal. In fact, this action seems like taking great strides backwards in solving this issue.

To society and tabloids: Even Stuyvesant students, sadly, can make terrible mistakes that can never be justified. Don't blame an upright administrator for the fault of students and a failing system.

To Ms. Damesek: If there's anything you've taught this school, it's to always follow the rules. Those of us who will fight will do so because we know you've always followed the rules. I'm sorry that you, out of all people, have to go through this.

To everyone: Do what you know is right. Stand by her. You won't regret it.

Womenomics: Japan's Underutilized Resource

By EMMA BERNSTEIN

What do the CEOs of PepsiCo, IBM, and Yahoo all have in common?

Yes—it's their gender. Almost half of working Americans are women, and a handful of them hold top positions at major companies. These women are not only stimulating our economy, but also inspiring our young female generation to follow in their footsteps. America, having realized the importance of women in the workforce, encourages their participation by providing the Family and Medical Leave Act, mandating that companies give a minimum of a 12-week leave to employees after birth.

Japan, however, can't say the same.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has urged Japan to bring women into the workforce, and it has good reason. Less than half of Japanese women are currently employed, while in America, around 60 percent of women are working. These numbers are both pretty low. But Japan's employment levels for women are much lower than those of other first-world countries, which typically have employment rates of 80 percent

and above.

But why is female participation so low?

The problem, according to a report released by the Los Angeles Times, is that two thirds of women aged 35-39 who leave the Japanese workforce for childbirth don't ever return. Furthermore, though 70 percent of Japanese women have jobs before they marry, only 62 percent of them quit after having their first child. It's all centered on babies, something Japan's been having some trouble with lately.

This happens for a few reasons. One is that women have nowhere to put their children after they give birth. Japan has a public daycare system, but waitlists tend to be too long to be practical; an infarct may be long over before a spot even opens up. This means that women need to take longer leaves because they cannot abandon their children during the workday.

The second reason is buried deep within Japan's culture: household dynamics. This is prevalent in employment rates, where men are the breadwinners, but it is also evident in the most basic everyday activities, like chores. In comparison with the US, the University's Insti-

tute for Social Research found that Japanese men spend only a quarter of the time on household chores that American men do.

Furthermore, The New York Times finds that these shocking statistics might be preventing Japanese women from having children because they fear for their careers. And in Japan, where the population is drastically decreasing, this is especially problematic. Right now Japan's population looks (almost) like a rectangle: there are equal amounts of the young, middle aged, and old. But if this trend continues, the rectangle starts looking more and more like an upside-down triangle. Upside down triangles don't stand up very well on their own, and neither will Japan. For instance, as the elderly population grows, there's less money going in to pay for their care because the young population is shrinking. It could also further impact the economy, because fewer people mean fewer workers.

Women in Japan don't want to leave the workforce, but childcare issues serve as a major deterrent. By excluding women, Japan is dealing its entire economy a blow. It's estimated that if both sexes were to work at the level of men, that

could boost Japan's GDP by 15 percent. This increase could even help the US, as Japan is the world's third-largest economy and a key part of the automotive industry.

So how can they get there? Shinzo Abe, prime minister of Japan.

His economic policies are frequently referred to as Abenomics, and they're giving hope to Japan's next female generation. Abe has called on corporations to have at least one female executive per company, something that could shape the way women perceive themselves by allowing them to have strong female figures to look up to. The government also plans

to open 250,000 daycares over the next few years, solving the messy situation Japanese women find themselves in today. Furthermore, the government is also considering giving women three years of leave to take care of their children.

These policies will give women a reason to stop being scared of having families, accessing an important economic resource for Japan and shifting social norms. More importantly, the policies will tell women that they are just as valuable as men, if not more so for the sake of economic growth.

Equality for Japan is more than just an ideal. It's a necessity.



Hayoung Ahn / The Spectator

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Opinions

By JUSTIN WELTZ

In past centuries, long-distance trade rested on the wooden ties of railroad tracks. International train systems connected commerce and established mutually beneficial relationships between nations. Since then, wealth has transferred from the agriculture and livestock that fed the 18th century to the oil and natural gas that power the current era. This shift in important resources resulted in the need for a new mode of transportation—the pipeline. These commercial links, regardless of their form, are the past and future of peace-keeping. International oil pipelines are the key to cooperation between nations.

In 1999, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey signed an agreement to support a pipeline running from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyha (BTC) oil transportation system, commissioned in 2006, has not only been profitable to these three nations, but also tied this profitability to cooperation between the nations that service the pipeline. This system of dependency is, essentially, an investment in peace.

The political situation surrounding the Greater Nile Oil Pipeline in the Sudan does not initially seem to be an example of the peaceful coexistence described above. However, considering the clear ethnic and religious divisions that define this country (Muslim vs. Chris-

tian, Arab vs. African), I would argue that the relative stability this nation experienced before the genocide in Darfur is a token of the power of pipeline dependency. Oil pipeline-induced stability on a national basis is often unsustainable because the supplier and the transportation have no leverage over each other. One side can be abused by the state for the benefit of another. The political climate in Sudan was, therefore, destined to explode. However, after the division of Sudan into two independent nations, the pipeline that transported oil from the southern oil fields to the northern refineries remained intact. This commercial link between the two belligerent countries now serves as a deterrent to any major conflict. Such aggression would cause catastrophic damage to both nations' economies.

These two international pipelines demonstrate the ability of economic dependency to form positive relationships between countries. While poor conditions and violence incline nations to blame their problems on their neighbors, prosperity as a consequence of joint projects between countries has the opposite effect. The Greater Nile Oil Pipeline is just one of many examples that prove that, although ideological differences play an important role in international politics, the average citizen cares more about putting food on the table. Prosperity has always been more important than polarization;

sustenance always of greater value than self-righteousness.

The Middle East has been in a state of perpetual turmoil for many years. Most of the oil pipelines that currently service this group of nations run from east to west and include one or two nations. The precedent exists, however, for a more extensive transportation system. In the 20th century, the Baghdad and Hejaz railways were built in order to promote consolidated commercial entities in the Ottoman Empire. A recreation of this infrastructure in the form of oil pipelines would not only bring much-needed prosperity to areas (such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran) ravaged by violence, but also force unity on many of the Middle Eastern nations (Parag Khanna). This newfound cooperation between countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey would create a group of countries devoted to preserving the use of the north-south oil pipeline. The line could service the European Union and other northern and western nations, and would compel these nations to promote peace in the countries that the pipeline passes through.

Although this plan of action invokes an intensely optimistic view of the Middle East's capabilities at this point in time, I believe that such a long-term goal is the only way to cope with the current chaos that plagues this area. Sadly, I cannot give a road map or blueprints to this pipeline, because an opportu-



Philip Shin / The Spectator

nity to build this economically unifying project has not yet presented itself. For me to presume enough to create such an outline would be to ignore the constant unpredictability and volatility of the conflict that has manifested itself in nations like Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Egypt. An oil pipeline through the Middle East is, therefore, not a solution to be implemented immediately, but rather a goal that must be achieved one step at a time.

The Pax Mongolia defined a period of stability and prosperity in the Middle East and the rest of Asia. The trade and cross-culture dialogue provided by the Silk Road promoted cooperation and common financial ends. The Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (between Russia and China) oil pipeline, the BTC pipeline, the extensive networks of oil pipelines in Central Asia and Russia, and the hypothetical pipeline described above provide the groundwork

for a new silk road. This system of oil transportation would start in China, the second-largest oil consumer in the world, and end in Europe. It would circumnavigate the Caspian Sea, passing through countries like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Although many of the nations listed above are unstable, I believe the united efforts of the countries invested in this oil transportation network could prevent any serious threat to the pipelines. The oil transit system would, therefore, create political syndicates composed of resource, distribution, and consumer states devoted to sustaining collective peace. It may not be the most optimistic view of human nature, but history has taught us that nations are more peaceful when they are enticed by economic incentive.

It's Time to Crack Down on Cheaters



By DANIEL KODSI

Cheating is an issue at Stuyvesant—it's resulted in punishments for students, forced retirement for teachers, and a negative reputation for dishonest and honest pupils alike. So what did the administration do about it? It cracked down as hard as it possibly could. This is a lesson American leaders would do well to learn, as cheaters overseas cost Americans jobs and harm the welfare of the United States. Foreign nations are manipulating their currencies in a flagrant violation of international law, and in doing so have altered yearly flows of \$1.5 trillion dollars away from the US and our closest allies.

Currency manipulation is when one government buys up another government's financial assets to decrease the appreciation of its own currency or pegs the currency's value to that of another country's. In doing so, that nation's currency is "manipulated" to be kept

artificially high in relation to one's own. This in turn makes exports cheaper for countries like China, which conduct huge amounts of trade with the United States, undercutting all other competitors and gaining a massively unfair trade advantage. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the ten largest holders of US foreign exchange reserves (FX reserves) had \$7.649 trillion worth (equivalent to 49% of the US's gross domestic product) as of the 3rd quarter of 2012, with China leading the pack at \$3.3 trillion dollars. And while China's holdings aren't the largest as a percentage of its own GDP, nominally, they're enormous, and hence, the most dangerous to the United States.

Those holdings pose three critical dangers to the United States. First, they keep American manufacturers from creating jobs at home, because their ability to compete is undermined by an artificially weak yuan. According to The Economic Policy Institute, a repu-

table Washington think-tank, ending currency manipulation would reduce the U.S. trade deficit by up to \$400 billion over three years and create between 2.2 and 4.7 million jobs. And Peter Morici, Professor of Economics at University of Maryland and former U.S. International Trade Commission economist, agrees with the estimates, saying that "[Currency manipulation] is probably the most significant reason why we aren't recovering as we should." The numbers speak for themselves: even disregarding the economics of it, these underhand tactics have caused massive humanitarian cost as millions go without jobs and families are left in abject poverty.

Second, according to the Congressional Research Service on December 6, 2012, "China's large and growing holdings of U.S. securities [might] give it leverage over the United States on economic and non-economic issues." This is because were China to divest itself of its holdings, our economy would suffer a catastrophic crash, in all likelihood plunging us right back into a severe recession. The fact that there's even a chance that America's agenda might be dictated by China is beyond frightening. Not only does it mean we lose soft power (economic or cultural influence) and some of our ability to compete in the world's developing markets, but we also can't fully regulate China's behavior because of their influence—that is, they have a free pass to do what they want, when they want to do it.

Finally, not fighting currency manipulation undermines our international image; it makes America look weak. We have allowed China and other countries to cause long-term harm to our economy, yet suffer very few repercussions other than stern telling-offs. We can't expect our demands to be taken seriously if we are unwilling to take retaliatory steps. Moreover, China knows that we're unwilling to act and has used that to behave aggressively in other aspects of their policy towards us.

According to The Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property from May 2013, Chinese cyber attacks have cost the United States up to \$210 billion annually, which the director of the NSA, Keith Alexander, has called "the greatest transfer of wealth in history." We make empty threats and the world has started to realize we're all bark, no bite. And now, with China potentially playing a role in our policy decisions, we're weak on yet another level. But what is there to do?

The first step that we must take stems from currency manipulation, as I mentioned, being illegal under international law. By joining the IMF, China agreed to "avoid manipulating trade rates ... in order to [gain an unfair competitive advantage over other members]." However, the IMF is unable to enact punishment and the organization that is able to, the World Trade Organization (WTO), doesn't have anything against currency manipulation in its charter. Additionally, we need to work in conjunction

with Europe (because this issue affects them too) in order to force the WTO and IMF to collaborate and impose punishments upon violators of financial law. While the United States has been reluctant to fully condemn any country for currency manipulation, doing so now is a step we have to take.

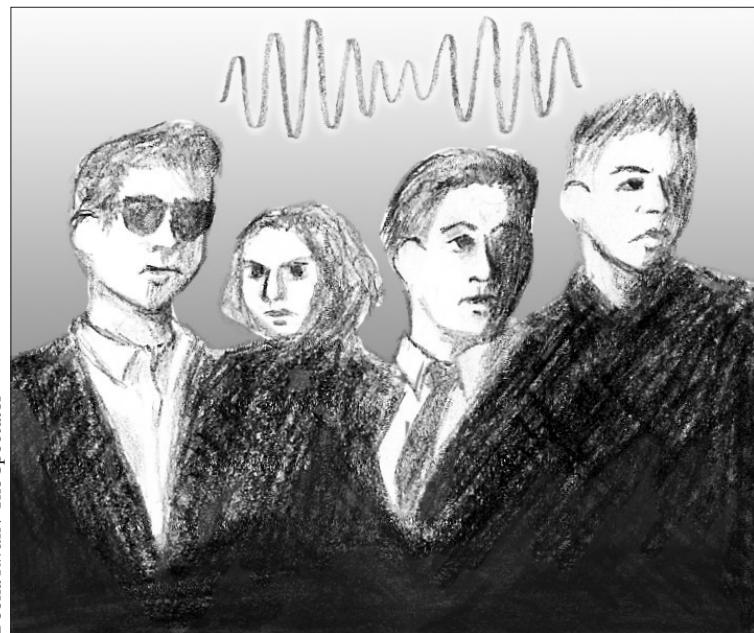
Meanwhile, we need to boost our long-term savings rate to reduce our dependency on foreign investors by lessening our trade deficit. While this might mean marginally less growth, it's an essential move towards regaining a firm grip over our own economy. And if we are unable to raise savings, then we must begin to reduce the scale of security sales in order to make sure that we don't become even more vulnerable. If we are unable to do either of those two things, then we stand little chance of defusing the economic nuclear bomb that China holds over us.

Lastly, were working with the WTO and IMF to fail, we can't just threaten sanctions, but we must actually impose tariffs on the goods of currency manipulators. Yes, it would be a gamble and could hurt American consumers by disrupting trade, but the countries we import from are far more dependent on us than we are on them; it would only be a matter of time before foreign currency exchange rates begin to rise. For the good of the community, cheaters need to be punished—as in Stuyvesant, as on the world stage. It's time to put our foot down on the cheaters.

Arts and Entertainment

Music

Arctic Monkeys' New, Mad Sounds



Deena Kwon / The Spectator

By ANNE DUNCAN

I often find myself frustrated or disappointed when my favorite musicians abandon the styles that I've grown to love. By 2011, when Arctic Monkeys' album "Suck It and See" was released, I already adored them for their sassy and sexual lyrics, predictable rhythms, and simple but provocative guitar lines. Their songs were musically understandable but thematically shocking enough to keep you interested. Familiar cheeky lyrics and confident melodies were still prevalent in "Suck It and See," but the old styles started to make way for pleading ballads and sentimental poetry, the last thing I expected from this British rock band. To

my surprise, I began to greedily embrace Arctic Monkeys for their intellectually challenging lyrics and complexly woven melodies.

Arctic Monkeys released "AM," their newest album, on Tuesday, September 10. I nervously hit play, anticipating an album of admittedly heartless sex and self-proclaimed dispassion. The album starts with "Do I Wanna Know?" and "R U Mine?", both of which are somewhat shallow love songs typical of Arctic Monkeys, but with minor stylistic changes. The album, however, moves on to an unpredictably polar lineup of new songs.

There is plenty of Arctic Monkeys' artistic thumbprint in "AM." Leader Alex Turner still shamelessly announces his blunt ro-

mantic solicitations. Crisp drumming punctuates confidently rhythmic guitar and bass lines. Clever lyrics dance around metaphors and analogies until they get their messages across. These are enough to reassure the band's fans that it has not changed too drastically.

However, Arctic Monkeys are developing the familiar side of their musical style. In particular, they have molded their usual rhythmic patterns into more provocative beats infused with hip-hop. When asked to describe the album, Turner said, "It sounds like a Dr. Dre beat, but we've given it an Ike Turner bowl-cut and sent it galloping across the desert on a Stratocaster."

This is particularly evident in "Mad Sounds." Minimalistic and stripped-down, most of the song is comprised of one guitar, a slow drum pattern, a quiet keyboard, and Turner's vocals. The beat is very easy to keep, but attempting to follow the rhythmic pattern of the guitar line requires counting eighth note rests. This complexity diverges from the Arctic Monkeys of the past, who tended to stick to more head-banging rock rhythms. It demonstrates the band's higher level of musical and compositional talent and more effectively draws the listener into the web of rhythm and rests that the instruments spin.

Yes, the lyrics are cocky and incriminating. The guitars are wild and the drums plenty loud. But when Turner describes a woman with the phrase, "Her lips are like the galaxy's edge," he re-

veals more than his nonchalance might imply, and the band's habit of communicating in extended metaphors makes this easier for familiar listeners to identify.

There is true longing in Turner's voice, sliding from note to note, as he sings lines like, "Ain't it just like you to kiss me and then hit the road" in "I Want It All." He sounds increasingly desperate as the album progresses, contradicting the cockiness he has developed for years. The instruments also become increasingly haunting throughout the album. In the concluding song, "I Wanna Be Yours," the slow and echoing percussion and uncomfortably drawn-out strum of one electric guitar give the almost pathetically pleading lyrics a hollow resonance that punches you straight in the gut. Unlike the concluding songs of the band's previous albums, "I Wanna Be Yours" ends the album tensely unresolved, with the last note lingering in the air.

These changes in mood reflect Arctic Monkeys' development, as they grow older and possibly more serious. There is a distinct sense of bittersweet dissatisfaction and nostalgia in the album, peeking out behind a facade of shallow songs about a scandalous nightlife. Arctic Monkeys' most wistful reflection is in, ironically, "No. 1 Party Anthem." Lines such as "sipping a drink and laughing at imaginary jokes" are enveloped by slow guitar chords; simple, ambling riffs; and pattering, pop-style drums. You're consequently left a little

discouraged and nostalgic for the easily carefree party anthems that Arctic Monkeys used to play with sincerity.

This mature feeling is subtly inserted in the new musical styles that Arctic Monkeys incorporate into "AM," and it ties the album together. For example, in many of the new songs (ballads and rock jams alike), multiple vocal lines are layered over each other dynamically. This allows the vocals to become a major contributing part of the melody instead of an afterthought to the lyrics and guitars that dominate most rock music. Many of the background vocals include nonsense words such as "Ooh, la-la-la," and "Shoo-op, shoo-op," distinctly reminiscent of the doo-wop genre in both interaction of the vocal lines and word choice.

As Arctic Monkeys age and mature from the teenage British boys they once were, they are starting to dabble in not only heavier emotions, but also older styles. Somehow, they have found a way to age with swagger.

Between its muscular, bass-heavy rock songs and thoughtfully woven ballads, "AM" offers a beautiful duality in theme. Despite the convention of having one identifiable musical style throughout an album, Arctic Monkeys have successfully developed two polar styles, tying them together with even more interesting stylistic choices. This time, Turner has certainly succeeded in his attempt to "sound less like four lads playing in a room."

Death Grips: An Experimental Powerhouse

By OMAR HEGAZY
and ELVIN SHOYFER

Death Grips is an experimental punk-rap outfit hailing from Sacramento, California. Formed in 2010, it is comprised of vocalist Stefan "MC Ride" Burnett, drummer Zach Hill, and producer Andy "Flatlander" Morin.

The band focuses on aggressive rapping over loud, sharp electronic beats. To call Burnett's passionate screaming "rapping" would be an oversimplification of what sounds like something that harms his vocal cords. His yelling often forms lyrics that seem incomprehensible on their own ("volcano pussy melt your peter like ice"). Yet they come together as a whole to show common themes: rejection of human advancement, fear and paranoia due to substance abuse, and a nihilistic worldview. Despite Burnett's strong vocal performance, he is still in the shadow of the invasive, cluttered, harsh electronic music that accompanies him.

The production of Death Grips is far more layered and cacophonous than the typical looped, generic beats common of other modern hip-hop artists. With Death Grips, it becomes impossible to isolate each layer of sound in the production, from the hypnotic, acidic synths to the heavy, destructive percussion to the distorted and loud samples. However, it all manages to come together in a cluttered but melodic mosaic of psychedelic catchiness and nightmarish noise.

In April, Death Grips, still a very young and mysterious group, released "Exmilitary EP," widely considered to be their first release. (They had released an EP before it, but it was unrecognized and most of it was re-released in

"Exmilitary.") The album starts off with "Beware," a track that samples neo-Nazi serial killer Charles Manson and contains Burnett's rhythmic chanting in an angry, raspy voice over multiple layers of stressful synth-bass hums and distorted samples. The rest of the album involves abrasive yet rhythmic hypnotic electronic sound, a mish-mash of samples, heavy bass, hypnotic synths, and whiny guitar riffs. However, Death Grips occasionally overdoes their image in "Exmilitary."

It becomes almost painful to listen to Burnett's disconcerted yelling on "Spread Eagle," a track that negatively overshadows the oddly out-of-rhythm guitar motifs. However, unrefined tracks like these are exceptions that prove the rule—"Exmilitary" was bold, angry, and active.

Exmilitary attracted much attention in the indie community, giving Death Grips a two-album deal with Epic Records in 2012. "The Money Store," the first of these two albums, proved to be a far more polished and coherent work than their initial mixtape. The hypnotic, smooth synth beats glide under Burnett's abrasive screeches, giving the production a markedly more focused direction. The group brilliantly alternates between its corrosion and legato, such as in "Hustle Bones," in which the harsh buzzes of a racecar's zips and turns are interwoven with fluid, liquid loops of a female voice and backed by light drum-work. In "Blackjack," the group commits fully to its darker side, overwhelming the listener with Burnett's heavily reverbed, paranoid screeches, accompanied by harsh, skin-crawling beats that dominate the track. Album closer "Hacker" surges forward, incor-

porating a fast-paced, twitchy beat under Burnett's frantic calls and shout-outs to pop-culture references, before reverting to its mesmerizing, heavily distorted synth over which Burnett dishes out death threats, including some of the group's most revered lyrical achievements to date. "Money Store" presented a far more refined expression of Death Grips' concept.

Breaching the terms of their contract with Epic as part of a feud, Death Grips leaked "No Love Deep Web" to their social media followers several months ahead of the proper release date. The album art depicted Hill's genitalia with the album title scrawled over in marker. The circumstances surrounding release notwithstanding, the new work presented in "No Love Deep Web" marked a departure from "The Money Store." The album provides the raw and direct sound that the group had hinted at in interviews, implemented as a radical change to minimalist production sans sampling, at the expense of a unified vision for the album. The track "No Love," their most aggressive work to date, hearkens back to "Blackjack" with its even more intimidating, earth-shattering drums and electronically generated beats. Hill has gained notoriety for his extremely hard drum hits, which have caused him to break lug casings, bend the hoops of his drums, destroy multiple drumsticks within a single recording session, trigger external bleeding, and even fracture his left hand. "No Love" is the track that makes it most evident why.

"Come Up And Get Me" features an unusually calm, plucky, electronically-produced instrumental as a backdrop to Burnett's



Laura Eng / The Spectator

independent, chaotic screaming. While a distinctive effort, the apparent lack of unity between vocals and background makes this among the more underwhelming tracks of the album. "Artificial Death In the West" is the most strikingly peculiar track. Its electronic background projects a sound reminiscent of Aphex Twin's early ambient work, blended with a recurring groove. The vocals are a surprisingly tranquil Burnett, who chants several of the strangest lyrics Death Grips have put out to date. "No Love Deep Web" features a selection of increasingly varied and substantial tracks that manage to stand on their own, but not as a whole; they cannot manage to assert the group's sound.

The falling out with Epic may have led to some uncertainty about the group's future, but in May 2013, it was announced that Death Grips would be involved in producing the soundtrack for an original film written and directed by Hill. Additionally, it was revealed in July 2013 that Death Grips had created their own label, Thirdworlds, under which their third studio album will be released in 2014. The strength of their entire discography has fans cautiously optimistic that Death Grips can produce another album that can uphold the intensity and avant-garde stylings of their previous work while matching the production of "The Money Store."

Arts and Entertainment

Shannon Daniels, Bard of Stuyvesant

By JENNY JIANG
and ROCKY LAM

Telling a story through writing is no easy task, but triggering a reader's emotions through simple, honest words is a gift.

Senior Shannon Daniels might just be blessed with this gift. In many ways, she's as ordinary as any other girl: she likes food memoirs, visual arts, and traveling, even if that entails exploring our city's individual neighborhoods, each with their own personality. However, what sets her apart is her talent in writing poetry.

Last year, Daniels won a gold medal for poetry in the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition with "Scale," an observational piece about her grandfather. The stanzas of the poem are divided into musical and rhythmic values, beginning with whole notes progressing to eighth notes, and then a rest, forming a scale to reflect her grandfather's deep involvement in music. "[He] had perfect pitch in music, [it makes me] wish that I actually learned how to play more instruments," she said. The poem is written from the intimate perspective of a little girl living in a family grieving for her grandfather's early death. It poem reflects Daniels's actual situation: because her grandfather passed away before her birth, Daniels never had the chance to meet him and has only learned about him through observing her family's lasting heartache.

Daniels was inspired to write "Scale" after a meeting for "Caliper," Stuyvesant's literary magazine, of which she is now co-editor. Coming home burnt out, she went onto her com-

puter and put all her thoughts and emotions to poetry for an hour. Daniels initially thought that her impromptu work was "trash," but after showing it to others—including her mentor

**"[Spellcheck]
can check your
grammar, but it
can't check your
style."**
—Shannon
Daniels,
senior

from Girls Write Now, an organization that pairs up young girls with writers to improve their craft—she was encouraged to submit the piece. However, aside from feeling thrilled because of her achievement, she is "glad that [her] poetry touched someone," she said.

Even though poetry is now her passion, Daniels only started to love poetry in the ninth grade, when English teacher Mark Henderson assigned her a project. Daniels was assigned the poet Mary Oliver, whose words on nature and individualism spoke to Daniels. Since then, she's been developing her voice as a writer and focusing on subjects that are meaningful to her. As of now, her poems are mostly about her family and seeing herself through other people's eyes.

The craft of writing always has its challenges, and every writer has her own way of dealing with them. When asked about overcoming problems such as writer's block, Daniels said that it's a "slump that's easy to get into, but hard to get out of." She suggested that writers find a word or prompt to latch onto that can pull them out of the slump. She also says that new writers should not get bogged down with grammar: "[Spellcheck] can check your grammar, but it can't check your style," she said.

To find inspiration, Daniels goes to the Poet's House to read and hone her voice in poetry and practices poetry at the park whenever she has time. "Writing is like a faucet, but creativity isn't," she said. "[It's] there; you just need to spark it."

Because she loves reading creative nonfiction and fiction, she plans on majoring in English or Comparative Literature. In her profession, whether it is in writing, publishing, or teaching, Daniels hopes to encourage others to share stories about who they are, just as she does with poetry.

"What I Owe (Ars Poetica)"

by Shannon Daniels

Italicized words not in the second stanza were taken directly from the translated version of Horace's "Ars Poetica."

How can I forget the weeds
bleeding from that slit in the sidewalk,
the makeshift fence of a door hanging
by a couple oxidized hinges?
It must be the black netting
beating over the metal gate,
hung from the rooftops
for the girl who stepped out and met
the bullet on the other end
of the door, a heart that reached its coda
because of a gang war;
now the netting hangs
over the bungalow exhaling
two black rest notes, one long
silence.

By the time this poem is complete, it will probably have had 1,833 edits.

One for each house Katrina turned over by its heels, one for each chalk mark on the doorways,
one for each person who couldn't swim. How long did it take until the levees gave way?

How many waterlogged conversations still
swallow family dinners?

And I know my poetry cannot bandage my grandmother's ruptured
boiler or

give back to a mother her baby girl's cardiac cadence.

But I want to tell people to speak, not endure.

Because is it not enough for a poem to be beautiful?

I owe my atonal voice to the fractured sky,
to too many crumbling bricks, to my country,
to the kind of love a parent, a brother, or a guest should be honored.
to too many crumbling bricks, to my country,
to the kind of love a parent, a brother, or a guest should be honored.

The rain fills the warped wood of this porch, seeps into the floor.

These stories have become too accustomed to
dark, compact comfort.

Subsided soil,
concrete,
plaster,
linoleum –

anything but flowing water.

The above is an excerpt. The full poem can be found online at www.stuyspectator.com.

Staff Picks: Pizzerias



Tony's Pizzeria
By JENNY JIANG
443 Knickerbocker Ave
(718-455-9664)

Though the plain pizza at "Tony's Pizzeria" isn't distinctly flavorful, its crust and familiar, cozy taste give a similar feeling to getting a compliment on a bad day; it just fills you with warmth. The taste of the other pizzas are just strong enough so that you can savor them. As a usual crust-eater, I can say that the crusts here are soft, delectable, and actually worth eating. The bottom of the pizza isn't charred and blackened, and the sauce isn't so copious that it seeps through the cheese and drips off the slice. The pric-

es of the food are reasonable; a plain slice is \$2.50 and the others range from \$3.25 to \$4, while the dishes are \$6 to \$10. With a reasonably spacious interior and many tables, Tony's Pizzeria is my go-to place when I want a nice, quick lunch. It is also conveniently located on 13th Avenue, near Bay Ridge Parkway.

Pizza Royale
By ROCKY LAM
6718 Fort Hamilton Pkwy
(718-238-5396)

Located on 67th Street and Fort Hamilton Parkway in Brooklyn, "Pizza Royale" serves pizzas with an unparalleled array of toppings while keeping prices low. My personal favorite

is the taco pizza, aptly named as it's topped with ingredients normally found in the Mexican staple. The initial crispiness is quickly followed by the creamy and exquisite mix of cheese and chicken, accented by lettuce and tomatoes. Even though Pizza Royale doesn't provide the biggest dining space, its employees are welcoming and friendly to customers (especially frequenters).

My Little Pizzeria
By SHAHRUZ GHAEMI
114 Court St
(718-643-6120)

Burdened by having to choose between different toppings and kinds of pizza? Tired of shelling out extra bucks for these fancy choices? The next time you're in Downtown Brooklyn, stop by "My Little Pizzeria" for some plain old New York pizza. The choices aren't hard: cheese pizza, fresh mozzarella, or a Sicilian "block" slice of fresh mozzarella. The pizza tastes like pizza; nothing particularly fancy was promised and that's what you'll get.

The cheese and fresh mozzarella are basic and understated, but delicious, and the Sicilian offers a more exotic flavor. The prices range from \$2-3 per slice. "Little Pizzeria" is a long-standing staple of an area that includes a large movie theatre and a Barnes & Noble's. Decorated with old-fashioned wall-

paper and several paintings, "My Little Pizzeria" also has Italian Ice alongside its pizza and a rarely-used gelato stand in the back.

Gray's Papaya
By NICOLE ROSENGLURT
402 6th Ave
(212-260-3532)

Who at some point hasn't been starving, stranded, and low on cash while hanging around NYC? For you, desperate explorer, there's "Gray's Papaya."

Sure, they're mostly famous for their hot dogs, but their pizza cannot be ignored. It's cheap (only one dollar!), but it tastes as good as any restaurant pizza. It's a classic slice with great gooey cheese and delicious sauce. What more do you need? While you're there, I'd also suggest grabbing the delicious papaya juice or the pina colada. Gray's Papaya is usually crowded, but the line moves fast and the food is worth it. Seriously, it's one dollar pizza.

Lombardi's
By ZOE LEAF
32 Spring St.
(212-941-7994)

Conveniently located in central SoHo, "Lombardi's" is famous for being the first pizzeria in America, having opened in 1905. It is always packed, and for good reason. Clearly, its century-long lifespan has given

their pizzaioli time to hone their craft, because their pizza is easily one of the best thin-crust slices I've ever had. The crust is crispy, and the creamy, rich tomato sauce is perfect with the warm, stretchy mozzarella. You can be sure that your pizza will not be too greasy or salty. The space is used not only for dining, but also for a little history: you can ask to visit the kitchen and see the original brick oven, still in use.

Dona Bella Pizzeria
By FRANCES DODIN
154 Church St.
(212-374-1130)

Close to home, "Dona Bella Pizzeria" is one of the first places I go to comfort my pizza-craving self. Located on the corner of Chambers and Church Streets, Dona Bella will give you that authentic New York pizzeria feel with its fast-paced service and cramped seats. But the pizza itself, with its thin crusts and delicious Sicilian slices, really gets the spotlight here. You can buy a plain slice for \$2.50, while the rest of the original slices range from \$2.50 to \$3.75. If you're not in the mood for pizza, you can choose from calzones, rolls, salads, desserts, and a variety of drinks. When you stop by Dona Bella on the way to your train or during your lunch period, don't be afraid to go change your toppings up, because they have a lot to offer.

Arts and Entertainment

Split-Screen: Next-Gen Features

Whether you're loyal to Microsoft or a hardcore PlayStation junkie, chances are you're excited for this fall. The next generation of home video game consoles is right around the corner, and your Split-Screen columnists thought we would share both our favorite features as well as features that we think need some work of these nascent consoles.

By THOMAS DUDA

Next Gen: Increased Cloud Support

For the last three years, cloud computing has been considered the future of technology. Sony and Microsoft are finally embracing cloud computing with their increased use of cloud storage, which allows gamers to access all of their files from any internet-connected device. Microsoft and Sony are working on expanding their capacities for cloud computing by creating more dedicated servers and inventing new ways to connect devices through the internet. This will allow for a few exciting things. First, it means increased support for digitally downloading games, which in turn means less hassle in trying to get, maintain, and not lose physical discs. Plus, cloud computing allows gamers to play on a dedicated server at Microsoft or Sony headquarters before they've even fully downloaded the games. Second, console owners will now be able to buy a game and begin downloading it from anywhere in the world with an internet connection, including smartphones and tablets. The third and most important aspect of embracing the cloud is the building of infrastructure. The majority of PC gamers haven't purchased a physical copy of a PC game in years because of services like Steam. This leads to an assumption that every PC gamer is connected to the internet, allowing developers to easily update their games frequently at a lower cost. Increased cloud support is sure to heighten game quality overall.

Try Again: More Cash-Grabbing Schemes

Corporations need to make money. However, Microsoft and Sony are going beyond the necessary to squeeze every last penny out of their consumers. Two years ago, Microsoft introduced the Kinect for the Xbox 360. It cost \$150 as a standalone product and an extra \$100 with the Xbox. Considered unnecessary by hardcore gamers, the device never rose in popularity. Now, in 2013, Microsoft doesn't even give the option of buying the Xbox One as a standalone product. It simply requires consumers to pay an extra \$100. Sony has a cheaper console, but it, too, is changing old policies to make up for the difference in the price on the box. Sony provided an online multiplayer for free with the PlayStation 3. However, playing online with friends and strangers in any game will cost an extra \$50 a year with the PlayStation 4, which will be released this fall. Both Sony and Microsoft are trying to shake every customer down with their new consoles.

Michele Lin / The Spectator

By JAMES BESSOIR

Next-Gen: Kinect 2.0

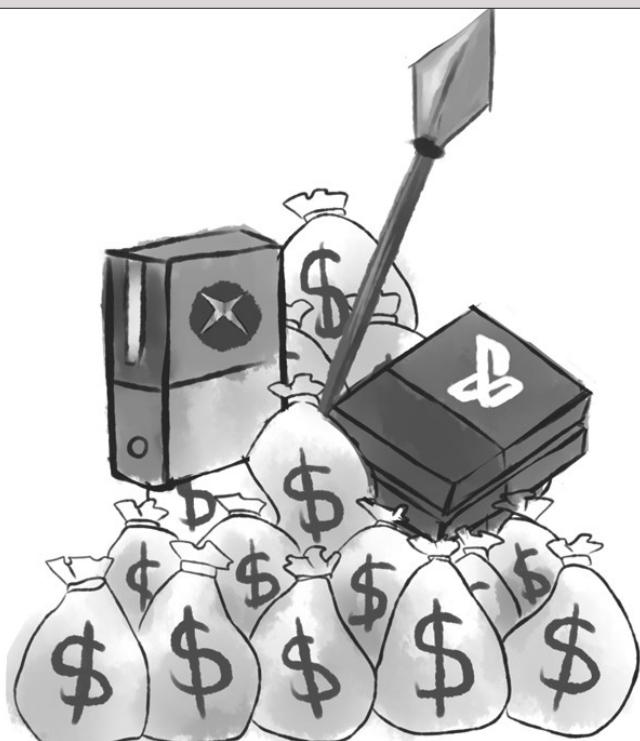
Xbox 360's Kinect sensor was an ambitious piece of hardware, promising totally controller-free gaming. The motion-control accessory was released primarily to compete with Sony's PlayStation Move and Nintendo's Wii. It ultimately fell through the cracks in the market, though, as younger audiences seemed to prefer Nintendo's kid-friendly games to Microsoft's and hardcore gamers had little interest in the content. A few more serious games, such as "Mass Effect 3," featured Kinect-powered voice commands, but they proved to be too little, too late.

Thankfully, Microsoft doesn't appear to be making the same mistakes again for Xbox One. Kinect 2.0 is shipping with every one of Microsoft's new consoles for the first year. While forcing the device on consumers might be extreme, it seems like the only way to encourage innovation after the lukewarm developer support for the original Kinect. Thankfully, the new sensor is billed as a complete overhaul from the previous model. Massively improved cameras detect more articulation points, or joints, in the human body. Strong microphones and audio-parsing software clear up voice commands in loud rooms, and infrared sensors can even track a moving body with lights off. Facial recognition software automatically selects player profiles for each controller being used, and the Kinect can read your heartbeat based on facial tics. In short, it's an incredibly powerful input tool that game developers can take advantage of when producing the next generation of titles. To those who still think the Kinect is a kid's toy, just imagine horror games that can react to how scared the player is. Excited yet?

Try Again: Missed Opportunities

When the concept for Xbox One was unveiled in May 2013, the primary reaction from fans and critics alike was one of apprehension. After Microsoft's press conference, it seemed like all of the console's confirmed aspects would be inconvenient. The Xbox One would always stay on, not play used games, and have to be connected to the internet. Microsoft chose to stress these aspects of the new console's technology without discussing what exciting new features it would enable. Fans freaked out. With no promised benefits, the Xbox One seemed like draconian attempt to control how customers used it. A few weeks later, Microsoft pulled an Xbox One-Eighty and reversed all of these policies. In the process, it listed all of the innovative features the public would now miss out on. These included digitally trading games among friends and selling them on a virtual marketplace, downloading new games while the console was off, and being able to play your games anywhere, regardless of whether you had the disc. Without strict control over console and game use, Microsoft explained, it couldn't allow these new freedoms. The public was impressed, and some people even petitioned Microsoft to reverse the reversal.

In the process of conforming to its fans' desires, Microsoft eliminated many of the new, exciting features of its system. If it had simply marketed features rather than technology and stuck to its plans despite criticism, the Xbox One might have been a much more cutting-edge console.



Art

Two Exhibits on Two Islands

By MANDY WONG

Walt Whitman said, "Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!" Living in New York City is a blessing, especially for art and museum lovers. There is never a shortage of shows or exhibits. If anything, there are too many fantastic ones to choose from. To get you started, here are a couple of shows worth checking out between the hustle and bustle of the everyday New Yorker life:

The Art of Brick

When: Through January 5
(Daily)
Where: Discovery Times Square

"The Art of Brick" is the brainchild of Nathan Sawaya. The collection—made entirely of Legos and the largest of its kind—is full of grace and realism. The statues exhibited are so large that the Lego bricks do not look rough, disjointed, or fake at all; they act like the pixels on your computer screen coming together to form a clean image. Sawaya also uses bricks

of varying colors to build shadowing and add depth and highlights to his pieces. The "Swimmer," for example, is a sky-blue woman swimming in a sea of sapphire-blue Lego bricks in front of a champagne-colored silk backdrop. Sawaya always chooses bright and bold colors for the main attractions and uses neutral tones for the backdrops. The effect is clean and refreshing. Lego versions of "The Thinker," the famous stones of Easter Island, and more are also featured in this exhibit. Sawaya stays true to the original motto of the Lego Company: only the best is the best.

Alternative Histories

When: Through December 1
(Daily)
Where: Brooklyn Museum

Well-known but not as well-visited as its city equivalents, Brooklyn Museum is the temporary home of Valerie Hegarty's dark and imaginative collection, "Alternative Histories." Hegarty's exhibit is Brooklyn Museum's second attempt to revive its period rooms,



Jensen Henry Foerster / The Spectator

An organization called 4Heads finds spaces to display the art of many upcoming, talented artists around New York. There are 3 different places on Governors Island displaying art.

Arts and Entertainment

Looking Forward: October

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Concert New York Philharmonic: Yefim Bronfman Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center 7:30 p.m. Album release Dr. Dog's "B-Room" Genre: Psychedelic rock	2 Concert The Flaming Lips Terminal 5 7 p.m. Amateur Night at the Apollo: Show Off Apollo Theater 7:30 p.m.	3 Concert Boyce Avenue Webster Hall 6 p.m. Concert White Lies Bowery Ballroom 8 p.m.	4 Movie release "Gravity" Genre: Sci-fi Cast: Sandra Bullock, George Clooney Album release Korn's "The Paradigm Shift" Genre: Nu metal	5 Concert Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra Carnegie Hall, Isaac Stern Auditorium 8 p.m. Concert The Growlers Bowery Ballroom 7 p.m.
6 25th Annual Upper Broadway Harvest Festival Broadway, between 96th-106th Streets 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Museum exhibition "New Photography 2013" MoMA Available through January 6, 2014	7 Concert The Weeknd Radio City Music Hall 8 p.m. Concert Julieta Venegas Irving Plaza 7 p.m.	8 Album release of Montreal's "Lousy with Sylvianbriar" Genre: Indie rock Album release Austin Mahone's "Junior Year" Genre: Pop, pop rock	9 Concert Sara Bareilles Radio City Music Hall 8 p.m. Concert Ra Ra Riot Terminal 5 7 p.m.	10 Museum exhibition "MoMA Studio: Sound in Space" MoMA Available through November 24, 2013 New York Comic Con 2013 Javits Center Show floor hours: 3 p.m.-9 p.m. Tickets: \$30	11 First Open Mic 6th floor library Starts at the beginning of 10th period Movie release "Romeo and Juliet" Genre: Romance Cast: Hailee Steinfeld, Douglas Booth, Ed Westwick	12 21st Annual Upper Broadway Fall Festival Broadway, between 110th-116th Streets 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Museum exhibition "Designing Modern Women 1890-1990" MoMA Available through October 1, 2014
13 Museum exhibition "Test Pattern" Whitney Museum of American Art Available through December 1, 2013 Concert Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra Highline Ballroom 8 p.m.	14 Album release Pearl Jam's "Lightning Bolt" Genre: Alternative rock, hard rock Concert Deltron 3030 Highline Ballroom 8 p.m.					

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Humor

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

Newsbeat

- Senior Tahia Islam lost her bid for public advocate. Go Reshma!
- The DOE called President of Syria Bashar Assad for help in suppressing protest and student rights.
- Numerous scientists verified that the fox does, indeed, say "Joff-tchoff-tchoffo-tchoff!"
- In our last issue, we warned Miley Cyrus that she might not get married. Recent reports confirm that her engagement with actor Liam Hemsworth has ended. We told you, Miley!
- With the aid of Thornton Studios, senior Daniel Thin received nearly 200 likes on his latest profile picture.

Students Celebrate Chinese New Year Protest

By SOPHIA WANG

September 9, 2013 was a monumental day for the Chinese community. "I am writing to you because it has come to my attention that several students at Stuyvesant High School are planning to stage a festive protest tomorrow morning, to express their concern about administrative actions involving a great ancestor," Principal Jie Zhang said in an e-mail. The Stuyvesant students planned to celebrate the Chinese New Year, better known as the first day of the new school year of Stuyvesant High School. However, the Chinese New Year was not just a celebration—it was also a battle. The New York City Dragon of Evil (DOE) planned to invade the festivities, striking fear into the hearts of the celebrators.

Led by loud, white, male students, the masses devised and executed a foolproof plan.

To frighten away the DOE, protesters wore bright red clothing. This has been the beast's least favorite color since ancient history. "We chose red because it symbolizes fortune, prosperity, and high SAT scores," junior Lydia Wu said.

The second part of the plan involved props. Large posters acted as shields against the evil spirits. A person with a loudspeaker led the group in chanting traditional Chinese mantras. These were all impressive signs of a joyous Lunar Festival.

The incoming freshman class was in awe. For the first time in recent memory, the upperclassmen had made the freshmen feel both safe and comfortable. To many, the event demonstrated the widespread appreciation of the Chinese culture. However, it turns out that not only Chinese people can celebrate Chinese New Year. "Chinese New Year is celebrated



Lydia Wu / The Spectator

all around the world, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, southeast Asia, and especially Russia," sophomore Steven Shin said.

In the end, the DOE was defeated. The masses sent a message through the heart of the

evil spirit, which finally heard its calls for liberty and justice. "No one wanted to talk to us until we did this," senior and protest organizer Sweyn Venderbush said.

"Who is Ms. Damesek?" freshman Michael Lin said.

Stuyvesant Administrator Awarded No-bell Prize

BY WENHAO DU
and DANIEL GOYNATSKY

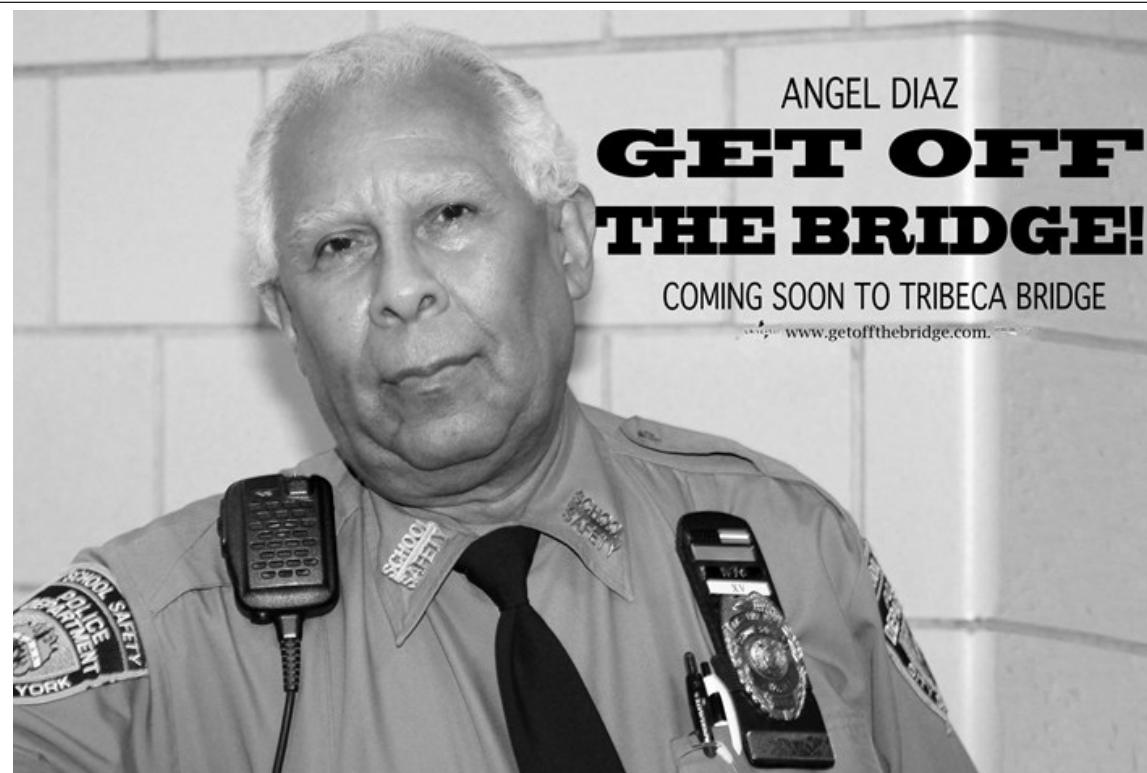
On Friday, September 13, Stuyvesant's once-reliable bell system began to experience technical problems. Students went almost the entire day without the solace of a bell waking them up at the end of class. Freshman Noah Fichter, who was stuck in Art Appreciation class until Saturday afternoon, told The Spectator he was glad his class period was extended. "With all the extra time I had, I managed to cure cancer, prove the Twin Prime Conjecture, and get 3 stars on all the Angry Birds levels," he said. Other students, however, were not as productive with their day. When asked how his day went, senior Bipan Sarker replied, "It was just like every other day I guess, sixth lunch and frees."

For her noble efforts in creating confusion in the school, Assistant Principal of Organization Saida Rodriguez-Tabone was awarded the prestigious No-bell Prize by the No-bell Committee. The prize, the fifth of which has been given to an individual affiliated with Stuyvesant, brings a great sense of pride and achievement among the Stuyvesant

community. This is no surprise to physics teacher Rebecca Gorla. "We have so many kids being accepted to a nearby community college every year that eventually the school will have many more No-bell winners," Gorla said.

Tabone was asked where her inspiration came from. "I'm not used to [working at] a school with 13 floors," said Tabone, who used to work as an administrator at Forest Hills High School. "So, like, am I supposed to press a button or something?"

In a statement released by the administration late Monday afternoon, it was revealed that the bell problem had been successfully solved when technicians used the renowned technique of "unplugging the power source and plugging it back in again." However, on Tuesday morning, the bell was again absent. In an apology before the school, Tabone admitted that she had lost the bell button on the 1 train that morning. Due to criticism by the Stuyvesant community that followed immediately afterwards, she locked herself in her office. She declined to comment on when the next bell would be rung.



Anne Duncan / The Spectator

Senior Names

By WILLIAM CHANG,
with additional reporting by
SPENCER WEISS

Over the summer, the American media was flooded with news about a mysterious character named "Carlos Danger," who had allegedly been interacting with various women online and sending inappropriate and potentially incriminating pictures. Though the hype over this scandal has died down, its effects can be seen here at Stuyvesant, where senior students seem to be emulating Danger's behavior.

Earlier this week, senior Wai Tan was alarmed when she began receiving Facebook messages and later a friend request from a man whom she insisted she did not know in real life. "Initially, I was a bit scared," said Tan. "But as we talked more and more, our exchanges became more intimate." The smooth-talking culprit, named G-ten Paddle, continued to send the aforementioned messages until his victim started to question his identity. Having only viewed the offender's lower regions, our unfortunate recipient couldn't help but acknowledge Paddle's "solid eight-pack," "luscious mane," and "extreme culinary prowess."

Paddle is not the only one reported to have adopted this

behavior. Since August, numerous offenders have committed similar crimes. They can be easily identified by the absolute ridiculousness of their names. Examples include Jeromey Romey Romey Rome, Robinson Canoah,

tgir.

And while senior sexting alias use has increased, all of the offenders' identities have yet to be revealed. One example of such a name is the infamous Junichi Tenichi. His alleged work includes countless instant messages containing indecent pictures coupled with Frank Ocean lyrics, and at least one confirmed raunchy Snapchat. "He must be stopped," senior Junpei Taguchi said. "My heart goes out to the young women who have endured Tenichi's continued harassment. I dearly hope this behavior ceases immediately." Taguchi was later seen posting his number on the second floor STC bulletin board.

Some offenders are beginning to own up to their crimes, though they still refuse to reveal themselves. We contacted Paddle through Facebook after luring him into a conversation with winking emoticons and multiple uses of the phrase "heyyy."

"sometimes i just get lonely u kno :(lol" said Paddle, obviously remorseful for his actions. However, the future looked hopeful for our sorry rapscallion. "I've been seeing a psychiatrist daily and going to a support group every Wednesday," he said, "but none of them have been texting back."

Aging Woman Makes Observational Facebook Status

By JEREMY KARSON

Late last Thursday, Jeanette McAdams, 58, posted a Facebook status that was fully observational and factual in nature. "Saw a red crab during my walk on the beach today! Seems hotter than normal for August—still beautiful. Glad to be home!" McAdams posted at 8:23 p.m.

McAdams, who is known in her social circles for garnering a very average number of likes and comments on her nightly posts, occasionally mixes in personal anecdotes, photo uploads, and even the occasional YouTube

link. She also loves commenting on pictures of old high school friends. However, her typical status is comprised of factual descriptions of her day, her mood, and/or the weather.

"I just sincerely wish she would use less exclamation points," said her grandson, Stephen. "I mean, I just don't get it. She really isn't saying anything to get particularly excited about."

When asked to comment, McAdams said, "I am excited about this article! I went to the gym today—so nicely air-conditioned! Today was 73 degrees."

"His alleged work includes countless instant messages containing indecent pictures coupled with Frank Ocean lyrics, and at least one confirmed raunchy Snapchat."

Eggbert Poindexter, Asap Sway, Skim Shady, and Munem J. Ras-

Sports

Boys' Soccer

Centaurs Mesmerized by Bard, Saved by Defense



Junior Mohammed Haque keeps the ball away from Bard High School Early College players during the Centaurs's game on Monday, September 16.

By LOUIS SUSSER

After a ghastly 0-2 start to the season, the Centaurs, Stuyvesant's boys' soccer team, are pressed to get their first win of the season in the books. With their first games against two perennial powerhouses, Martin Luther King, Jr. High School and Beacon High School, the losses were hardly shocking. However, with two more matchups each against those two teams later in the season, the Centaurs have to win every other game for a shot at the playoffs.

However, against Bard High School, which has had losing seasons two years in a row, the Centaurs still would not win on Monday, September 16, finishing their match with a 0-0 draw. The match was riddled with many missed opportunities for the Centaurs. Unfortunately, many

The team's offense has yet to demonstrate the ability to win any soccer match. Not only did they have fewer shots on goal than Bard, but they also weren't able to capitalize on any of their attempts. "[We are] having trouble finishing and communicating on the field," coach Vincent Miller said. "We have only scored one goal in three games." The Centaurs' offensive woes are due to their incapacity to take shots and create chances to score. They had a total of 17 shots on goal in their first three games; by comparison, Bard had 17 shots on goal in this game. Senior Stanislav Banartsev, a highly touted addition for the Centaurs, basically ran the offense. He set up a few opportunities for junior Mohammed Haque, who took the majority of the shots for the Centaurs. Unfortunately, many

of Haque's shots didn't even challenge the goalie, as they rebounded off the goal's crossbar. All of the shots taken by the Centaurs were missed, and while coach Miller acknowledges that the Centaurs "need to work on passing and moving the ball around on offense, setting up better shots," both quality and quantity of shots have to get better.

Though the Centaurs offense was abysmal, their defense was outstanding. Led by senior Aaron Coppa and juniors Sean Fitzgerald and Meril Takizawa, the backfield was a brick wall. In the rare cases where Bard managed to break through the defense, junior Demos Sfakianakis, the Centaurs' goalie, was able to make a play. With only five minutes left in regulation, Sfakianakis made an incredible save to bail out his team from what would have been the tiebreaking goal and the Centaurs' third loss.

The Centaurs tough season-opener should only push the team to take advantage of their must-win games. "I think we could have played harder, like we wanted it more," senior and co-captain Zane Birenbaum said. There are 12 games of the season in total, and with the top three teams advancing to the playoffs, the preliminary playoff chase seems to be between Stuyvesant and Bard for the last spot. The Centaurs better shape up if they want to make playoffs; otherwise, they can only watch while Bard advances.

Boys' Fencing

Can't Touch this... or Can They?

By CHRIS KIM

Over the past six years, the Untouchables have taken home five championships and one runner-up trophy. However, this season, the team is coming out with a weaker starting lineup, and gold doesn't seem nearly as certain as

"We've seen gold so many times; it would be a disappointment if we don't win this season."

—Philip Shin,
senior and
co-captain

to Stuyvesant's four season championship streak in 2011, are the Untouchables' main competition this coming season. "Hunter has not lost any member, except for one épée player," Winston said. "Their foil team is stronger, while our foil team has gotten weaker."

The Untouchables are coming into this season with some vulnerability, but that isn't stopping the fencers' plans to perform with a confident mindset. "Adam Schorin was a great asset and a leader to the team, but I believe that we have the ability to win again without him," senior and co-captain Philip Shin said. "We've seen gold so many times; it would be a disappointment if we don't win this season."

On a similar note of optimism, senior and co-captain Ryan Li said, "The team is always improving. Hopefully, we'll be able to win through our improvements."

Despite the confidence oozing from members of the team, Winston believes that the path to victory doesn't seem as clear as it has in previous seasons, and the holes left by the losses of Rafailov and Schorin are evident.

However, part of the Untouchables' spirit was raised by the possibility of freshman Shuya Ishizuka, a nationally ranked fencer, joining the team. "If we are able to get him on the team, we will definitely have a better chance of winning the championships," Winston said. Unfortunately for the team, Ishizuka has already decided not to join.

As of now, the confidence of the fencers may be high, but it's up to them to prove that their words aren't just for show.

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Why Not Rafa?



By LEV AKABAS

Roger Federer, the all-time leader in Grand Slam tennis championships with 17 to his name, is widely considered to be the best to ever play the sport. The claim seems justified—number of Grand Slam wins is the most important statistic in tennis, as Grand Slams occur just four times a year and have the largest and most competitive fields of players. However, I find it curious that Rafael Nadal never crosses people's minds as the greatest player of all time, especially after he dominated the U.S. Open a month ago for his 13th major.

Why is Nadal overlooked? Maybe because he was ranked number two in the world, behind Federer, for nearly five years. Maybe because he's been injured frequently and overshadowed by an influx of younger players like Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray. Maybe because he doesn't have the pretty, traditional strokes that old-timers are looking for. Whatever the reason, Nadal is underrated. In fact, whenever I told someone that I was writing an article arguing that Nadal, not Federer, is the greatest tennis player of all-time, I received a dumbfounded, "Are you crazy?" But before proclaiming that I'm crazy, there are a few indisputable points you must consider:

1. Nadal has faced extraordinarily tough competition; he was sandwiched between Federer and Djokovic

in their respective primes and never got to take a breather. On the flip side, Federer spent the first six years of his career beating guys like Mark Philippoussis and Marcos Baghdatis in Grand Slam finals. When Federer won his first major, tennis icon Pete Sampras had recently retired; by the time Federer won the majority of his major championships, Nadal had only just turned 20 years old. Federer's timing was fortuitous, as opposed to Nadal's, who won 10 of his 13 majors with another player ranked number one in the world.

2. Many have named "The Big Four" of Nadal, Federer, Djokovic, and Murray to be the most talented group of players whose careers overlapped, and Nadal has emerged from the pack as the clear victor. He is 56-30 against his three strongest opponents. By comparison, Federer, Djokovic, and Murray are 35-45, 39-46, and 24-33, respectively, against other members of "The Big Four." Considering his dominance over his toughest rivals, had he not been plagued by injuries throughout his career, Nadal, not Federer, would have set the record for most consecutive weeks at number one. After all, in their head-to-head matchup, Nadal owned Federer to the tune of 21-10, including 8-2 in majors.

3. Nadal is more dominant on clay than any other player has been on a single surface. He once won 81 consecutive matches on clay, and has won 98.7 percent of five-set matches on clay in his career. However, he is one of only two players to have won at least two majors on clay, grass, and hard court, proving his versatility.

4. Nadal may only have won 13 majors so far, but he's only 27 years old, a prime age for tennis players. He's never looked stronger, won a higher percentage of matches, and served better than he has in the last six months. Federer won five majors after turning 27—the number Nadal would need to pass Roger on the all-time major titles list. Throw in the fact that Nadal winning the

French Open is as sure a thing as there is in sports, after winning it eight of nine years, and the odds of him moving ahead of Federer are high.

5. Nadal's playing style is one that we've never seen before—constantly hustling, using an unorthodox, lasso-whip follow-through, sliding across the court to hit winners on shots that humans shouldn't physically be able to get a racket on. He doesn't fit the mold that people have created for what they believe makes a proper tennis player. He doesn't follow through over his shoulder the way kids are taught in their first tennis lesson, the sound-effects that accompany his shots disrupt the calm, silent game that people are used to, and his brightly-colored, sleeveless shirts contrast with the days when everyone wore white polos. But these attributes don't make him any less effective a tennis player.

He leads all athletes (including LeBron James) in the number of times he's made me say, "Wow!" Whenever I see Nadal sprinting for shots that are on the other side of the court or exchanging a sweaty bandana for the twentieth time of a match I find it impossible not to root for a player who gives so much effort. He's one of the few superstar athletes who make you feel that he's winning not necessarily because he's the most skilled, but because of how hard he's trying. That's what makes him so entertaining. He's not the most consistent hitter, he doesn't play the way that tennis teachers have deemed "correct," and there's nothing aesthetically beautiful about his game. But he always gives 110 percent.

It's a style contrasting that of the graceful, almost god-like Federer, who somehow keeps his hair perfectly combed throughout a five-hour tennis match. Federer wins with picture-perfect strokes, impeccable point strategy, and by always seeming in control. Nadal's winning with raw power, freakish athleticism, and hustle is equally legitimate, and, in my opinion, more fascinating to watch.

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas Just Pile 'Em On

By DAVID ROTHBLATT

It was a lopsided battle at East River Park B, as the Mimbas, the girls' soccer team, abused the opposing goalie all afternoon. It seemed as if every shot taken by the Mimbas during their game against Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy (RKA) lead to a victory walk back to midfield. Coming in on a two-game losing streak, the Mimbas turned things around quickly on Tuesday, September 17 by winning a 11-2 blow-out. After being absent just two days earlier in their match against Beacon, the Mimbas' explosive offense carried the team.

The Mimbas were in control of the game from the opening whistle, winning most of the fights for fifty-fifty balls, clearing them before RKA had a chance to attack and keeping play on their opponents' side of the field for the majority of the game. "We were very good at making passes, making runs, and taking advantage of offensive opportunities," senior and co-captain Raquel Brau-Diaz said. "We had good team chemistry and put a lot of pressure on them."

Put in positions to succeed, the sophomores had a major impact on the game. Sophomores Alexis Kushner and Sarah Joseph each scored hat tricks, three goals, in the first half of the game alone. "The sophomores work really hard and are a valuable part of our team,"

Brau-Diaz said. "Their continuous effort is really admirable." Sophomores Emily Hirtle and Hannah Contreras each scored a goal as well, with freshman Brigit Bacon-Blaber adding a goal of her own. Out of the 21 shots on goal by the Mimbas, 14 were taken by underclassmen. With a few more weeks to improve before a run at the playoffs, the sophomores are expected to make even larger positive contributions to this team.

Now that the Mimbas know they are capable of a strong offense, they can focus their attention towards their defensive organization. "The team is working on moving the defense as one unit, to avoid through balls or breakaways by the other team," junior Madison Truemner said.

"We're also trying to maintain control of the ball under pressure for longer periods of time." Though the defense kept their opponents out of the box for the large part of the afternoon and surrendered an impressive five shots on goal, only three of which were saved by junior goalie Sophie Gershon, a ratio that must improve.

While eleven goals against any team is an impressive feat, the majority of opponents in the league are much more talented than Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy. The real test resides in matchups against their playoff competitors and powerhouses like Bronx Science or LaGuardia.

Boys' Football

"3-0, Baby!"

continued from page 24

solid defensive line but weak pass coverage, Stuyvesant was unable to adjust to LIC's fluctuating run-and-pass offense. This time, the Peglegs were ultimately unable to shut out the Bulldogs' aerial attack as LIC scored a touchdown late in the third quarter.

To handle both the running and passing game, "everything had to come into plan," Weaver said. The special teams came through for the Peglegs once again, as a punt by senior Shin Kim landed on the one-yard line, putting the Bulldogs in terrible field position. The defense stepped up as well in the final quarter, pushing back the Bulldogs' offensive line and putting them in a third down and 18 situation after

a sack by Weaver, and later a fourth down and 20.

Emulating the energy of the defensive line, senior Kevin Chen put the icing on the cake with a touchdown run, giving the Peglegs a 20-7 victory.

Though the Peglegs emerged victorious against a team that just came down from the B-division, they failed to fully take advantage of situations throughout the game. "We have to bring it," assistant coach Leron Blake said. "We [want to] continue the streak so we can make our way to the playoffs and get back into the championship." But if the flow of the season resembles that of Friday night's game, the Peglegs may face difficulty in mirroring last year's outstanding season.

Girls' Volleyball

Despite Adjustments, Vixens Ready to Pounce on Opponents

**By ERICA CHIO
and SAMANTHA LAU**

Like most teams, losing seniors means losing the most experienced players. For the Vixens, it also meant losing the team's three tallest people on the team: Marta Poplawski ('13), Natalie Kozlova ('13), and Anna Wang ('13). These three players were each around 5 feet 10 inches, which is a great deal taller than the current team. At the moment, the tallest players on the team are senior Paula Carcamo and sophomore Mariya Kulyk, who are both 5 feet 8 inches. Losing height means the team won't be able to block as well. On top of that, the Vixens have to find a new setter, the player who controls the plays and sets up the ball for a perfect spike to the other team's court. However, the biggest change the Vixens will face is adjusting to their new coach, Vasken Choubaralian.

The team has had three coaches within the past three years. Last year, the Vixens were coached by

"I tried to keep the drills the same as what Coach Yang was doing because the team was very happy with his drills."
— Vasken Choubaralian, coach

Joshua Yang, who replaced the previous coach Philip Fisher. Yang has coached the boys' volleyball team at the Academy of American Studies since 2007, leading them to victory in the PSAL Championships in 2012. "Yang came in all the time and knew exactly what to do and what to change," senior Abigail Baltazar said. "He knew a lot about different teams so when we were playing, we knew what we should be doing." Yang left the team because he had received a new job and is currently training boys' varsity basketball at Academy of American Studies.

Even though Choubaralian is focusing on training much of the same skills that Yang did, he plans to incorporate his own drills like "Around the World." This drill combines competition with accuracy, for players must make sure that their serves get to designated spots. Choubaralian is more interested in the conditioning aspects so that when we are on the court, we are not going to exhaust ourselves. Yang was more focused on

getting the fundamentals down," Carcamo said. Conditioning is an important aspect of the game as the Vixens have to be strong from the beginning of the match until the players slap hands at the end.

Furthermore, the Vixens appreciate that Choubaralian works in the school, allowing them to start their practices earlier and have more time to train, as opposed to Yang who would arrive an hour after school.

Along with the change in coach, the team took on many rookies and players from the junior varsity team. "Even though we want to keep our winning streak for the past 14 years, this year is more about getting a good foundation for the next year's players," senior and captain Alice Li said. However, the junior varsity team was also coached by Choubaralian last year. As a result, the newcomers have an advantage over the returners from their awareness and relationship with Choubaralian as a coach. Sophomore Ashley Lin noted, "It was an easy transition

with [Choubaralian] becoming my junior varsity to varsity coach [so he] knows which areas I'm better [and] has an idea of [what] to develop." The player's previous relationship with the coach works to each individual's advantage. He knows what to focus on for each player and it will ultimately lead to a better team as a whole.

Though the Vixens are focusing on foundation and adapting to changes, they plan on focusing on each match as it comes. The team played their first scrimmage on Friday, September 13 against Bronx Science and won 25-18. A clever play from middles Carcamo, Kulyk and setter and junior Julia Gokhberg proved that the team could manage with their losses, work together, and give Li some new-found hope. "The scrimmage was the first time we tried out our new rotations against another school and it was great that it turned out well," Li said. "Even though I had doubt in the beginning of the season, I look forward to going far in playoffs."

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Football

"3-0, Baby!"



Junior Cooper Weaver splitting a crowd of defensemen as they tackle one another.

By JUNPEI TAGUCHI

In their game against the Long Island City (LIC) Bulldogs on Friday, September 20, the Peglegs found themselves repeating a cycle: experiencing problems, identifying them, and resolving them.

"We do things that we know we shouldn't be doing," sophomore Tahji Lyons said. "But once we bring it up in the huddle, it's done, and we get back on our feet and we do what we need to do."

The home opener started off strong, as Stuyvesant's defense suppressed LIC's offense and the Peglegs' defensive linemen won the battle at the line of scrimmage. Through this mismatch, the Peglegs shut down LIC's running game, resulting in a two-point safety early in the first quarter.

Conversely, the offensive line slacked periodically, as the linemen found themselves standing upright more often than not. This put pressure on senior quarter-

back Solomon Quinn, who threw an interception deep into the Bulldogs' territory early in the second quarter. Learning from his mistake, Quinn was back on his feet on the next drive, stringing together three consecutive completions to lead the Peglegs back into the red zone. This time, he found junior running-back Cooper Weaver wide open in the end zone, allowing the Peglegs to go into halftime 8-0.

The Peglegs continued to hold a solid lead over the Bulldogs. Weaver broke three tackles on the kickoff return and ran the ball 78 yards into the end zone, increasing Stuyvesant's lead to 14-0.

Following the Peglegs' quick special team strike, LIC was quick to counter, as their offense, composed of quarterback runs and passes, challenged Stuyvesant's defense. "They kept changing up their offense," Weaver said. With a

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Girls' Swimming

By JASON LEE
and JASON ZHENG

The Penguins, Stuyvesant girls' swimming team, won their fifth consecutive title last year and show no signs of slowing down. However, this year's team is very different from last year's, and the differences start at the top. Physical education teacher Peter Bologna, who also coaches the very successful boys' swimming team, will be replacing physical education teacher Dr. Anna Markova as the coach of the girl's team. The Penguins will also have a remodeled roster led by seniors and captains Felicia How and Arisa Chen. Some returning swimmers were cut to make room for new swimmers, while a number of them left during last year's season.

Last year, Dr. Markova led the Penguins to the championship in her first year of coaching. Despite the huge success, she withdrew from coaching this year for an unknown reason. But there has definitely been a lot of controversy concerning the relationship between Dr. Markova and the swimmers. An anonymous junior on the swim team said, "[Dr. Markova], as a coach, gave acceptable pep talks." However, the junior had a problem with how Dr. Markova "didn't let everyone swim. Part of a coach's responsibility is to let as many swimmers swim at a meet but there were many meets where barely a third of the team swam," she said.

Putting the past aside, How is "extremely optimistic about this year's team. [Coach Bologna], who has nearly a decade of experience coaching the boys' swimming

team, has been very successful in the past," she said. Bologna's successes include a string of three straight boys' swimming championships from 2010 to 2012.

Bologna wasted no time by starting practice near the end of August and cutting a couple of upperclassmen. He does not like to "carry many swimmers, especially in the pool that we're using now," he said. Though Bologna feels that he cut some good players, he is confident in the new players he took and "wants them to give their all this season," he said.

Along with the loss of veteran talent, the Penguins must face the challenge of still not having their own pool. However, the captains made it very clear that despite the inconvenience and the smaller pool, the team still looks forward to becoming city champions for the sixth year in a row. "We're nevertheless fortunate to have a functional pool for practice at all," How said. "Coach Bologna has really demonstrated a strong sense of leadership and intensity, experience, and dedication as a coach so far."

Bologna has a lot of faith in his team this season. "The girls are a very close-knit group," he said. "They are very cohesive and all share a common goal." Staying together is a must for the Penguins this season, especially with the weak relationship they had with Dr. Markova last season.

The Penguins began their title run on Wednesday, September 25, where they will face off against the Hunter College High School Ducks.

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas Overcome Losing Streak with Will to Improve

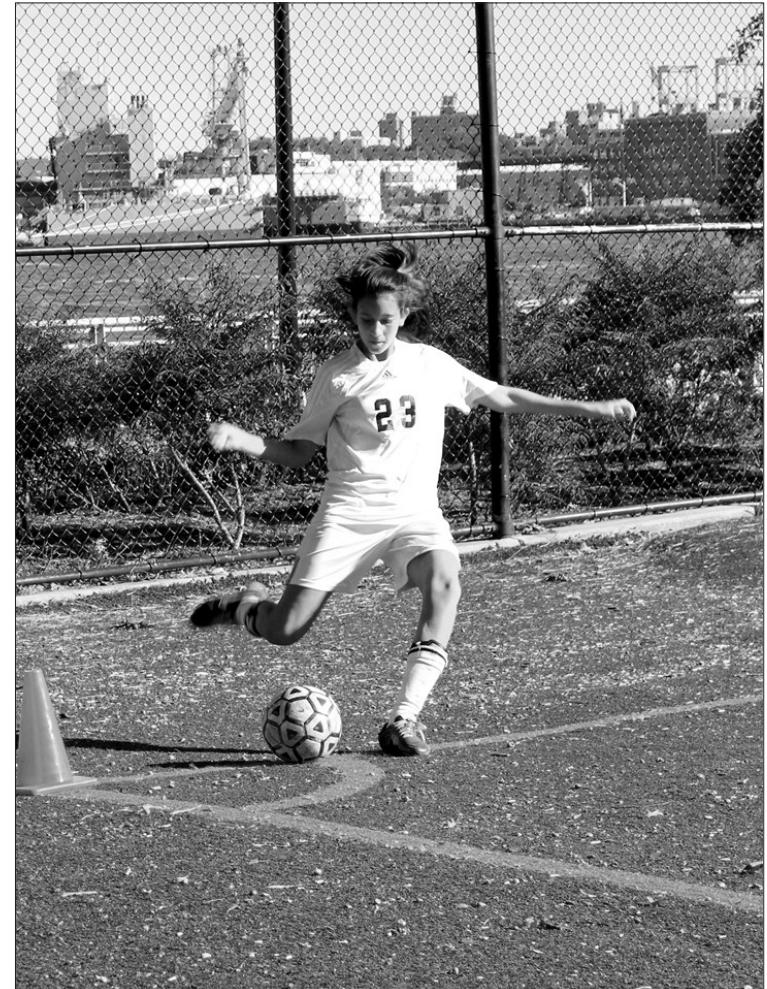
By GRACE LU

After losing to the Beacon Blue Demons season after season, the Mimbas were far from surprised by their 7-1 loss on Sunday, September 15. They weren't evenly matched, and both teams knew it. The Mimbas, who have failed to come close to playoffs in the last few years, hoped to prevent Beacon, the top seeded team in the city, from winning in a blowout. And year after year, they have yet to fulfill that hope.

Even before the game started, the Mimbas took a safe approach and loaded up the backfield. "I wanted to make sure we had forwards going forward and the midfielders coming back to help on defense," coach Hugh Francis said. But even with aid from the midfielders, the Mimbas' defense was not able to contain Beacon's offense, and five minutes into the game, the Blue Demons easily scored their first goal. The rest of the first half was played almost entirely on Stuyvesant's side of the field, with the Mimbas losing the ball several times on offense and the Blue Demons' clean passes and superior footwork overwhelming the defense. The Beacon team would easily dribble their way down the line and maneuver into the 18-yard box uncovered. The Mimbas' reliance on junior Sophia Gershon, who saved 8 out of 15 shots, was evident. On average, Beacon took a shot every six minutes, and scored every ten, keeping Gershon on edge. But while Beacon put on an offensive clinic against the Mimbas, senior and co-captain Rosalie Campbell, who was sidelined due to injury, believes this is uncharacteristic of the defense. "We are usually pretty consistent across the back, and I don't think defense is necessarily our top priority to improve," she said. While this may be true, it is only so because the offense is nonexistent.

During halftime, the exhausted Mimbas, who were down 4-0, discussed their shortcomings.

"We have to keep working together to keep defending as a team and make sure we're communicating," Francis said. With refreshed spirits at the start of the second half, the Mimbas started



Sophomore Sarah Joseph takes a corner kick for the Mimbas on Tuesday, September 17 at the East River Park against the Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy.

to play more aggressively, and, more importantly, on Beacon's side of the turf. After sophomore Sarah Joseph took a corner kick, senior Radha Sathanayagam was able to score a goal at the far post. A bright spot among the Mimbas' anemic offense, this was their only shot on goal the entire game. Beacon, however, answered by taking more shots and securing three more goals by the end of the game. According to Francis, the last goal should not have been scored—it was off an unwarranted free kick after a Beacon player tripped over the ball. Nevertheless, the game went the way most of them expected—Beacon's domination.

The Mimbas' game was riddled with holes. "The defense should have marked the Beacon runners more because they shouldn't have gotten that far into the 18-yard box," Gershon said.

"Offensively, we really need to be taking more shots on goal, because that is the only way we will score," Sathanayagam added.

The loss has not dampened the Mimbas' spirits but has forced them to realize their flaws. "We're weaker as a team this year than last year," Gershon said. "We lost a lot of seniors and didn't really get that many strong new players." What seemed like a strength in the beginning of the year is proving to be the opposite, as the highly prospective sophomores have yet to make an impact. Looking forward, the Mimbas still have three teams they have not played yet this season and will be facing Beacon once more in the future. "We have the opportunity to improve. Losing by fewer goals to Beacon would be exciting," Francis said.

Sports Wrap-Up

Following up their run into the championship game last year, Stuyvesant's football team, the PEGLEGS, started off the year red-hot, winning four consecutive games by double digits. Junior Cooper Weaver has been a key asset especially on offense, rushing for 322 yards and five touchdowns in the team's first two wins.

After winning their first two games, Stuyvesant's girls' soccer team, the MIMBAS, lost five of their last six games. They will need to turn things around immediately if they want to make a run at the playoffs.

With a combined three losses to their rivals, Martin Luther King Jr. and Beacon, Stuyvesant's boys' soccer team, the CENTAURS, have a 1-3-1 record, marking a disappointing beginning to their season.

Stuyvesant's girls' swimming team, the PENGUINS, began the defense of their PSAL championship with a decisive win over Hunter on Wednesday, September 25.

After a disappointing 4-7 record last year, Stuyvesant's boys' bowling team, the PINHEADS, are off to a good start this season with two consecutive victories. The girls' bowling team performed similarly in its first game, and came away with a victory.

Stuyvesant's girls' golf team, the BIRDIES, won three of their first four matches. All of their wins were by the score 5-0, with their only loss coming via forfeit.

At the Xavier Invitational track meet, junior Eric Chen finished first in the junior boys' 4000m run with a time of 13:32.90, which was more than half a minute faster than the second place runner.

Stuyvesant's girls' volleyball team, the VIXENS, started off the year with a two-set (25-0, 25-9) victory over Washington Irving.