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Teitel Discusses Possibility of Four-Year Math Requirement

By RUCHI JAIN

During the School Leadership Team (SLT) meeting held on Tuesday, October 20, Principal Stanley Teitel proposed changing graduation requirements to mandate students to take mathematics for four years rather than the current three. If implemented, the policy would affect all students beginning with the class of 2014.

At the SLT meeting, Teitel cited college admissions as one of the reasons behind the possible new policy. "[College Adviser Pat Cleary] made it pretty clear that if a student wanted to be considered for a top tier college, he or she should be carrying mathematics into their fourth year," he said. "I am concerned that those [seniors] not [taking math] might not be aware that they might be putting themselves at a disadvantage to the college of their choice."

According to Teitel, an average of 16 percent of every senior class does not take a mathematics course in their final year. For this year's senior class, approximately 130 of the 791 students will have taken only three years of mathematics before graduating. These

students either opted not to take math in their final year or were not able to obtain their desired math class because of programming conflicts.

"We had to do a number of program changes this year, specifically to include math to some students who did not originally request it, but now realized that that might not have been their best idea," Teitel said at the SLT meeting. "We had not made enough classes to support them, so some students never got the math they wanted simply because we didn't anticipate it."

The standard mathematics curriculum for students is Geometry in freshman year, Intermediate Algebra in sophomore year, pre-Calculus in junior year, and Calculus in senior year. Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics, Multivariate Calculus, and Differential Equations are also offered for students to take as electives.

If the change is implemented, students who exhaust the school's mathematics curriculum early in their high school

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Academic Intervention Services: Getting Extra Help



Math teacher Gary Jaye instructs students during an AIS session.

By KAITLYN KWAN,
ANI SEFAJ,
and ALEXANDER SHIN
with additional reporting by
MAYA AVERBUCH,
CHRIS LEE,
EMMA LICHTENSTEIN
and NICOLE ZHAO

During the Student Leadership Team meeting held on

Tuesday, September 22, Principal Stanley Teitel said that if mid-year citywide budget cuts arise, per session pay, which is hourly compensation for teachers who stay after school to supervise extracurricular activities and amounts to 102,358 dollars of the school's budget, would be reduced. However, Teitel insisted that the per session pay that is

used to fund Academic Intervention Services (AIS), would not be cut.

AIS allows students in need of additional help to attend subject-specific tutoring sessions after school. These weekly sessions are led by teachers within the school and usually last around one hour.

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Navy's Newest Ship Reaches Manhattan



The USS New York paused by Ground Zero on Monday, November 2, and fired a 21-gun salute.

By GAVIN HUANG

On a misty and windy morning, the USS New York, back from its inaugural four-day voyage from Norfolk, Virginia, paused by Ground Zero for a 21-gun salute. Spectators, army veterans, and members of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), the New York Police Department and the Port Authority Police gathered along the Hudson shoreline in front of the World Financial Center on Monday, November 2, to welcome the ship. Its bow stem was constructed with 7.5 tons of steel salvaged from the World Trade Center.

"The bow of the ship is the front, which is the first piece of the ship that goes into action. So, in essence, what they're trying to do for us who think like that

is they're taking New York to the battle," said Bill Jennings, a Vietnam veteran who attended the ceremony. "And if you knew anybody who was in the World Trade Center and lost their life, you feel very proud that part of New York is going to take the battle to the enemy."

The ceremony started at 8 a.m. with the national anthem, followed by a rendition of "America the Beautiful" by the FDNY Pipes and Drums Band. As the navy transport ship headed up the Hudson River, helicopters roared overhead; nearby police boats, fireboats, tugboats and personal boats turned on their fountains and sounded their sirens. Servicemen on board the USS New York then fired 21 rifle shots. Among the spectators who attended the 21-gun salute were

family members who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001.

"I spent a lot of days down there trying to recover our brothers' and sisters' remains," Lt. Paige Humphries of the FDNY Emergency Medical Services unit said. "So I feel like it's only proper that I be here today to witness them coming back in because of the horrendous way they went out. It's a pleasure to see how they're coming back to us just as strong as steel."

Residents around Battery Park City, including Stuyvesant, received notice from the Battery Park City Authority informing them of the ceremony to prevent any possible alarm it might have caused. Principal Stanley Teitel received an e-mail on Thursday, October 29 and distributed the notice to faculty members. He attended the salute on Monday morning.

"I thought it was going to be some sort of cannon," Teitel said. "But it turned out to be just rifles. Seven guns, I believe, since they were fired in sets of three."

The USS New York is now docked at Pier 88, on 48th Street and the Hudson River. Sailors and Marines on board will conduct public tours in the days leading up to its commissioning ceremony on Saturday, November 7.

"It's indescribable," Jennings said of the ship's return to New York. "It's just a very emotional feeling."

United Federation of Teachers: The Teachers' Union

By SARAH KAPLAN

The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) was established in 1960 as the New York City chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, the national teachers' union. Teachers in the fifties and early sixties were often overworked, underpaid and subject to what some teachers termed the tyrannical power of principals and other supervisory staff.

"We had absolutely no rights. We were afraid to speak up," said former New York City teacher and one of the UFT's founders, Abe Levine, in the "History of the UFT" section on the union's Web site. According to a New York Times editorial published in January 1955, teachers in city public schools earned less in a week than a car washer.

By 1960 many teachers were fed up. In March of that year, Levine called for the creation of a New York teachers union to combat these and other issues. In December, 1961, the UFT was designated as the collective bargaining organization for all public school teachers in New York City.

According to the mission statement on the UFT Web

site, the union "negotiates for fair and competitive salaries, enhanced professionalism and improved working conditions, not only to benefit its members but also to help recruit and retain the best educators for New York City schools." The UFT also acts as an advocate for public schools, calling for greater funding for education from city, state, and federal governments and promoting reforms like smaller class sizes and improved academic standards.

For all its noble aspirations, the UFT has become a target of much criticism in recent years. Politicians and members of the Department of Education (DOE) criticize UFT policies that make it difficult to fire teachers, blaming these practices for contributing to a lack of accountability and a shortage of funds in the New York City school system.

The UFT's contract with the city expired on Saturday, October 31, and negotiations for a new contract are already underway. Though the UFT declined to comment on the ongoing negotiations, two key issues—teacher tenure and merit pay—are almost certainly under debate.

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Opinions

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An Appetite for Apathy

There have been an influx of projects to aid in the fight against hunger. Stuyvesant's food drives are our school's contribution to this effort.



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Features

Open to Interpretation

The Stuyvesant Open House, held annually, allows for prospective teachers and students to gain insight into the school.

News

Energy Monitors to Be Installed in Computer Rooms

By ALLISON BURNS
and MAYA AVERBUCH

Wireless monitors that track energy usage will be installed in computer rooms 411 and 413 as part of a project being conducted by InGRID Energy, a small two-month-old company created to produce, generate, and supply renewable and sustainable energy. The monitors are expected to be installed within the next two weeks after it is confirmed that they meet all safety regulations. Principal Stanley Teitel was contacted by InGRIDEnergy CEO John Macnamara, who proposed the idea of installing the monitors in the school. Teitel turned the project over to biology teacher Jerry Citron, who is currently discussing the details with Dr. Farokh Eskafi, a company representative who specializes in wireless communication.

Teitel agreed to the proposal because the electricity and heating bills are not included in the school's budget, and therefore the administration has no record of

the school's energy consumption. The project is part of an attempt to improve the energy policy at Stuyvesant and make the school a greener place.

"Monitoring is very important because then you can see as a whole what percentage of energy is used where," Dr. Eskafi said. "If most of the power is used in lighting or air conditioning, then it kind of focuses the program onto where it is best to put the effort on."

"If there's something we can do, we certainly want to. This building is going to be around for a long time, so any savings we can extract [would be beneficial]," Teitel said.

Teitel handed over the project to Citron because of his positions as both Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher and faculty advisor for the Students Taking Resolute Initiative to Vindicate the Environment (STRIVE) club, which aims to raise awareness about the environment and make the school more environmentally friendly. The project is

funded by InGRID Energy, which receives its money from private funding. Eskafi estimates that the monitors will cost 5,000 to 6,000 dollars to install. If funding continues, the project may be expanded to more than just the computer rooms.

According to Eskafi, it is important for the company to get involved with schools. "We really wanted to have a situation that we can introduce energy savings, and energy type tools, a set of tools that you can use to observe energy usages, in an educational premises," Eskafi said. Stuyvesant was chosen to participate first because of its reputation as one of the best schools in New York City. The company is also trying to expand the project to two private schools, as well as a hotel and convenience store located in Massachusetts and Chicago.

Eskafi stated that the energy-monitoring technology is a collection of existing technologies invented in different places, including Massachusetts Institute

of Technology and the University of California-Berkeley. "We are using the best of the breed that exists in the system, in the market right now," Eskafi said.

The monitors will collect data that will be used both by the school and InGRID Energy.

"We're going to [...] measure the temperature, the electrical usage, and the fan coil, which is part of the electrical component of the furnace, to see how often it goes on and off," Citron said. "[Then we'll] look at all that data to come up with an energy profile for energy consumption for those rooms." In addition to being attached to the computers, energy monitors will be attached to the lights as well.

Motion sensors will also be installed on the walls to keep track of whether or not the room is occupied. "When the computers are not in use, they are just put into the screen saver mode type. The power supply is still running on a lot of these things, so the power supply should be able to shut down so it does not generate heat, and it does

not use energy," Eskafi said.

The sensors will be connected to a computer system that sends information to a router connected to all the computers in the room. "What every Stuyvesant student might be able to do is look on a computer screen and see how much energy is being used every ten minutes in that room," Citron said. "If one looks at how much energy is consumed and how much pollution is generated, you then can have a real sense of what using energy means." According to Eskafi, the information will either be presented as the cost of the energy used or the amount of carbon being used in order to help students understand what the data means.

"It is useful to know about energy usage in school, but I really don't know if people would look at the information," sophomore and STRIVE member Aarthi Kuppannan said. "Still, it's important to monitor energy use because this is a big building that consumes a lot of energy, which could be really harmful."

Teitel Considers Four-Year Math Requirement

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career would have to take more advanced courses such as Linear Algebra in the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University in order to receive credit for their diplomas.

Students and teachers expressed mixed reactions to the possible new policy.

"The vast majority of the students who are not taking a fourth year of math are the lowest performing Stuy students and the lowest performing math students," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said at the SLT meeting. "I am not convinced that forcing those students to take a fourth year helps their transcript."

Senior Amy Lin disagreed. "[Those students] should not have Calculus or Calc Apps but there should be a different math course they could take," Lin said. "If you really don't take a year of math, it really hurts you to miss out."

Lin, who took AP Calculus in her junior year, was not able to obtain a seat in AP Statistics this year and is currently not taking a mathematics course.

For senior Ashleigh Bowie, on the other hand, "It all depends on your field of interest and what you plan to do with your college career," she said. "When you go to college, it's not about requirements. It's about learning [...] After three years of taking classes that you're required to, you should have the freedom to take the classes that you want to take."

Math teacher Jonas Kalish agreed. "Students should certainly be advised to take a fourth

year of math if it helps them, but it should be their decision," he said.

According to freshman Vinit Shah, who will most likely take pre-Calculus in his sophomore year, "If they're not good at math but they're good at something else, they shouldn't be required to take another year," he said. "I don't think that's really fair."

"What [colleges] most look for is not cookie cutter kids, but kids who really pursue their academic interests, which means taking a whole bunch of classes in whatever area is most interesting to them," Grossman said. "They [should] show passion and dedication in a particular area rather than just kind of checking in the boxes."

Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara declined to comment about the possible new policy.

Grossman also pointed out budgetary issues that could arise from this change. "If we hire an additional math teacher, which this would require, that teacher's coming out of another department," he said. "Already my department's been eviscerated this year. Almost no one had the opportunity to double up in English."

In previous years, Teitel made changes to the graduation requirements without consulting any students or faculty, such as decreasing the foreign language requirement from four years to three. This year, he accepted input from everyone present at the SLT meeting. However, he has still not come to a decision about whether he will put these changes into effect.

By ALEKS MERKOVICH
and ANIKA RASTGIR

Stuyvesant's Black Students' League (BSL), Gay Lesbian and Straight Spectrum (GLASS), School Prevention of Addiction through Rehabilitation and Knowledge (SPARK) program and Free Hugs club all recently held awareness weeks to promote different issues. These events were Breast Cancer Awareness Week, Ally Week, SMILE WEEK and Red Ribbon Week.

The first of these events, held during the week of Monday, October 12, was Breast Cancer Awareness Week. Throughout the week, the BSL raised money for the American Cancer Society and the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, which took place on Sunday, October 18. They were able to reach their goal of raising 500 dollars by the end of the week through sale of items such as pins and arm bands at a table near the TriBeCa Bridge entrance.

"[The week] was a good opportunity for the Black Students' League to give back to the community and raise awareness," guidance counselor and BSL advisor Audra Parris said.

Ally Week took place during the week of Monday, October 19. Supported by GLASS, its goal was to raise awareness and help prevent prejudice against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. The event encouraged allies who support the LGBT community to identify themselves in order to demonstrate how strong the community is.

"Allies have been important to expand civil rights movements and to fight for equal rights," senior and GLASS president Allegra Wiprud said.

During Ally Week, a table was

Causes Promoted Through Awareness Weeks

set up near the TriBeCa Bridge entrance and by the cafeteria where people could ask questions about the LGBT community. Over 1,000 stickers bearing the message, "I am an Ally" were also given out and worn by allies and members of GLASS.

"The stickers are important for having the message out there," said Angel Colon, SPARK counselor and co-faculty advisor of GLASS. "Students and faculty wore the stickers proudly."

However, some students felt that Ally Week could have been more effective. "I was surprised by how many people were unaware of Ally Week," freshman and GLASS member Savannah Hendrix said. "We had to mainly rely on word of mouth to get people aware."

SMILE WEEK and Red Ribbon Week occurred together during the week of Monday, October 26. SMILE WEEK, spearheaded by the Free Hugs club, was meant to raise awareness about mental health problems. Red Ribbon Week, supported by SPARK, was meant to raise drug awareness.

"We get people aware by putting up posters and handing out brochures," said sophomore and Free Hugs member Manisha Baker, describing the actions her club took to promote SMILE WEEK.

During the week, a table was also set up near the cafeteria where products were sold and pamphlets about mental health and drugs were distributed. The money raised was for non-profit charities and foundations.

"Our goal is to make people more aware of the harmfulness of drugs and the seriousness of mental health," junior and Free Hugs co-president Lipi Thaker said. "A lot of people disregard it, considering it insignificant. However, after doing research and

finding out real life facts about the topics, we feel that we need to inform others."

This event differed from last year's event in that both SMILE WEEK and Red Ribbon Week occurred during the same week. Last year, free candy with facts on the wrappers was given out along with pamphlets at the table and money was raised only through donations. However, due to the Chancellor's Regulation A-812, or the Bake Sale Ban, candy could not be given out. Instead, each event sold their items, such as friendship bracelets, on different days of the week.

"This year I've noticed that there are fewer pamphlets on the floor and people look through them," said junior and Free Hugs events coordinator of Becky Chao, commenting on the success of the event.

"The event was a great success since we made over 400 dollars, not including the money made on the last day, which is already four times the profit we made last year," junior and Free Hugs co-president Marsha Kononenko said.

However, some students felt SMILE and Red Ribbon Week could have been more effective.

"Instead of just handing out pamphlets, we could do more wide-spread events like assemblies," sophomore and SPARK member Diego Kervabon said.

"[Awareness weeks] do what they set out to do," sophomore John Lee said. "However, we've all heard the messages a million times. It's getting kind of redundant."

Despite mixed reviews, the events were able to collect money for their causes and distribute over 1,000 stickers, pins, and arm bands, leaving their mark on the Stuyvesant student body.

Teachers Taught To Implement Writing Across the Curriculum

By MEGAN HAREWOOD
and THOMAS FLAGIELLO

During the students' day off on Tuesday, November 3, Martha Harbison, editor of Popular Science magazine, talked to Stuyvesant staff about her experiences as both a scientist and a writer, and gave suggestions as to how Writing Across the Curriculum should be properly implemented in classes.

Writing Across the Curriculum, created last October by Principal Stanley Teitel, is an

educational program in Stuyvesant classes that attempts to bring writing into all subject classes.

This September, Teitel distributed English grammar manuals to all staff members. These pocket manuals were recommended by the English department in an effort to help students hone their writing skills in classes other than English.

All teachers who were not attending the other mandatory Advanced Placement Calculus seminar met in one room in the

morning and then broke up into their respective departments in separate stations after a noon lunch break.

Harbison bases her method of incorporating writing on the sayings, 'If you want to learn a topic, teach it' and 'If you can't explain something clearly, you don't know it.' Therefore, she tries to fully understand a topic before she attempts to put any thoughts into writing.

"There has to be a balance, because you have to be exposed to the concept before you can

write at all about it [...] It's not necessarily taking away from instruction. It's just a different type of instruction," Harbison said.

Faculty members found the seminar to be helpful.

"I found it worthwhile and thought she made worthwhile suggestions," Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara said.

"I think [the seminar] is an important step," Foreign Languages teacher Milton Diaz said. "These things need a lot of

input from teachers and other people."

Many teachers have been quick to implement increased writing in their classes and have had positive reactions to the policy. "Writing Across the Curriculum is vital in a society where students communicate via texts, instant messages, and 140 character bursts," chemistry teacher Michael Orlando said.

Some students have mixed

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Poetry Class Creates “Haiku Stones”

By ALEX WANG

“Amidst the countless / literature is a portal open to / creativity” reads a haiku written by junior Peter Liu on a piece of round, light-blue paper on the door of room 615E.

These ‘Haiku Stones’ have recently been placed around the school by English teacher Emily Moore and the students in her Poetry Workshop class.

According to a paragraph written on each stone, “In Japan, ‘Haiku Stones’ mark areas of poetic significance.” Although the definitions and format of a haiku are flexible, haiku is recognized as a style of Japanese poetry that emphasizes simplicity and attempts to capture the essence of a place or experience, often in nature. The traditional format of a haiku is a first line containing five syllables, a second line with seven syllables and a third line with five syllables.

The poems were hung up on Friday, October 6. They can be found at the bridge entrance, in room 615E where the class is held, in the staircases and in other areas. “The idea of the ‘Haiku Stones’ is that they’re a bit hidden, so that they’re special to find,” said Moore, mentioning as an example a poem hidden in the back of the library. She compared finding a ‘Haiku Stone’ to “finding a ladybug. You are lucky if you see one,” she said.

Moore was inspired to do this activity with her classes after she took a trip to Japan through the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund in 2007, a program designed by the Japanese government that

encourages American educators to visit Japan and learn about its culture. Moore decided to study the tradition of Japanese poetry, visiting the Basho Museum in Tokyo. Matsuo Basho, whom the museum is named after, was a famous Japanese poet, described by Moore as the “Shakespeare of Japan”. Written during a trip between Tokyo and Ogaki in 1689, “The Narrow Road to the Interior” is his collection of haiku and prose written at particular places. Later generations of poets returned to these areas and placed rocks and plaques with poems as a public arts project. This motivated Moore to do the same at Stuyvesant and, since 2007, she has done the ‘Haiku Stones’ project with her classes every semester.

This year, the students in her classes studied Japanese poetry styles such as haiku, tanka and renga. Tanka is a mood poem, often about love, sadness, or other ideas. Renga is a style of Japanese poetry that is often written by a group of poets taking turns to write stanzas, which alternate between two and three lines. One of the goals of the unit was to promote “cross-cultural understanding,” Moore said. The students created the ‘Haiku Stones’ toward the end of the unit.

The poems displayed are meant to be anonymous. Moore stated that she wanted to “represent voices from the class”, but also to have students read the poems rather than “just to see their friend’s name.”

Students in the classes that participated in the activity enjoyed being able to read and learn

about haiku, and felt proud of having their work displayed in the school.

“I learned how to express my feelings through as few words as possible,” Liu said.

Although her poem was torn down the day after it was hung up, junior Disi Chen “enjoyed writing the haikus because it lets you feel what the whole process is about, like that special moment when it’s just one [...] snapshot,” she said.

Junior Mustafa Kamal wrote a haiku about the cold temperature of his math classroom and as a result, his poem hangs outside that room. “I enjoyed writing about one snapshot where I was able to express one scene in a short sentence,” he said. “[Haiku are] very expressive.”

Many students did not notice the ‘Haiku Stones’ posted around the school, but those who did notice them enjoyed the idea.

“It incorporates literature into our school community, and they’re also short and easy to read while passing by,” freshman Sabid Manick said.

Sophomore Eric Li liked the ‘Haiku Stones’, but mentioned that it was difficult to see them when “there are a lot of people in the hallway,” he said.

Moore was pleased with the results of the project. “They’re a special window into a particularly little place or a part of the Stuy experience,” Moore said. She also cited its ease and low cost as a representation of how “simple things can really make a nice difference,” she said.

New Research Project and Intel Class for Sophomores

By KAREN ZHENG

Thirty-five sophomores from each lunch period were sent e-mail invitations on Wednesday, October 21, to participate in engineering research groups that will meet during the students’ free or lunch periods. The e-mails were sent by Assistant Principal Chemistry and Physics Scott Thomas. He selected the students by asking the program office for a list of sophomores with each lunch period free who had grade point averages of over 95.

The main goal of this program is to teach sophomores skills to do research projects on their own by starting early in groups of two to four. Groups will be formed based on the students’ common interests, whether it is in biology, chemistry, physics, or a combination.

Although Thomas e-mailed only 175 students, all sophomore homeroom teachers will soon be notified to announce the program to their homeroom students. “If a student really wants to get the work done, then he or she can take part,” Biology teacher and research coordinator Jonathan Gastel said. “We hope we can accommodate all sophomores that want to do it. The main criteria is determination.”

Thomas is currently working on being able to give students academic credits for participating, but if that is not possible, he can “at least give independent study credit,” Thomas said. Last year, there was one research group that met during seventh period. This year, Gastel had an idea to branch out as “a way of getting sophomores more involved in the program [Intel] earlier,” Thomas said.

“We will have mentors like qualified parents, Stuyvesant alumni, and outside researchers,” Thomas said. “The point is to start off in sophomore year, get acquainted with research skills, and then do Intel junior and senior year, like what people do in other schools.” One of these schools is

the Bronx High School of Science, which had nine Intel semifinalists in the 2008-2009 school year, compared to Stuyvesant’s 10.

Thomas’s goal for this semester is to have the engineering research groups submit to the Toshiba Explorer Vision competition at the end of January. Contests that are planned for next year include Siemens and the New York Science and Engineering Fair (NYSEF). If students are successful at the NYSEF, they could advance to the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Nevada. Last year, April Lee (‘09) won second place at the ISEF.

In addition, Dr. Gastel is organizing another sophomore research project that will begin next term. For the first time, sophomores will be able to register for Intel research classes for their spring term through the Student Tools link on the Stuyvesant Web site. Sophomores will be mixed with juniors who are also taking Intel. Possible project fields for the classes include biology, chemistry, physics and psychology. Dr. Gastel will be teaching the class along with other teachers who have not yet been decided on. In addition, room 802 will be made into a workspace specifically for students doing research. A larger table will be installed in the room, as well as a new computer and printer.

These new programs will not affect Stuyvesant’s budget, as all equipment will be provided by grants. This is the fourth year that the Toshiba American Foundation has given Stuyvesant a grant for science equipment. This year, Toshiba donated 15,000 dollars to purchase a nanoscan microscope, which is a high-resolution magnetic and atomic force microscope.

Over the past three years, Toshiba has provided 60,000 dollars to purchase a 3-D printer, a high speed data collector, and plasma physics tools. Also last year, the Parents’ Association gave 45,000 dollars for

a scanning electron microscope, and the Alumni Association gave 9,000 dollars for a glass tube furnace. Scanning electron microscopes allow viewers to examine, in a three-dimensional screen image, the surface structure of prepared specimens. Glass tube furnaces conduct syntheses and purifications of inorganic compounds and also make superconductors.

“It has been very interesting so far. We used an electron microscope to examine cells,” said sophomore Elizabeth Matsumura, who recently joined Thomas’s program but has not started working on a project yet. “[I joined because] it seemed intriguing. I wanted experience working in a lab setting.”

Students generally had positive responses to these new programs.

“This is a preferable thing. I can’t guarantee that the sophomores will love what Intel’s all about and that’s exactly why they should start early, so they’re not scrambling like the kids in my year,” said senior Kristi Truong, who did a psychology Intel project last year. “Intel is a lot of work and not everyone is cut out for it, so starting early would be great.”

Sophomore Meisze Yau agreed. “Having a sophomore Intel class is definitely an improvement because junior year is stressful enough already, and you can take some of that stress off by starting sophomore year,” said Yau, who recently joined the fourth period research group and is considering taking the Intel class. “You could probably get a lot more out of the project, too.”

Some students, however, expressed concerns that the sophomores would not be able to handle a demanding research project. “Sophomore year is too early to start Intel, unless the sophomores are accelerated in science, meaning they’ve taken three years of high school science beforehand,” junior Jensen Cheong said.

Stuyvesant Alumnus Marius Orza Dies

By NICOLE ZHAO
and GEORGINA YANG

Stuyvesant alumnus Marius Daniel Orza (‘07) passed away on Sunday, October 18 after falling from a height at a construction site in Chicago. Marius was declared dead at the scene at 7:30 a.m., according to the Cook County medical examiner’s office.

Autopsy results revealing the exact cause of death have not yet been released.

According to 2006-2007 President of Key Club Courtney Ng (‘07), Marius left New York due to personal reasons in October 2007 to live in Chicago. There, he studied at Truman College, a local two-year community college and worked at Ann Sather, a coffee house.

When Marius graduated from Stuyvesant, he enrolled into the City College of New York (CCNY) to pursue a degree in civil engineering.

Marius was the vice president

of Stuyvesant’s Key Club from the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007. He was known to his friends and classmates as a generous, kind person.

“We shared the same vision of making [Key Club] service meaningful and fun,” Ng said. “He was an incredible leader and just a really genuine, caring guy.”

Friends of Marius have fond memories of him.

“I have considered Marius Daniel Orza to be a friend of mine since I began my Stuyvesant experience as a wide-eyed sophomore,” Anthony Pang (‘07, CCNY ‘11) said. “He was a generous fellow and he was always good for a laugh or a conversation about Pink Floyd.”

“He was outgoing and funny among friends,” Ng said. “I remember having many long conversations over snack wraps in McDonald’s after school [with him], and realizing how lucky I was to have such a genuine ‘partner-in-crime’.”

News-in-Brief

Straw Poll Held in Social Studies Classes

elections.

“We wanted every student to know that there is an election,” Weissman said. “We wanted to raise student awareness across the board.”

Students voted for candidates in the mayoral, comptroller, and public advocate races. While all students were given the option of voting, some chose not to.

“I don’t think it matters because we can’t vote, but it’s nice to see how the students would vote,” senior Ronald Kim said.

Some students were optimistic about the poll.

“The poll is a good idea, but I didn’t know anything about the candidates,” junior Lillian Liang said. “I’m definitely going to learn more about [the elections].”

To help raise awareness, the students in Weissman’s government classes also made mock campaign posters, which were hung outside the social studies office for a couple of weeks leading up to the straw poll.

Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri had a positive response to the effort. “I’ve been hearing kids talk about it in hallways, discussing which candidates they voted for and why,” Suri said. “I believe it has been successful in raising awareness and interest.”

Teachers Taught To Implement Writing Across the Curriculum

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opinions on the extra writing. However, most students are against Writing Across the Curriculum and do not see the point. “One of my teachers enforces Writing Across the Curriculum but it’s not really a big deal in my classes and I don’t see why it should be,” junior Lipi Thaker said. “We’re required to take four years of English anyway.”

However, most students are against Writing Across the Curriculum and do not see the point. “Writing Across the Curriculum takes valuable time away from the vital aspects of the curriculum,” sophomore Susmita Bhowmik said.

Although classes like math

and science need to find ways to incorporate writing, certain departments, including foreign language, have writing as a part of classes already. “We currently have a writing rubric in all of our classes,” Assistant Principal Foreign Languages Arlene Ubreta said.

“Writing is a valuable tool in any discipline. Used thoughtfully and creatively writing can help to deepen students’ understanding of any subject,” Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said.

“It is essential that students have ample opportunity to practice both formal and informal writing of more complete thoughts,” Orlando said.

Features

United Federation of Teachers: The Teachers' Union

continued from page 1

Teacher Tenure

One of the most contentious of the UFT's policies is teacher tenure. This rule limits the DOE's ability to fire tenured teachers and enforce stricter standards upon them. But at the same time, it serves to protect teachers from the mistreatment they dealt with prior to the 1960s.

Teacher tenure has come under more and more fire in recent years because it makes it more difficult to fire experienced teachers, even if they are incompetent. Every school system has a horror story: a Los Angeles teacher kept his job even after making fun of a student's suicide attempt, a teacher from Florida threw books in the classroom but was able to hold on to her job for an entire year. New York City teachers are usually granted tenure after three years in the classroom. Before this they are considered "on probation" and can be fired at the discretion of the principal, but once tenure has been granted they are guaranteed due process of law.

This means that any attempt to fire a tenured teacher must involve a hearing before the justice department. However, less than .02 percent of New York City teachers were fired last year, in part because the process is so expensive—the city pays 250,000 dollars in lawyers' fees and other costs simply to fire one teacher for incompetence. The process can often take many months, and until they have been officially fired, all teachers will receive their full salary plus benefits and vacation. Instead of working in the classroom, they report to a "rubber room" from 8:15 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., being paid to do essentially nothing.

"The UFT contract makes it excessively difficult to fire a teacher for incompetence. The burden of proof is on me, until

According to a report published by the New Teacher Project, last year the city spent 74 million dollars paying teachers who weren't working in a classroom.

unneeded even if they have done nothing wrong, in the school system, excess teachers who are not hired by a school are placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve pool (ATR), to be called in as substitutes when needed. These teachers still receive full pay and benefits. As Schools Chancellor Joel Klein shuts down more and more large, failing schools, more and more tenured teachers are finding themselves without jobs. Principals are often reluctant to hire teachers who come from failed schools and older teachers who require higher salaries, so they enter the ATR and increase its ranks even further. Because it is so rare for principals to hire more experienced teachers who require a larger salary, teachers almost never leave the ATR pool.

According to a report published by the New Teacher Project, last year the city spent 74 million dollars paying teachers who weren't working in a classroom. Klein and Teitel have cited the large number of teachers in the ATR as a major reason for possible upcoming budget cuts.

Though teacher tenure has become a popular punching bag for politicians proposing to reform the education system, there are many who believe that it is necessary to protect teachers. They argue that tenure does not equal lifetime job security and that the system protects teachers from being subject to the whims of principals. They point to the years before the UFT was established, when principals complete authority over the curriculum and teachers could be fired for political or religious beliefs.

According to a survey "Teaching for a Living: How Teachers See the Profession Today" conducted this spring by Public Agenda, 66 percent of teachers thought that eliminating tenure would not improve teacher effectiveness. Meanwhile, 58 percent of teachers felt that tenure protects teachers from district politics, favoritism, and the threat of losing their jobs to newcomers who could work for less.

"Tenure prevents abuses such as favoritism, vindictiveness, arbitrariness or political pressure and allows teachers to take the legitimate risks necessary to teach kids," said retired teacher Anne Millman in an

April 2008 article titled "Tenure process is kept fair" on the UFT Web site.

Additionally, the UFT argues that tenure doesn't even guarantee a job for life.

"Tenure [...] doesn't 'guarantee' anybody anything — except a fair hearing before they can be disciplined or fired," former UFT president Randi Weingarten wrote in "Tenure: Mine, yours, and theirs," on the UFT Web site. Weingarten also argues that many teachers leave the profession because their jobs don't have enough benefits.

"Thousands of new teachers leave every year and never come up for tenure. They leave because they are disappointed with the lack of support and resources, with the quality of leadership, with the failure to enforce discipline and with the lack of professional respect they are accorded," Weingarten said.

Merit Pay

Another controversial component of the UFT contract is the section which stipulates that teachers are to be paid solely based on years in the school system and their level of education.

In an opinion piece published in the Daily News on Sunday, November 1 titled "It's time to tear up the teachers' contract that protects mediocre educators, dooms kids to failure," social studies teacher Matthew Polazzo advocated providing incentives for teachers to work harder and be better teachers.

"I think that NYC teachers are amazing and some of my peers here are unbelievably incredible, but I think that those people who work really hard should be rewarded for it. We cannot depend on altruism because then we really have no solution when people choose not to be altruistic. Why should a teacher work hard when it means that there's a greater risk of burnout?" Polazzo said. "I have all kinds of demands on my time. I need something that incentivizes me to really focus my energies on the students that I'm teaching. I think that the students of New York could really benefit from this and frankly so could the teachers. You know, many of us work beyond hours that we're supposed to. Why not have a system that rewards us for that work?"

However, paying teachers based on merit can be extremely complicated. Though merit pay has many proponents, few have a definite idea of how merit might be determined. Giving principals the discretion to decide which teachers deserve bonuses leaves a great deal of room for favoritism and political patronage.

On the other hand, there are few objective measures which can be used to gauge teacher performance. Standardized test scores are unreliable and often inflated by schools and school systems, and hinging a teacher's salary on students' scores could encourage even more widespread cheating. Such a system would also favor higher performing schools, which tend to be in wealthier neighborhoods, thereby punishing teachers who choose to work with underprivileged students.

"A school with large numbers of low-income children, high residential mobility, great family stress, little literacy support at home, and serious health problems may be a better school even if its test scores are lower than another whose pupils do not have such challenges," said

Richard Rothstein, a research associate for the Economic Policy Institute who conducted a study on teachers, performance pay, and accountability.

Merit pay systems can be difficult to implement as well.

Texas adopted merit pay in 2006, but the system had to be revamped two years later after the majority of schools participating in the program performed below standards. Of 1,000 schools in the program, 669 were forced to terminate bonus payments to teachers for failing to meet the standards of the program. Because schools' performances

government as well. This July, President Barack Obama and United States Education Secretary Arne Duncan unveiled a new "Race to the Top" competition, which would provide more than \$4 billion in grants to states whose school systems the rest of the country. However, only states that allow school systems to use test scores to evaluate teachers and principals—and use these evaluations to calculate pay—are eligible for a grant.

In spite of this federal support, few teachers think that merit pay would lead to improvements in the classroom. According to the same Public Agenda survey, 67 percent of teachers felt that tying teacher rewards to student performance would not improve teacher effectiveness.

A New Contract – a New Start?

The renewal of the UFT contract provides the city with an opportunity to address these issues. Whatever changes will be made, and what the final contract will look like, are still subject to debate.

"What I would ask is that the union really focus its efforts on increasing quality instruction and especially ensuring that young teachers get a lot of support," Polazzo said. "At this point I would just advocate a union that fights more for those individuals who are more powerless."

And although union members defend many aspects of the current contract, they too are open to reform.

"No entity, including the teachers' union, is perfect," former UFT president Randi Weingarten said in an advertisement placed in the New York Times. "But I would challenge anyone who thinks that teachers' unions exist to block reform and defend the status quo to rethink that assumption."

Giving principals the discretion to decide which teachers deserve bonuses leaves a great deal of room for favoritism and political patronage, but there are few objective measures which can be used to gauge teacher performance.

vary from year to year, the effectiveness and consistency of such incentives is shaky at best.

"How effective can a merit pay system be when you have that much turnover from year to year, where teachers have to think what is here today could be gone tomorrow?" Richard Kouri of the Texas State Teachers' Association said in a Dallas News Article, "Texas officials ready to revamp teachers' merit pay," published on October 7, 2008.

However, in some school districts the introduction of merit pay for teachers has led to noticeable improvements. In Louisiana 28 public schools have implemented a merit pay program. Teachers in these schools are evaluated four times a year rather than once every three years, and according to a March 14, 2009 article in the Times-Picayune titled "Merit pay for teachers garners praise from Obama and local schools," the new system has been very successful. One participating school saw a 20 point increase in its school performance score—a function of graduation rates, standardized test scores, and attendance—since the program began in 2002. That's a near 25 percent increase in spite of the fact that the school was heavily affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The idea of linking salaries to teachers' performance has gained favor with the federal

"The UFT contract makes it excessively difficult to fire a teacher for incompetence. The burden of proof is on me, until then the teacher is considered innocent."
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

then the teacher is considered innocent," Teitel said.

Whereas in most industries employees can be fired if they are

"I need something that incentivizes me to really focus my energies on the students that I'm teaching. Why not have a system that rewards [teachers] for that work?"
—Matthew Polazzo, social studies teacher

Stuyvesant's UFT Chapter Chairperson Megan Breslin declined to comment for this article.

Features

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Friday, November 6
Open Mic

**Monday, November 9
to Friday, November 20**
Food Drive
Donate food to the needy
outside room 209.

Wednesday, November 11
Veteran's Day
NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, November 18

Locks of Love
Donate hair to patients with
cancer after receiving
parental consents. It will take
place in the lobby.

**Friday, November 20
and Saturday, November 21**
*Fall Musical:
The Pajama Game*

Homerooms Donate to Various Charities

By BERNICE CHAN
and JOANNA GAO

Roslyn Bierig, biology teacher and homeroom teacher of 3JA, 5JA and 7JA, suggests that her students donate one dollar to a charitable organization every month. Students of the three homerooms decided at the beginning of the school year to donate to several organizations, including the Make a Wish Foundation, God's Love We Deliver, St. Jude's Children Research Hospital and The Smile Train. Approximately 20 to 25 students in each homeroom participate in the charity each month.

has seen how a large amount of money can be accumulated for charities just by asking each student to contribute a little each month. Twenty four dollars was raised for the month of September; however, since 18 is a lucky number in Judaism, Bierig used her own money to raise the amount to 36 dollars. Now she hopes all homerooms will start to donate as well.

"It's very important that the money goes to helping the cause and not paying salaries [of the charity workers]," Bierig said. "Young people should give back to feel good about helping others and in return feel good about themselves. It also adds something to the homeroom experience."

"It feels really good to know our donations bring joy to others. By giving away a small amount of money, we are able to really help other people. In collectively supporting a cause we grow together as a homeroom while also gaining more of a sense of community," sophomore Devon Varrichione of homeroom 3JA said.

Students and teachers have mixed feelings about how successful this will be.

"It feels good to participate. It's only a dollar a month and I'm sure the charities appreciate the amount of money it adds up to," junior Sean Tarmidi of homeroom 5JA said.

"It's a nice thing to do, but it probably wouldn't be very successful because most people don't care. They'd rather spend the money on food for themselves," junior Patrick Moy said.

"It's a good idea, but people

"Young people should give back to feel good about helping others."
—Roslyn Bierig, biology teacher

will only donate if they get rewards from it," freshman Daniel Lin said.

If students have mixed feelings about how successful this will be, teachers see this as an opportunity to give and learn.

"I think it's a good idea because everyone would benefit. It teaches students to help others and be less selfish," biology teacher Hemal Pathak said. "I think it's a good idea to teach youngsters to give back to their community," biology teacher and homeroom teacher of 1Y Anne Manwell said.

"Giving to charities is always a good thing. It'd be a good start to get alternating homerooms to donate each month. It's good for everyone to give a little," baseball coach Matt Hahn said.

Bierig has been organizing these donations from her homeroom students every month since she worked in the old Stuyvesant building. She

"It feels really good to know our donations bring joy to others."
—Devon Varrichione, sophomore

Bierig has been organizing these donations from her homeroom students every month since she worked in the old Stuyvesant building. She

'101 Things Every Stuyvesant Student Should Do' Poll Results

Thing (% of poll takers who have done it, number of votes)

- 32. Get giddy when it's a D-day. (94%, 173 Votes)
- 29. Go to stuy.edu for absolutely no reason. (94%, 173 Votes)
- 7. Procrastinate. (94%, 173 Votes)
- 101. Read The Spectator. (91%, 168 Votes)
- 9. Be disgusted by your ID picture. (91%, 167 Votes)
- 68. Envy your friends because they got an easy teacher. (91%, 167 Votes)
- 65. Ask a random stranger whether the bell that just rang was warning, end, or late. (90%, 165 Votes)

- 10. Go from the 1st floor to the 10th. (89%, 163 Votes)
- 89. Attend your grade's assembly. (89%, 163 Votes)
- 38. Sneak food into the school. (86%, 159 Votes)
- 41. Become a Facebook addict. (86%, 158 Votes)
- 37. Sit on the half floor. (85%, 156 Votes)
- 88. Share a locker. (83%, 153 Votes)
- 12. Use your phone in the bathroom. (83%, 152 Votes)
- 78. Ask for the time because the clock is not working. (83%, 152 Votes)
- 72. Break the ice with the words "I'm so tired...". (82%, 151 Votes)
- 47. Get marked for cutting classes you know you didn't cut. (81%, 149 Votes)
- 5. Sit on The Wall. (81%, 149 Votes)
- 42. Copy homework. (81%, 149 Votes)
- 63. Be late to first period despite getting to school on time. (80%, 148 Votes)
- 40. Fall asleep in class. (80%, 148 Votes)
- 23. Buy a senior bar locker for 70 dollars. (4%, 7 Votes)

Total Voters: 184

For complete results, visit
<http://stuspectator.com/101poll>

Open to Interpretation



Marcin Skok / The Spectator

Big Sibs and ARISTA members wait in the cafeteria before giving tours at the Open House for prospective students.

By JUDY CHEN,
NANCY MA
and SANGHO PARK

Every November, about 29,000 eighth grade students sit for the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test. Students sometimes do not know which specialized high school to attend. For parents and students who are curious about Stuyvesant High School, there is the Informal Open House, which was held this year on Thursday, October 22. This annual event allows students and parents to learn more about Stuyvesant before taking the entrance exam.

The line stretched from the bridge all the way to Greenwich Street—in all over 3000 parents and students eager to see what Stuyvesant had to offer.

Big Sibs, ARISTA and Key Club volunteers were paired together and led tours of the building for parents and prospective students.

"I think that Stuyvesant comes with a preconceived notion of tons of work and no fun. In a way, we had to tell kids that that idea wasn't all there was to Stuy," junior and Big Sib Miriam Holmes said.

Junior and Big Sib Shanna Chen did not feel comfortable about Stuyvesant's reputation as "intense and unfriendly [...]" because it's so far from the truth," she said. "When parents asked me that question, I would immediately tell them that they had it all wrong, because our school spirit is so high."

Yet, Chen recalls one Big Sib being thrown off by a question about bullying at Stuyvesant. "When a Big Sib answered on whether bullying happened at Stuy, the parent immediately pulled out a Spectator article about two students putting ketchup on a fellow student's lock," Chen said.

Many eighth graders worried about the workload. Eighth grader Sara Xing Eisenberg thought that one of the biggest challenges if she were to come to Stuyvesant would be "not getting enough sleep," she said.

Students agree that some aspects of Stuyvesant's reputation are untrue. "There are some people that might think that Stuy would be hostile and unfriendly. Convincing people otherwise is a good idea, because then it will let them see Stuyvesant for what it really is," freshman Loriann Szeto said.

But senior Kevin Zhang felt that Stuyvesant's reputation

"Stuyvesant comes with a preconceived notion of tons of work and no fun."
—Miriam Holmes, junior and Big Sib

types of classes were offered at Stuyvesant was very helpful."

Parents and students were also impressed by the variety of courses and extracurriculars present at Stuyvesant. "You can find the same things you are interested in and there are enough people to find your own group," eighth grade parent Jill Reinier said.

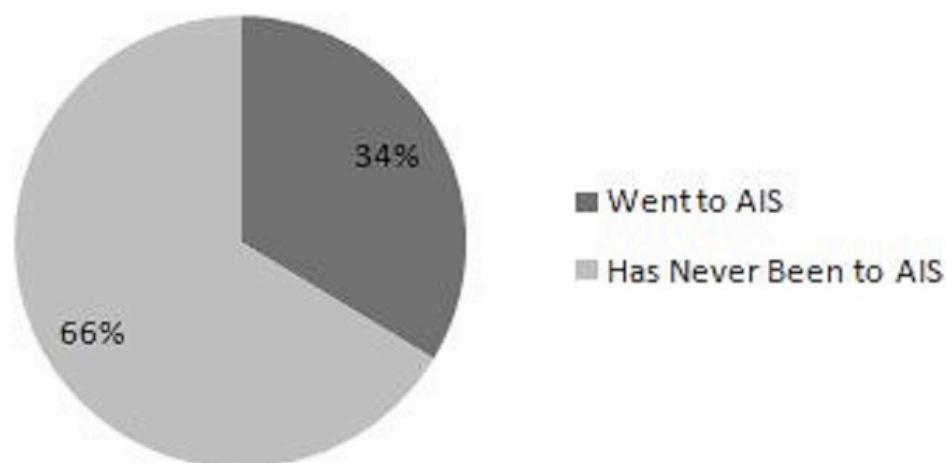
"[Students] who graduate from [Stuyvesant] have so many opportunities," eighth grade parent Nancy Sharp said.

Even after the Big Sib and ARISTA members' effort on convincing students to select Stuyvesant as their first choice, many do not. Junior and Bronx High School of Science student Kaching Ho did not put Stuyvesant as her first choice because she "wanted to feel welcome in an environment [where there is] less stress and more fun" she said.

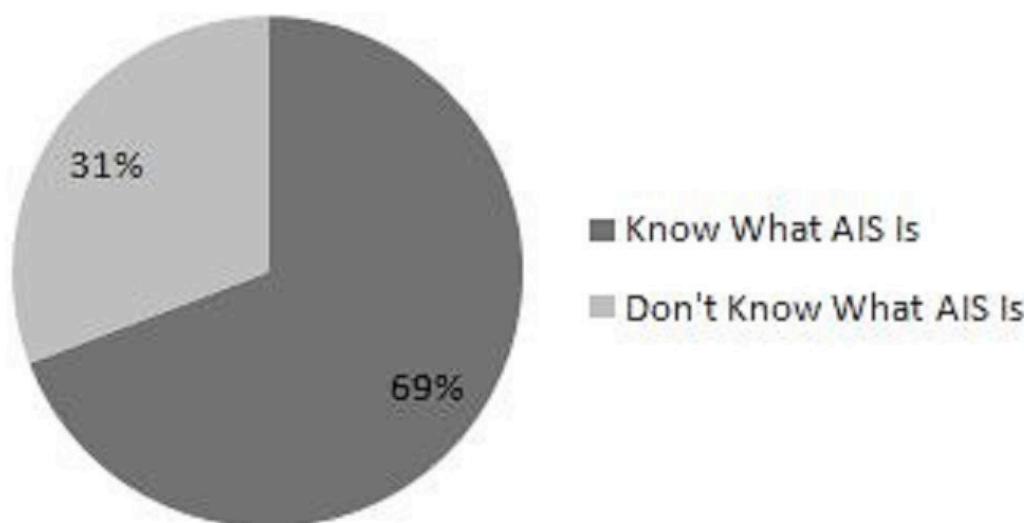
Yet many eighth graders at the Open House were already decided. "I was beginning a tour and we were on the escalators, I asked the eight graders if they wanted to definitely come to Stuy," junior and Big Sib Stefan Garcia said. "And they gave a definite yes."

Academic Intervention Services

Percentage of Student Body That Has Attended AIS



Percentage of Student Body That Knows What AIS Is



Academics Instead of Sports

By EDDIE CYTRYN
and SCOTT CHIUSANO

As the year continues and the semester progresses, the work load can pile up. The average student may work for hours from the time they get home from school until they go to sleep. For students who participate on sports teams, it can be a lot more difficult to avoid falling behind. Grades slip and confusion in certain subjects ensues because of a lack of time for study and homework. AIS tutoring often has to battle practices and games for a student-athlete's time.

For members of the boys' varsity fencing team, which practices five days a week, it is especially hard to balance studies and training. "Coach doesn't let us off that much," junior Hilton Au said. "We have to go to practice basically every day."

Students who are on teams with strict coaches who do not like their athletes missing practice must often still train on days they have a lot of work. "Sometimes I see if the coach can excuse me, but if I can't, I guess I'll work real late that night," Au said.

Many times students go

"It's more important to be doing well in class."
—Vincent Miller, physical education teacher

to tutoring immediately after school and then on to practice afterwards. However, the extra long days can hurt performance on the field and in the classroom. Because of these time constraints, students often have to choose between getting extra help for a class they are struggling in and going to a practice or game. Whether an athlete loses valuable time at practice, or loses an opportunity to get tutored, he or she will be forced to miss out on something.

"I think it's more important to be doing well in class

first and if tutoring helps that then that's good," physical education teacher and coach of girls' junior varsity volleyball and girls' softball teams Vincent Miller said.

For some sports, it is easier to work around these predicaments. Members of the boys' cross country team are able to go to tutoring on the days when they have shorter runs at school. "It's different in our sport because we don't have games during the week," boys' cross country coach Mark Mendes said. "The way our practices work, if a kid needs a day off, the days we're here [at school] is not a problem." In this way, the runners can still get a short practice in, as well as complete the necessary extra academic work. However, for teams that practice and have games five days a week on fields that are far away, it is much more difficult to juggle tutoring and practice.

Although AIS tutoring greatly benefits athletes, it is still difficult to attend as many sessions as one might wish to. On any given day, a student-athlete must choose between his or her academics or training, and either one can be shortchanged.

Academic Intervention Services: Getting Extra Help

continued from page 1

According to Assistant Principal Pupil Services Eleanor Archie, "These teachers do it because they want to, and I presume that they enjoy doing it," she said. "A lot of the teachers have done it before and they seem to enjoy working with the kids."

"AIS is effective because the kids work with teachers so that they can answer their questions," Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara said. "Teachers may see kids from the same class with the same types of questions and cluster them together. So when that teacher answers one question, he or she may be answering the question of many students."

Last fall, in order to further utilize the tutoring service to help lessen the number of failing students, Teitel implemented a new policy mandating all students failing a major class to attend AIS tutoring. Immediately after the new policy was put into action, the number of failing students, coupled with the lack of space available in a single classroom, caused many sessions to be filled to capacity. According to the December 20, 2008, Spectator article "As More Students Attend Sessions, AIS Tutoring Feels Strain," a total of 233 students attended math tutoring, 304 attended science, and 61 attended social studies in November 2008.

Recently, however, the numbers have dropped. Of 211 students surveyed by The Spectator on Tuesday, October 13, none of the students who had been mandated to attend AIS sessions actually went.

According to social studies teacher Brenda Garcia, who leads the history AIS sessions, in general, the students who do not attend AIS despite being mandated to "may be too busy with extracurricular activities," she said. In addition, Garcia said that a majority of the students who attend tutoring are those who don't need it and only want to review information for a test.

"AIS sessions are good for students who need a little review before a test, but are already doing well," junior Ramkumar Balasubramanyan said. "I don't know how effective they are for students who are failing."

Furthermore, according to the Spectator survey, 71 of the 211 students surveyed, or 33.5 percent, did not even know what AIS is. Of the 141 students who did know, 48 percent of them had ever attended a session. Although the number of attendees at AIS sessions will most likely increase by the end of the term, this is still alarming to school administrators.

"When the turnout is really low, it concerns me," Teitel said. "I don't understand why the student body is not availing itself of this free service."

Students who have attended sessions, however, said that they were generally helpful. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, students on average said that the helpfulness of AIS was approximately a 3.5.

"AIS is a great way to perform better in your classes," said junior Jensen Cheong, who attended AIS tutoring for French. "AIS provides review and a smaller learning environment. It also isn't as fast-paced as regular classes. You go at your own pace."

This is not the case for all ses-

sions, however, as certain ones are more crowded than others. As a result, students in the more crowded sessions fail to receive comprehensive help.

To solve this problem, some of the overcrowded sessions, specifically those in math, are being assisted by tutors from ARISTA, Stuyvesant's Chapter of the National Honor Society. In these sessions, each ARISTA tutor is paired with one student to provide him or her with additional one-on-one help. The supervising teacher sits at the front of the room and assists students with questions their ARISTA tutor could not answer.

ARISTA tutors also help with the variety of topics that students ask to review during AIS sessions. According to computer science teacher JonAlf Dyrland-Weaver, an additional tutor is effective to have because "if I have students from different classes with different questions, [the tutor] is around to give assistance so students aren't waiting too long," he said.

"In mathematics, we have four to five different subjects in the same room. On days when many students show up it's very difficult for the teacher to give students what they need," Ferrara said. "To compensate for this, we've asked ARISTA tutors to help in the rooms."

"AIS teachers [often] don't have the time to tutor students one-on-one," senior and ARISTA co-Vice President of Tutoring Shirley Xu said. "What ARISTA allows is for students to get one-on-one peer tutoring and feel more comfortable with the situation."

Not all sessions, however, are provided with ARISTA tutors, due to a lack of available members. As a result, sessions with more tutors are often one-on-one, whereas the others are done in lecture form. This disparity in learning environments makes certain sessions more effective than others.

"I attended AIS twice last year, but I did not find it to be helpful," sophomore Cleo Nevakiv-Callanan said. "The teachers did not do a good job of explaining the concepts that I didn't understand. The session was also more like a lecture than a tutoring session, so none of the questions my friends and I wanted to ask were answered."

Cheong, however, attributed this disparity to "each teacher [having his] own approach," he said. "Some teachers prefer for students to ask questions and go over that while other teachers quickly re-teach the previous week's topics. It depends on the subject, too."

According to junior Rohan Shah the effectiveness of AIS sessions, "completely depends on the teacher [leading] them," he said. "Sometimes you get a good teacher and sometimes you don't."

"The best way to improve it would be if each room were devoted to only one subject, [but] we don't have the funds to do that right now," Ferrara said.

Teitel, however, believed that the onus lies with the students.

"As in all cases, it has to do with whether or not the student takes it seriously," Teitel said. "We certainly try to provide students with an opportunity to get additional help [...] For the most part it's up to the student to take advantage of what I'll call this gift."

The State of Tutoring at Stuy

ARISTA, an Alternative

By SARAH KAPLAN

For many students, the best kind of academic help is offered by their peers. ARISTA, Stuyvesant's chapter of the National Honor Society, offers several forms of peer tutoring on a daily basis.

Most students get help from ARISTA through one-on-one tutoring sessions with ARISTA members. Students can e-mail the tutoring committee, which will then pair them up with an ARISTA member who can help them in a particular subject. Tutoring sessions can be scheduled based on the needs of the individual students, giving more flexibility than the weekly AIS schedule.

Senior and ARISTA tutor Samantha Shetty feels that the individual tutoring offered by ARISTA is often the key to helping students who are struggling in a subject.

"ARISTA was more helpful because it was one on one."
—Latchini Gopoel, senior

"I think that sometimes when you're in a big group people kind of have a tendency to not ask questions because they feel as though they'll be regarded as stupid. So I think when you work on-a-one-on-one basis, it's a lot easier for kids to be open about the questions that they have," Shetty said.

Many students agree with Shetty's analysis. In a Spectator survey that was distributed on Tuesday, October 13, 83 percent of respondents who had attended both AIS and ARISTA tutoring felt that ARISTA was more helpful.

"ARISTA was more helpful because it was one on one," senior Latchmi Gopoel wrote on a survey.

Senior Bibi Lewis agreed. "In AIS, there were so many

people and the teacher was going over material so fast. With ARISTA it was one on one and I got to talk to one person and explain what it was that was exactly the problem," Lewis said.

This year, the ARISTA tutoring committee hopes to expand its program even further.

"Last year we had walk-in tutoring, where students could just walk into a room and get help in any subject, so this year we are planning to have walk-in tutoring specific to certain subjects," senior and Co-Vice President of Tutoring Shirley Xu said. "Another one we're planning to hold is ARISTA review sessions for anyone who has trouble in a subject before a test."

For students who are unable to attend tutoring sessions at school, ARISTA offers several forms of online academic help.

"Right now we have study buddies, which is an online tutoring program where students can log on to the Web site and they can just go online and do online tutoring in math and science," Xu said.

ARISTA also has a peer essay editing program, which allows students to anonymously e-mail their papers to ARISTA and receive feedback. However, not everyone feels that this is the best way to receive help.

"I really feel like you should be able to meet someone in person because you don't want some one making these changes without you being able to understand why or defend your own essay," said senior Julie Kim, an ARISTA member who edited essays last year. "I was afraid that the person who was getting it would take my edits too seriously and lose their own voice."

But for the most part, ARISTA enjoys a great deal of success.

"When you look at the emails students send asking for a tutor, they're always really frantic," junior and ARISTA tutoring committee member Elizabeth Litvitskiy said. "But the emails after they work with their tutors are always very calm and very thankful [...] I think it's a great feeling to be helpful, and I've talked to people and they're always glad to have gotten tutors and we're glad to help them."

For more information on ARISTA tutoring email stuyaristatutoring@gmail.com

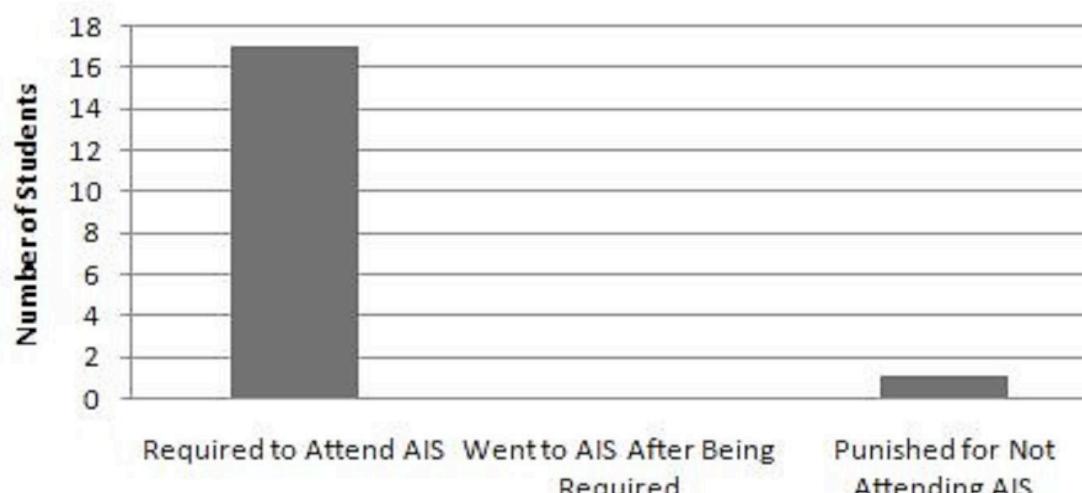


Students take notes in a math AIS tutoring session. Math AIS sessions are the most frequently attended.

Emily Koo / The Spectator

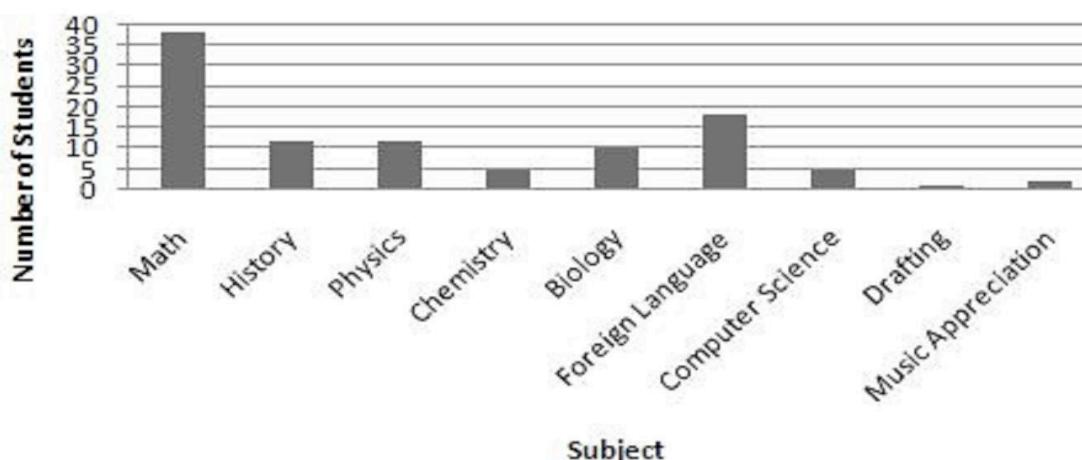
Students Required to Attend AIS*

*211 Students Surveyed



AIS Sessions Attended By Subject*

*211 Students Surveyed



Different Approaches to Tutoring

By EMMA DRIES
with additional reporting by HYEMIN YI

Beyond AIS, and even beyond ARISTA, there are ways to get academic help without having to resort to out-of-school tutoring.

On Wednesday afternoons, the day before tests, Math teacher Richard Geller holds tutoring sessions until 4:30 p.m. for his Mathematics B (MR21 and MR22) classes to provide students with extra help if needed. "He would put problems on the board and then have the answers in the back and if you had any questions you would raise your hand and he would try to help you," said senior James Slade, who had Geller as a sophomore. Students can

either come in, take a worksheet and leave, or stay for the session to complete the problems.

Geller is among a select group of teachers who stays after school without pay for the benefit of his students. His room is almost always entirely full during tutoring sessions, and his methods seem helpful for students. "I would write down the problems and the answers on the back and then I would do them over and over at home until I felt like I understood them all," Slade said.

However, seeking out individual help from a teacher isn't always just an alternative to attending AIS tutoring. The Stuyvesant English department at Stuyvesant is currently the only department that does not offer AIS tutoring.

Instead, the vast majority of English teachers make themselves available during free periods and after school to help students with an upcoming paper, or even just talk about an unsatisfactory grade on an essay.

"There are usually two ways that I'll help students outside of the classroom," English teacher Jennifer Choi said. According to Choi, certain students will seek out help, but also there are "the students who don't seek help but I seek them out because they need help," she said. "So I will often pull those students aside, sometimes I go down to guidance to see if we can come up with a plan to help their writing."

With the use of writing workshops, where students bring in

drafts of an essay to be revised, English classes provide an extra cushion to those who are struggling. "We like peer editing too," Choi said. "Not only can you learn from the teacher but you can learn from one another. By peer editing you can teach yourself and can help teach the person you are editing for. It's mutually beneficial."

Whether or not they offer official weekly tutoring sessions, or stay late after school to help students, Stuyvesant teachers are known to be, in general, fairly accessible. "Since I am the only teacher teaching my subjects I feel ethically and professionally obligated to help students who need it," said Biology teacher Jerry Citron, adding that he also

does enjoy helping his Medical Diagnosis, Human Disease, and Meteorology students. Citron tells students almost weekly that he is available during his free periods and after school if they have any questions.

Though teachers such as Choi will sometimes recognize struggling students and offer assistance, many teachers who offer one-on-one help stress that the help is completely optional. "It is the students' responsibility to seek help," Citron said. "I do not impose it on them." On the other hand, AIS tutoring is mandated for failing students. "AIS can help scores of students when the concepts are aligned," Citron said, "but nothing replaces one and one assistance."

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Cartoons

OH, THAT CLASSWORK


ERICA CHAN

"I don't even know what to call this one"

By Robert Vinluan,
with additional reporting by Kiran Sury


THOUGHTS ON A FULL DAY

BY YUN CHO



FACE IT!

By Benito Kestelman

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At the teacher's lounge...

Why is my cell phone bill so expensive? I only made two calls before my teacher took my phone...

Yes, I'm talking from my new cell phone.
The quality's great and I got it for free!

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Need to Tutor AIS

More than a decade ago, the administration recognized that students needed a means of obtaining academic help outside of the classroom. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) was born from this concern. Run by the administration, taught by the teachers, and offered weekly after school, the funds that were allocated to the program gave life to an innovative idea. But there are still several lapses in the program that, if improved, could allow the funds allotted to AIS to be spent more effectively.

With possible budget cuts in January, Principal Stanley Teitel stated that the only per-session pay (the hourly pay for teachers who stay after school) that will not be cut will finance AIS. In order to keep AIS, funding might be cut for teachers who supervise extracurricular activities that take place after school. To ensure that other extracurricular activities are not cut in lieu of only moderately successful AIS tutoring, the program needs to be evaluated and improved.

The Spectator conducted a survey regarding AIS on October 13, 2009 of 211 students during homeroom. We discovered that the students taking advantage of this tutoring were not required to go, and that most of these students found the sessions helpful. Of the students who were mandated to attend because of failing grades, none actually showed up.

Last year, Teitel implemented a policy that required students who were failing any of their classes to attend mandatory AIS tutoring for those subjects. The intent was to reduce the overall number of failing students. However, of the 17 students who were required to go, only one was confronted about it by his (or her) teacher.

The survey also showed that all of the 71 students who went to AIS did so voluntarily. These students suggested that the sessions were most helpful when teach-

ers could help them individually rather than as a group. But since attendance varies from room to room, it is not always possible for the teacher to give each student the individual attention that he or she desires, especially in more crowded sessions such as those for math.

Math teacher Deena Avigdor has come up with ways to make her sessions more effective for students. Avigdor tailors her teaching to each individual student, answering specific questions after flipping through the students' notes, and staying after her designated tutoring time to help those remaining. At AIS sessions, she is responsible for four different math levels: Geometry Enriched, Calculus Applications, Advanced Placement Calculus AB, and Honors Advanced Placement Calculus BC. But given the time restrictions of the program, not all AIS teachers can be as helpful as Avigdor is.

To cope with the high student-teacher ratios, math AIS tutors should have more assistance from ARISTA, Stuyvesant's chapter of the National Honor Society. ARISTA already offers peer tutoring that can be scheduled on a case-by-case basis. In addition, ARISTA is already sometimes used in conjunction with AIS. However, the presence of ARISTA tutors at AIS is sporadic and to improve the productivity of AIS sessions, tutors should be present at all times.

To minimize the negative aspects of both the AIS and ARISTA tutoring programs, a more formal partnership between the two should be implemented. AIS and ARISTA tutoring would still occur separately, but with an option for students to combine the two programs. In this alternate option, ARISTA tutors would be officially designated to AIS tutoring sessions. In order for students to have this collaborative alternative, a portion of the budget needs to be allocated to ARISTA as well.

In light of the budget cuts, AIS should be reformed to ensure that funds are only going towards effective tutoring sessions, such as Avigdor's. To find out which sessions are helpful, the administration should keep track of AIS students' test scores before and after attending sessions; trends of whether or not students' grades improve would indicate which sessions are the most effective. In order to document the improvements in grades, the AIS sign-in sheet could be utilized to include previous and subsequent test scores.

A major cause of ineffectiveness for AIS sessions is the disproportionate number of students in different sessions. It is a poor use of our funds to distribute AIS funds to under-attended sessions. The multiple sessions dedicated weekly to math tutoring are overcrowded, especially compared to the few students that attend sessions for certain other subjects. According to the survey, of the 71 students who attended AIS, only one had attended drafting tutoring and only two had attended tutoring for music appreciation. While some tutoring should still be available for students who need help in subjects such as drafting, in order to save funds, sessions with low attendance should be scheduled less frequently until it is time for finals, final projects and Regents exams, when more students are likely to attend specific subject sessions.

By creating a better distribution of tutoring sessions, following the examples of effective AIS teachers, and establishing a partnership with ARISTA tutoring, AIS can be the helpful academic tool that the administration hopes for. With the constraints of upcoming budget cuts, improving AIS to its full potential would allow the administration's goal of addressing students, failing or not, to remain.

OP-ART



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



*"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"*

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FOR THE RECORD

- In Issue 4, it was incorrectly stated in "School Named for Frank McCourt" that the Frank McCourt High School of Writing Journalism and Literature will open on 83rd Street. It will be located on 84th Street.
- The headline for "Simple, Genius Haikus" was misprinted. It should have been titled "Simple, Ingenious Haikus."

Opinions

Of Leif Ericson and Lost Moments



By SARAH KAPLAN

Columbus Day has become a topic of much criticism in our politically correct, historically accurate society. We treat it scornfully: a holiday for directionally challenged sailors and small pox infected blankets.

But Columbus is lucky to be discussed at all. For every explorer or historical figure who gets a national holiday, there are hundreds who go unnoticed. Few students even realized that October 9 was Leif Ericson day, a celebration of the first Europeans to set foot on American soil.

It seems a shame that we close the banks for Christopher Columbus but don't even bat an eye for poor Ericson. But because the Icelandic explorer left behind no permanent settlements and few written records, this is the fate that he is relegated to. History, after all, is written by the winners, the people who are able to accomplish something permanent, to be admired by future generations. What is important, or so we have been led to believe, is not so much what happens as what gets recorded. We only count what gets written down.

This is a poor mindset for historians as well as for students. It is easy to become overly concerned with written records, the things which can be examined, analyzed, and judged. In class, we're most concerned with what's going to be on the test, whether or not an assignment will count toward our final grade, because those are the things for which we are held accountable. The rest of it, much like Leif Ericson, we put aside as irrelevant—an interesting anecdote, but of no lasting importance.

I too, am guilty of this flawed outlook. For three and a half years, I've been studying things

instead of doing them; I've allowed myself to overstate the importance of the things that would be written down. And I fear that I may have missed the tiny moments that, on the record, don't account for much, but added together are what make up a life. For there is a great deal of value in the anecdotes, the fleeting moments, in the lunches spent picnicking in Battery Park instead of studying in the library. In the books that we read just because we feel like it. In the ice cream cones eaten, songs sung, games won and lost. These are things we tend to ignore because they can't be written on a resume or calculated into a grade. Whether we experience them or not, no one will know but ourselves. Like Leif Ericson in his discovery of America, we will be alone in these accomplishments.

There is a great deal of value in the anecdotes, the fleeting moments

But I think, and Ericson would probably agree, that this doesn't make them any less valuable. This is something that you've heard before, and no doubt it will be repeated many times in the future. But it is worth saying. Don't neglect the tiny moments in pursuit of a bigger picture. Don't forget that for every major victory there are hundreds of smaller ones just as significant but perhaps not quite loud enough to be noticed. After all, Columbus died in debt and was considered incompetent by many Spaniards, while Leif Ericson returned to Greenland a hero. You decide which life was most worth living.



By TINAEY WANG / The Spectator

An Appetite for Apathy

could contribute to the fight against world hunger without any monetary donation. The site operates as a vocabulary quiz; for every correct answer, 10 grains of rice are donated to the hungry through the WFP. Recently, the site has expanded to include quizzes in other subject areas, including World Geography, Math and Languages. And while it's a great study tool for any high school student, the real reward comes from "seeing that I donated so and so amount of rice, rather than seeing you got this many questions right," senior Tina Kuo said in an e-mail interview. "What's awesome is seeing the photo of the rice bowl grow as I answer more questions," Kuo said.

FreeRice keeps track of its progress. "They have a Totals section that tells you how many grains of rice they donated each month," Kuo said. As of October 22, 2009, the WFP has donated 69,836,404,930 grains through FreeRice. The grains gathered in just two years are equivalent to over 3.5 million days worth of food for one person.

Though most extreme cases of hunger exist in the impoverished countries of Africa, as well as India and other parts of Southeast Asia where population far exceeds food supply, there are still cases of poverty and hunger in many developed cities today, including our own. Much like WFP works to solve hunger issues on a global scale, City Harvest was founded in 1982 as an organization to address the growing issue of hunger in New York City. According to the City Harvest Web site, "more than 1 million New Yorkers will access emergency food at some point this year." That means that one in every eight people you see on the street could, theoretically, be hungry and unable to feed him or herself.

City Harvest helps organize Food Drives every year around the city, and deals with the logistics of distributing food to the hungry. From Monday, November 9 to Friday, November 20, Stuyvesant will be sponsoring

its very own food drive. In order to be eligible for pick-up by City Harvest, we need to collect at least 100 pounds (which is equal to about 100 cans) of non-perishable food, which can come in the form of canned or packaged goods. In order to meet this quota, one in every 32 students needs to donate about a pound of food. The goal should not be to simply to meet the quota, however. We should work together in attempts to far exceed it.

One in every eight people you see on the street could, theoretically, be hungry, and unable to feed him or herself.

In the past, Food Drives at Stuyvesant have been far from successful. Apathy regarding community service is common amongst high school students, and the idea that one person cannot make a difference is a frequent misconception that causes many to shy away from charity work. But it takes less than a minute to grab a can of soup or a jar of peanut butter from your pantry and throw it in to your bag. If everyone actively participated in this Food drive, the benefits would be two-fold: we would be both helping to feed the hungry New York City community and learning to not take the food we have for granted.

Every six seconds, a child dies from hunger related causes. How many of those deaths can you stop?

Of Mice and Men



By CHRISTOPHER NATOLI

Spotting a mouse in public always makes my day. Whether the cute little critter is on the subway tracks or under the seat-radiators in the cafeteria, I always immediately point him out so that my friends and I can intently watch him search for garbage to eat. The rare creature scurries across the floor and nimbly climbs over any obstacles, his tiny paws moving in perfect harmony as his nose seeks out the slightest scent of food. Then he pauses,

stands up, and his head desperately twitches from side to side in the hopes of finding a candy wrapper or a finished bag of chips. But alas, he finds nothing. He disappointedly drops back down to four legs and continues his long search, scuttling out of view and ending our excitement.

But I'm afraid the story gets even worse. The poor mouse is starving, and he might never finish his hunt for food. Despite his adorable black eyes, little ears, and pink spot of a nose, he can only be as cute as a plush toy that has lost its stuffing and has been thrown into a washing machine. The little mouse is so emaciated that his skin is stretched tight over his rib cage. Patches of fur are bare or missing. He's living his last few days, and he might not even get a final meal.

This is the sad fate of the mouse population at Stuyvesant. Gone are the days of easily coming across a little melted chocolate in a candy wrapper or the crumb of a muffin in the hallway. With the new Department of Education's (DOE) ban on bake sales—which specifically prohibits students from

selling unapproved food from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.—mice are at the complete mercy of the cafeteria. But to a mouse, the cafeteria is nothing less than a cave of giants. How could a furry little guy even conceive of reaching a french fry dropped in the center of the cafeteria with so many students walking around, not caring where—or on whom—they step?

Mice just don't stand a chance. They're forced to choose between facing the extreme perils of the cafeteria, leaving their home—our lovely school—or starving. In an effort to ensure that students eat healthier food, the DOE neglected that mice need to eat, too. This policy is just another act leading to what I fear will be the extermination of our adorable mouse population.

Such a fate would have tremendous repercussions. We would not only lose our stunningly cute and furry friends, but we would also be losing the biodiversity that mice add to the Stuyvesant community. Without mice, we're left with the rather anti-social fish in the biology aquariums. Us students would be robbed of the experience of

A mutually beneficial relationship between students and mice, exemplary of the cooperation between peoples that are developing on the world stage today.

daily interaction with other species. It's just as important to learn about the ways of different species as it is to learn about other human cultures, because it affects tolerance toward other organ-

isms and a better understanding of humanity's role in nature.

Furthermore, these cuddly critters play an integral role in cleaning our floors of crumbs. They also occasionally entertain us with a temporary distraction when they sense that the lesson is dull. This is nothing less than a mutually beneficial relationship between students and mice, just like the international "cooperation between peoples" promoted by President Obama that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

One could argue, however, that these disease-ridden rodents need to be exterminated for our protection—a classic example of the discrimination known as "speciesism," according to which humans consider other species inferior. This sense of human supremacy must end here, or else that sad scene of a dead mouse curled up in a dark corner, so young that he'd fit in your palm, will become commonplace. It's our duty—not just as fellow mammals, but also as fellow inhabitants of Stuyvesant—to stand up against this injustice. The ban on bake sales is as immoral as it gets.

Opinions

Open for Interpretation



Michael Silverblatt / The Spectator

By SAMIRA SIDDIQUE

Doe-eyed and innocently-obsessed eighth graders wave to the camera outside Brooklyn Tech while waiting to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). One SHSAT contender claims that he wants to attend Stuyvesant in order to get a job and make lots of money. This footage is shown yearly at the Stuyvesant open house as part of a nine-year-old documentary that is intended to lure parents and prospective students into the splendors of our school.

Stuyvesant open houses attract hundreds of prospective students and their families, ranging from the mildly interested to the completely obsessed. There are two open houses per year, one before the SHSAT, and one after students are accepted into high school. Open houses are intended to give prospective students and their parents an overview of the school and what it has to offer, ideally allowing the school environment to appear

friendly and accommodating. But there is not much to be said about our school, besides the general facts, when many visitors are more concerned about being accepted than the architectural marvel of the seventh to ninth floor escalator or the multitude of classes offered.

Eighth graders, who have yet to take the SHSAT, filed into the theater with their parents on Thursday, October 22. Orange and teal-clad ARISTA and Big Sib members lined the back, preying to claim a row of visitors to give school tours to.

In four shifts, Big Sib and ARISTA members shuttled groups of parents and students around the school and, with 15 minutes to give each tour, the event was rushed and disorganized. There were frequent hallway skirmishes between tour groups, and the Assistant Principals' (AP) rooms were too crowded to visit—though the information APs gave was not so complex that the student tour guides could not give it themselves. The gathered sentiment of stu-

dents helping out was not of school pride, but of anticipation for the school work that needed to be done after the open house ended at 7:30 p.m.

Every 45 minutes, the same outdated footage was shown in the theater, displaying an SU president who must be in his late twenties by now, former Assistant Principal English Dr. Steven Shapiro as the head of the English department, chunky and uniformly beige computers from the 90s, and a football game in which the Peglegs exhibit success. Perhaps no one has mustered up the energy to update the introductory video, or maybe there is no need to do so. Not much has changed at this school besides some different staff members, fewer student rights, more students and newer technology. Our school's public image is still that of the best public high school in the city, and an environment for rigorous mental stimulation and competitiveness.

Many of the questions that were asked of Principal Stanley Teitel were factual: How many students are accepted every year? What is the condition of the air inside the building after 9/11? The answers: "around 1000, but there are about 200 who decide not to attend" and "Can't you hear the condition of my voice?" More personal questions regarding the student body and lifestyle can hardly be answered efficiently during the disorder of the open house, and are probably better left for more elaborate answers during the second open house, when the visitors will be students who may realistically attend Stuyvesant. For the informal open house,

no substantial information is given to the visitors that would dramatically change their willingness to attend Stuyvesant.

According to Big Sibs and ARISTA members, the same types of questions were asked: Is Stuyvesant competitive? Are there enough guidance counselors for the student body? One parent, who was persistent and stubborn in repeatedly asking the same ques-

guidance counselors, but we do have a competent group of them. And maybe your daughter is so self-conscious because of your terrible parenting skills (this is actually a bad answer).

There is no need to exaggerate unnecessarily or shy away from answers that might make the school look bad. "We are overcrowded, so that might not be a bad thing," Principal Stanley Teitel said when answering a parent's question about the possibility of students choosing another school over Stuyvesant because of Stuyvesant's competitiveness. The reason for Teitel's negligence to seriously answer dim inquiries by visitors could be because of a peculiar scheme to ward off students because of overcrowding. A more likely reason, though, is because Stuyvesant sells itself already. Compared to other schools, it is not as necessary for us to try to attract students and parents to what Stuyvesant has to offer.

It is a bit cruel to have an open house two weeks before the SHSAT, potentially causing more anxiety for an overwhelmed eighth grader.

tions when he did not believe the answer asked, "How do shy people survive at Stuyvesant?" He then winked and gestured toward his daughter.

The answers to these questions should be simple and honest. Competitiveness and work load depend on the student's time management skills and the teachers that they have. No, there are not enough

Missing the Dot



Joann Lee / The Spectator

By POOJA DESAI

In a New York Times article published on October 16, 2009, "The Secret New York Minute," the Metropolitan Transit Authority revealed that "every commuter train that departs from New York City—about 900 a day—leaves a minute later than scheduled." This difference might seem small, but for many students who have a long commute to Stuyvesant, taking commuter trains such as the Long Island Railroad, missing the train by one minute means being late to school by 30. For the majority of Stuyvesant students taking the subway, the unpredictable timetables can cause students to be late by one second or 20 minutes.

Lateness is something almost every Stuyvesant student has dealt with, whether it's because of the unpredictability of the subway system or the physical impossibility of running up 10 flights of stairs in four minutes. It's understandable that if instruction has started a student may be marked late, but many Stuyvesant teachers mark students late for coming into class a minute or even a second after the late bell. Yet, class hasn't even started. Nobody has really settled down, and the teacher hasn't even begun to talk.

Teachers who have such strict policies and need to have a specific time when kids have to be in their classroom should consider marking students late

two or three minutes after class begins for first period, and about one minute after class begins for classes during the day. These teachers usually believe the tardiness is because of idling in the halls, but if all the teachers just asked what floor students were coming from during the first few days of classes, reasonable extra time could be given and such assumptions wouldn't be made. Also, for many teachers, tardiness brings down a student's grade. When a student is late by five seconds 10 times, they haven't missed any instruction but still receive a grade that doesn't reflect the effort and time they have put into the class.

Classes at Stuyvesant are only 41 minutes long, so it's understandable that teachers would like to make the most of their class time. It's clear that when students are late, they may miss important information and useful parts of the lesson, and distract other students, so it is a student's responsibility to get to school and class on time. Because of this, a grace period should be implemented at Stuyvesant, but it should definitely be circumstantial. Teachers should only allow some students to come into class a minute after the late bell, depending on whether they have to climb seven or more flights of stairs to travel. The same principle should be applied to first period. While all students should be given two to three extra minutes to get to class, if a student begins coming to class during the grace period every day, it is clear that they are abusing the privilege, and their right to have a grace period should be revoked.

Students already carry a large amount of stress with juggling homework, class work, tests and a social life. The majority of us do try our best to make it on time, but it's about time for Stuyvesant to realize that it's okay if we don't always make it on the dot.



Harry Popnick / The Spectator

By JOSEPH PARK

Due to the increasing number of overweight and obese students in New York City, the Department of Education (DOE) issued a ban on the sale of baked goods and other snacks this year in the hope of improving "the nutritional quality of food and beverages available for sale to students at school," as Document A-812, the official ban, states. Part of their reason for the ban was that obesity increases "mental health effects of low self esteem, depression, and poor school performance." But in our school, the new policy seems to be backfiring.

Teams and clubs used to rely heavily on bake sales and candy boxes for fundraising. For example, both the boys' and girls' Ultimate Frisbee teams depended heavily on the sales of baked goods and candy for funds because they are not official PSAL sports teams, and thus receive no money from the school administration. Quite successfully, the girls' team made an average of \$300 dollars at each bake sale they held last year, according to junior Vivian Zhang. But without their fundraising support, team members can only make up for their losses by digging from their own pockets and from their parents'.

No Snacking Zone

The DOE will not solve the problem of obesity by issuing this ban. There isn't a bake sale every day; students pass by bake sales a few times per month at most. Cutting down on a few cupcakes won't fix the obesity problem. In fact, home-baked goods are often healthier than the food we eat both inside and outside school, and many Stuyvesant students carry candy bars in their bags anyway. The ban has little positive effects and damages the stability of clubs and teams.

A major point of Document A-812 is that the school is required to report all sales of food and beverages to the DOE. It specifies that food items cannot be sold during mealtimes. Stuyvesant's lunch periods stretch from fourth to eighth period, which is exactly half the school day. It is not easy to handle seven and a half hours with the DOE's sole offer of food during school hours: cafeteria lunch.

Stuyvesant students and other students in New York public schools, many of whom spend their lunch or free periods studying for an upcoming test later in the day, need this ban to be removed. It is absurd that the DOE allows the selling of food after 6 p.m., when most students are long gone and getting ready for dinner. When we really need the snacks is around the middle of the school day, when our energy is fleeting.

Stuyvesant is suffering rather than benefiting from the ban. No longer are there any enthusiastic voices yelling, "Bake sale!" to greet students in the morning. No longer are there bright green boxes of candy zipping through the hallways. No longer is there a source of funds for many clubs and teams. Stuyvesant's atmosphere has made a sharp turn for the worse due to a ban that is doing nothing to help the school.

Arts & Entertainment

Beyond the Hollywood Sign

By SERENA BERRY

The box office's current leaders fall under the same genres as they do almost every other week. Among the leaders

are two horror movies, or rather films almost entirely composed of special effects mixed with gallons of conspicuously fake blood. The other leaders include multiple chick flicks containing cheesy plots and just plain bad

acting. The highly anticipated movies of the year, including adaptations of classic books and Hilary Swank's *Amelia*, have received unexpected bad reviews. Where *The Wild Things Are* definitely

does not belong in the same category as *Saw VI*, but it does fall behind many of today's lesser-known movies.

These so-called "Indie" films have been able to produce fantastic stories with great acting,

An Education

An Education is about a 16-year-old girl, Jenny, played by Carey Mulligan, living in England during the 1960s. Her parents are pushing her to get good grades and eventually go to Oxford, but she would rather go to concerts and thus puts school second. One day, an older man, Simon Goldman, played by Peter Sarsgaard, begins to seduce her and bring her into an elegant world, the one that Jenny always hoped to be part of.

The movie highlights the importance of status and the place of women during the pre-feminist 1960s. Jenny dreams of being great, but her parents are sure women can only become teachers or housewives. They allow Jenny to get swept away by the charming, yet creepy, Goldman. Goldman, who is actually a con man, convinces her parents that he is a rich man so they will allow her to be in this relationship.

The excellent acting truly engages the audience. Mulligan carries herself the same way a teenager who hopes to seem older would, yet she still projects the character's youth

through various facial expressions. After previous supporting roles, Mulligan proves that she has the ability to play a lead role in a movie. The more experienced Sarsgaard creates a character who has the skill to appear mysterious and somewhat off, even through the most charming scenes. Sarsgaard is able to avoid depicting the typical predator, despite his character's relationship with a teenage girl. The supporting cast, led by Alfred Molina, Jenny's father, and Olivia Williams, Jenny's concerned teacher, embody the personalities of their characters.

Aside from the acting, the film includes great cinematography, a suiting soundtrack and impeccable sets and costumes.

With all of the technical aspects, from cinematography to acting, down pat, *An Education* still manages to be more than the sum of its parts. The film teaches important lessons about being yourself and not growing up too fast. It does not give in to any clichés, but does not try too hard to be different. It is not loud, but it has an impact.

Coco Avant Chanel



When most people think of Chanel, they think of snooty girls toting around designer bags and sunglasses. *Coco Avant Chanel* is a biopic about designer Gabriel Bonheur "Coco" Chanel, played by Audrey Tautou. The film depicts Chanel's humble beginnings and helps reveal the unglamorous life of one of the most glamorous icons in history. It starts when Coco is a child and in an orphanage. Ten years later she becomes a seamstress by day and a cabaret singer by night. She soon becomes the mistress of a wealthy man, Étienne Balsan, played by Benoit Poelvoorde, with whom she lives.

He takes her to ritzy parties and gives her expensive and over-the-top dresses. But Chanel goes against the social norms and wears simple dresses or even suits to the parties. Eventually Chanel's style begins to gain popularity, leading to the creation of her line.

Aside from telling the story of a woman who works her way up from rags to riches, *Coco Avant Chanel* also covers a tragic love affair she has with Arthur "Boy" Capel, played by Alessandro Nivola. The chemistry between the two is enticing. Nivola is dapper and charming. His character is the one who convinces Chanel that she can

do more.

Tautou, like she is in most of her films, is adorable as Chanel. Like Chanel, she is expressive, yet subtle. Her facial expressions tell almost as much as her actual lines. Tatou fits the role perfectly, fully convincing the audience that she is Chanel.

As expected, the costumes are outstanding. The outrageous, overly decorated hats and dresses of the upper-class women contrasted perfectly with Chanel's simple silhouettes and masculine details. Continuing with the success of the costumes is the success of the cinematography. One amazing cinematographic scene is at the end, during Chanel's runway show. The runway has mirrors and the reflections create an outstanding image. It is a very chic and ethereal scene.

Coco Avant Chanel manages to be beautiful even while chronicling the meager parts of Chanel's life. The story is fascinating and sheds a different light on the most influential person in 20th century fashion. This movie avoids the formulaic and clichés of biopic, which really allows this film to shine.

Every week, movies like *An Education* and *Coco Avant Chanel* are nowhere near the top of the box office, but in actuality they are probably the strongest movies in the theaters. These films can be seen in theaters throughout the city for the same price as the generic romantic comedy. So, when planning weekend trips to the movies with friends or families, try skipping *Couples Retreat* and spend \$12 on a unique movie instead.

Frites 'N' Meats: Saving Tribeca One Burger At A Time

By EMMA POLLACK

The mission: "Saving the world, one burger at a time," said co-owner VP, who declined to reveal his secret identity.

The action plan: "We're fighting the good fight for the peace-loving burger lovers of the world," VP said.

The latest addition to the fast food services in Tribeca, Frites 'N' Meats made its grand opening on the corner of Chambers Street and Greenwich Street on Thursday, October 29, 2009. One of the latest to join the fast food truck industry, Frites 'N' Meats' motto is "We ain't fancy, but we're good," co-owner VP said. The co-owners, who introduced themselves as VP and AV, provide a comedic approach to good quality food through the use of a superhero theme. The duo refus-



Frites 'N' Meats', a burger truck that takes a comedic approach to selling its food, opened on October 29.

high quality product and give it to the people at an incredibly good price," VP said.

Although the menu is based around two main foods – burgers and fries – there are hundreds of different creations that can be made. There are two choices of meat for burgers, grass-fed Angus at \$5.50 and American Kobe at \$7.50. Both of these burgers are much thicker and juicier than the thin patties that are often found at the neighboring restaurants. The burgers come with a choice of bread and six complimentary toppings, from mesclun greens to ketchup. However, the possibilities do not end there. There are additional toppings for \$.75

each. These include a variety of cheeses, from Gruyere to Brie, garlicky guacamole and apple wood-smoked bacon.

"I'm really excited for their burgers because all of the brioche buns are from Balthazar and all the cheeses are from Murray's cheese," junior Daniel Frankel said. Unfortunately for non-meat-lovers and vegetarians, Frites 'N' Meats does not serve burgers made out of anything but beef.

Although burgers are the truck's most popular option, their accompaniment, the French fries, are equally delicious. The fries, at \$3.00 per serving, are served fresh and display the characteristics

of a real french-fry, not the kind found at fast-food chains. "The price was pretty meager for such a large amount of fries," Frankel said.

Partially inspired by restaurant Pomme Frites, a Belgian Fries shop in lower Manhattan, Frites 'N' Meats offers a range of sauces for the fries. Priced at \$.50 apiece, the sauces range from a garlic aioli to blue cheese to a horseradish aioli. The sauces are homemade and created through methods such as pureeing the ingredients rather than using paste bases. VP's favorite is the sundried tomato aioli.

A huge factor that differentiates Frites 'N' Meats from many

other restaurants is the service level. "We view our customers as precious," VP said. The truck even already has loyal and re-

**"We're
fighting the
good fight
for the
peace-loving
burger lovers
of the world."**

**—VP,
co-owner**

**"The price was
pretty meager
for such a large
amount of
fries."**
—Daniel
Frankel, junior

es to be held down by "forces of non-burger eating" and instead aim to "provide an incredible

turning customers, despite being open for barely two weeks. However with the many customers come long lines, making it a risky choice for the short school lunch period.

Although there is no current student special, Frites 'N' Meats does sweeten the deal by throwing some candy into every bag. "We are committed to putting a smile on your face," VP said.

Despite being in business for just a few days, Frites 'N' Meats has already succeeded in reaching their goal. The customers have smiles on their faces and Tribeca is enjoying the succulent taste of a real burger.

Arts & Entertainment

Point

Fear of a Rap Planet

By ALAN SAGE

"Yet our best trained, best educated, best prepared troops refuse to fight. Matter of fact, it's safe to say that they would rather switch than fight." Ever heard a rap with an intro like that?

If you aren't a rap enthusiast and haven't seen Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing," you've probably never heard Public Enemy's "Fight the Power." And if you're critical of rap despite this lack of critical hip-hop knowledge, then for you rap probably brings to mind images of 50 Cent or Eminem. If you're slightly more indie, maybe Lupe Fiasco.

Well, I too would be critical of rap if those artists were the limit of my hip-hop exposure. For some, it's probably because 50 Cent and Eminem's raps are sometimes violent or inappropriate. But, then again, a lot of today's hip-hop hits aren't particularly graphic—I can't imagine anyone finds Lupe Fiasco's "Superstar" particularly offensive.

My theory: the real reason why so many people are critical of rap is that they don't have as strong an emotional response to rap as to other forms of music. You listen to Marilyn Manson, and you feel angry; you listen to the Velvet Underground, and, presumably because of the music, you feel mellow; but when you listen to rap, you're not exactly sure you feel anything.

But hip-hop can induce just as much of an emotional response if you know what artists to listen to, and how to listen to them. For one, you have to listen to the lyrics actively. You're not going to get any feelings from "Fight the Power" unless you listen to the anger the lyrics are crafted with. "Elvis was a hero to most, but he never meant [Expletive deleted] to me." In those lyrics, Public Enemy sums up the years of frustration

rappers have faced in encounters with the mainstream music industry.

Anger at injustice provides most rappers with the emotions that fuel them: N.W.A.'s "[Expletive deleted] tha Police" is partially about police too scared to patrol South Central; The Roots' "Lost Desire" is all about economic frustration; Eric B. & Rakim's whimsical "Paid In Full" might seem like a happy-go-lucky experimental musical collage, but its lyrics are also about economic problems.

Of course, maybe anger at decades of injustice doesn't elicit a response from you. Fair enough—maybe you like to keep your politics and music separate. But hip-hop can also elicit a response with its distinctive ambiances. One example might be A Tribe Called Quest's "Jazz (We've Got)." The rap is about writing rap lyrics and is full of off-topic puns. But the song has a strong mysterious aura that makes you feel mellow. It's not the same strong, identifiable emotion I feel when I listen to rock tracks—rather, in the words of A Tribe Called Quest, the group's "brand new twist" is "so low-key that ya probably missed it / And yet it's so loud, that it stands in the crowd / When the guy takes the beat, they bowed."

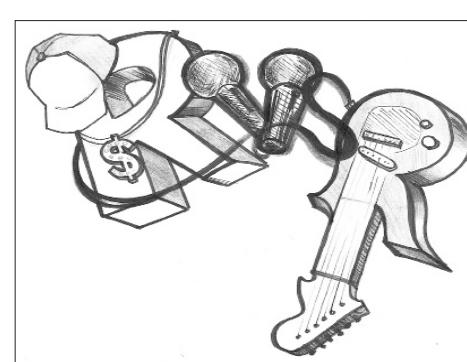
And then there are the raps that you're not really sure why you like. To me, Wu-Tang Clan's "Ol' Dirty Bastard" is brilliant. I love his quirky lyrics like "rhymes good as a Tastykake." He doesn't create a strong ambiance and doesn't offer particularly insightful lyrics. But his distinctive style and lyrics combined with his gruff voice undeniably make me feel some unidentifiable emotion.

So, before you judge hip-hop, make sure you're not listening to any, as Run-DMC described them, "Sucker M.C.s."

quick wit that rappers possess can sometimes be impressive. Eminem's "rap battle" scenes in the popular movie 8 Mile are fun to watch, but I'm sure Eric Clapton can come up with a guitar riff just as quickly. The lyrics of rockers Bob Dylan are nothing short of well-thought out poetry; take Bob Dylan's Desolation Row for instance: "Her sin is her lifelessness/And though her eyes are fixed upon/Noah's great rainbow/She spends her time peeking/Into Desolation Row."

Historically speaking, rock music has a much deeper and richer tradition than hip hop does. Old-time swing bands incorporated solos and rhythms sections. Elvis made popular rockabilly, a sort of mashup of rock and country music that took the radios by storm in the 1950s. Hip hop started in the early 70's, so although some of rock's popularity can be attributed to having 20 years more history than hip hop, there has never even been a rap concert that can match the cultural magnitude of Woodstock. The legendary music festival was marked by peace and love (as well as grooviness and traffic jams). Remarkably, there were not many accounts of violence or looting considering the sheer size of the audience. As the central music of troubled inner cities, hip hop promotes violence. Aggressive lyrics that glorify gang life and drug dealing should not be exposed to impressionable children and teenagers. Ice Cube's [Expletive deleted] Tha Police painted cops as racist punks, highlighting tensions in urban areas. Kids today should experience music the way kids from the Beatles' day did: through admiration and appreciation for melodies and harmonies, not violence and racism.

Hip hop has recently been honored in the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, which shows that the two very different genres can coexist. Rage Against the Machine has been blending rock and rap for years and Aerosmith partnered with Run-DMC to cover their hit song, "Walk This Way". That is all very encouraging but I'm still not yet ready to crown Run-DMC the Kings of Rock. Elvis will remain comfortable on his throne, for now at least.



By JAMES HONG

Why did Run-DMC, a pioneer hip hop group that was popular in the 1980s, call themselves the "Kings of Rock"? As far as I'm concerned, Elvis Presley was the King of Rock. The one and only Elvis (well, aside from Elvis Costello) should not be forced to scoot over on his throne atop American music for a hip hop group. Or should he? Can hip hop music really compare to good old rock n' roll?

First and foremost, there is a sort of disciplined aura surrounding rock musicians that must be admired. They dedicate themselves to their instruments, spending hours upon hours learning the chords of a song or mastering rhythm patterns. "My brother would go out at 7 p.m. to party, and when he'd come back at 3 a.m., I would still be sitting in the same place, playing guitar. I did that for years—I still do that," said Eddie Van Halen. Rock musicians also tend to be more diverse in their sound, incorporating different elements into their songs. The band Chicago was well known for complementing guitars with brass instruments such as the trombone and the trumpet. Some rockers have even utilized entire classical orchestras; a 30-piece string section played on the Smashing Pumpkins' hit "Tonight Tonight".

Hip hop music includes two turntables, a microphone, and not much else. Rapping does not require as much dedication as playing an instrument, although the spontaneity and

Real Barbecue for the Hurried Diner



Dennis Rim / The Spectator
Express BBQ, located at 27 Park at the intersection of Park Place and Church Street, offers a wide range of appetizing menu items despite its drab appearance.

By JAMES HONG

To the average diner, the words "express" and "barbecue" do not normally go together. Express BBQ, located at 27 Park at the intersection of Park Place and Church Street, could change that misconception.

The tiny venue is well-suited for downtown Manhattan's busy students and workers. At first glance, the eatery looks drab; it has a dull yellow awning with no design to the block letters. It also feels a bit dingy inside, as there are only three counter stools and an odd stump seat. The counter is lined with cheap decorative logs as if the owners felt they had to add at least a little Southern flare. The food, however, makes up for the aesthetic shortcomings.

The menu ranges from classic ribs to non-traditional fare, such as wraps. The eatery offers sandwiches and wraps of pulled pork, beef brisket, sausage and pulled chicken ranging in price from \$4 to \$5.50. The meat is roasted in an oven and carefully pulled by the employees. Paired with a creamy cole slaw, the sandwiches are mouthwatering but a little small for the \$5.50 price. The wraps, which cost \$4, consist of

BBQ meat, lettuce and a little bit of mayonnaise. Ribs are offered on platters, which come with two sides and cost \$6.99.

The sandwiches aren't as big as their price may suggest and the platters, while sizable, would probably cost too much for a student on a budget. The pulled pork, the most popular item on the menu, is especially good and surprisingly tender. Sides of baked beans, cole slaw, potato salad, macaroni salad, and corn on the cob range from \$1 to \$3. The sweet baked beans go well with the excellent iced teas, which are made with real passion fruit, mango, lemon, and tangy blackberry (\$1.29). I recommend any pulled pork paired with the blackberry or passion fruit iced tea. Passion fruit and blackberry are novel ideas for iced tea, and they nail it.

Although there is no student discount at the moment, head employee Alfredo Aguilar brought out a card, saying, "We're trying to work with these customer appreciation cards." With one of these cards, a customer can receive a free platter or sandwich on his or her sixth visit.

Junior David Gong was quite satisfied with what Aguilar called the "specialty": the pulled pork wrap. "This is better than I thought," Gong said between big bites. "I thought it was going to be like another chain restaurant."

Lines do form, which can be uncomfortable in the cramped space, but service is quick and the employees are friendly. While a bit too far to go for lunch, Express BBQ is great for winding down after a long day. They don't call it comfort food for nothing.

New Apps Make Facebook Even More Addicting

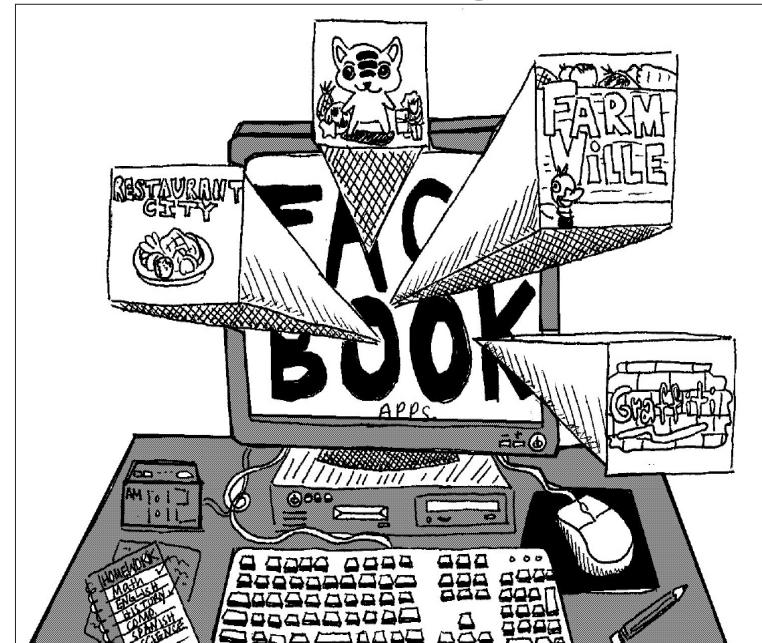
By JENNIFER CHU
and LEE KHO

Long gone are the days when Superlatives and Superpoke dominated Facebook. That was the Stone Age of Facebook applications. Now, with creative new apps such as Restaurant City and the thousands of silly—yet sometimes surprisingly accurate—quizzes floating around the social networking site, it is clear that we have suddenly entered the Bronze Age of Facebook.

There is probably a constant wave of new and very addicting features currently inundating your Facebook feed. This includes the wildly popular games Farmville and Pet Society, in which you can enter the exciting field of agriculture and own an adorable custom-made pet, respectively, without getting out of your computer chair or even leaving the Web site. It seems like a dream come true to many students at Stuyvesant, who are sure to find the break from their homework welcome. "I tend to use applications during my little studying breaks," junior Lorraine Ma said. "Sometimes it is just more important to be told by an application that I will get an A+ on my next test than to actually read over my notes."

That said, these online applications can also be a danger to students already fighting off procrastination from all directions. It is hard enough getting homework done with things like AIM and YouTube standing in the way, but with Facebook constantly adding fun new mini-games and activities to the picture, it's no wonder procrastination plagues so many students.

"Facebook applications can be somewhat addicting," junior



Doc Mou said. "Like other video games, it can take time away from academic focus." This potential for procrastination leaves many students skeptical towards even trying the applications, as fun as they might be.

"I don't often use most applications anymore because they're essentially pointless," sophomore Julie Rong said. "They're definitely a big distraction if you get too involved with them."

On the other hand, some users argue that it is simply an issue of time management, something all Stuyvesant students have struggled with. "I don't think [using Facebook applications] really affects my academic performance, as long as I don't spend too much time on it," Mou said.

Facebook constantly updates and adds features for the pleasure of its users. Games like Pet Society have some similarities

with other online games such as Neopets, indicating that Facebook—originally used solely by college students—is now being used by a much younger audience. These games make the site more kid-friendly in an attempt to attract the new generation of Internet users. However, some people, like freshman Amber Lin, regard them as too "childish" to partake in, she said.

Whether tending to your crops and animals on Farmville, customers in Restaurant City, or partaking in a quiz to see "how good tomorrow will be," Facebook applications give students the opportunity to relax and unwind. However, be cautious of how much time you spend on these applications, or else you might find more lost cows on your field than points on your next test.

Arts & Entertainment

Unearthed From the Slushpile: After Extinction of the Unicorns

By HYEMIN YI

"I woke up thirsty on an island in the sea." It seems as if, in those lyrics, the Unicorns foreshadowed the creation of their successor band, the Islands.

After the breakup of the Unicorns, band members Nicholas Diamonds (Nicholas Thornburn) and J'aime Tambour (Jamie Thompson) continued to collaborate on indie rock proj-

and said the upcoming album, "Return to Sea," was inspired by Paul Simon's "Graceland," a huge jump from the Unicorns to say the very least, it was difficult to say in what direction the Islands were heading.

On the first track of the album, "Swans (Life After Death)," the group does deliver. Opening with guitar strumming, the song is propelled into motion by the steady chords of the keyboards and the buildup of verse supported by Diamond's slightly off-key vocals until coming to a straight rock-out finale. Instead of coming directly back to the main melody, there are subtle twists and turns that keep the song fresh.

The quirky lyrics are still reminiscent of the Unicorns. In "Don't Call Me Whitney, Bobby," without a doubt the set's catchiest song, the bouncy instrumentation is juxtaposed with slightly morbid lyrics recalling "the sleek sleek skeleton" made up of "brittle little bones."

As if the group is unwilling to be predictable, "Where There's a Will There's A Whalebone" kicks off with a psychedelic vibe, built from the "oos" in the background and the dissonance created by the synthesizer baseline, before moving into a 'stream of consciousness' rap-off between two guys that don't seem to have rapped much before. With the variety of styles incorporated into the album, it's no surprise



The quirky lyrics are still reminiscent of the Unicorns.

ects influenced by hip-hop—something along the lines of indie pop. They formed the Islands and leaked two songs on their Web site to garner the attention of the Unicorns' fans.

Both of the songs retained the heavy use of synthetic sounds and self-referencing goofy lyrics characteristic of the Unicorns. But when the two came out

to hear the band combining country and 'calypso reggae' in "Jogging Gorgeous Summer."

There are still the silly lyrics and buzzing synchs, but with some horns, reeds, strings and even the use of the steel-

pan drum, the instrumentation seems to be used as a means of exploring the possibilities of the project. The ideas are disjointed at times, with many songs going off on musical tangents. Diamonds and Tambour have taken

steps to musical self-actualization. Unlike the inane albums that made the Unicorns fun to listen to, this album is enjoyable because of its willingness to explore the world beyond the island.

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Halloween 2009



Photos taken by Ruchi Jain



Halloween 2009



Sports

Two Brothers

continued from page 20

friend.

Two years ago, Raviv found himself in a lonely place. His mother had recently passed away after losing her battle against cancer and he was left in a situation that no teenager should have to deal with. Luckily for him, he had a friend to help him get his life back on track. It took Fernandez little effort to convince his parents to adopt his close friend Raviv, who had already become a regular guest in their home. Since then, Raviv has become the member of a new, loving family. "We get along really well and we're basically just brothers now," Fernandez said. "The transition of him moving in was pretty smooth and nothing could really have been better."

With the adoption of Raviv, the friendship between the two players evolved into a true brotherhood. "We eat together, sleep in the same room, share clothes, and go to school together," Raviv said. "All the stuff brothers do, we do."

The two have been friends since Raviv was nine and Fernandez was 10. Since they have become siblings, though, their new connection has become visible on the soccer field. "Living with Andrés has brought a new level to the way we play," Raviv said. "We always know where the other one is on the field, and I think that you can see that in the way we make combinations when we play." The two players function in harmony, complementing what the other does, a relationship that could not be achieved without each having a great deal of confidence in one another.

"You can really feel how much they trust each other just by how they share the ball," junior Colin O'Connor said. "I think they know that the other one will always be there to back the other up."

Although the two players have grown closer, the difference in their styles is obvious on the field. While Raviv is a flashier player and provides more offense, Fernandez is better at controlling the ball, as well as the team. As one of FC's captains,

he is responsible for making sure that the 11 players on the field function as a single unit. The stark differences in the players' styles are the reasons that Raviv and Fernandez are able to work so well together, according to first year coach Feliks Fuksman. "Arik and Andrés are both very talented and intelligent players; nevertheless, they are very different, and complement each other well on the field," Fuksman said. "Arik's strengths are more one-on-one breakaways and finishing. Andres is very good in a crowded situation and in controlling our team's tempo."

Their relationship has had a significant effect on the offensive output of both players. As the regular season came to an end on Sunday, October 18, Raviv and Fernandez had combined for a total of 13 goals in 10 games, roughly 40 percent of the total scored by Stuyvesant FC this year. Both players scored more goals than they had in any previous season. Raviv led the team in scoring with eight goals and Fernandez finished third on the team with five, behind senior Cody Levine, who had six.

After carrying Stuyvesant FC to a 7-3-2 record and a first round playoff win against Cardozo on Saturday, October 24, and after living together for two years, Raviv and Fernandez have developed a mutual loyalty to one another.

It comes with little surprise then, that Fernandez was the first one to defend Raviv in the altercation with Julia Richmond. He was shocked, however, that the entire team wasn't there with him. "I was hoping everyone would sprint over and I could be in the position a captain should be in, calming everyone down," Fernandez said. "However, no one ran over so I went slightly crazy." Nevertheless, Fernandez felt that his actions were justified. "I knew the kid was out of line kicking Arik," he said. "Something had to be done." Fernandez took the initiative in helping out his friend and brother, something they will each continue to do both on the field and off it.

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Sports

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens Set For the Kill as Playoffs Approach

continued from page 20

came back a few days later and crushed them on their home court. The team found it to be a "confidence booster," senior and co-captain Imelda Ko said.

"It showed us that if we get pumped enough we can beat whoever," senior and co-captain Alex Albright said.

One of the strengths of this year's team is the discipline and dedication of the players. The girls' focus can be attributed to the leadership of Albright and Ko. "They set a great example because their work ethic is tremendous," Fisher said. Both captains also noted that practice attendance has not been a problem and that putting volleyball first has really helped.

The Vixens have come together as a united team. "This has been one of the most fun

teams to coach because they all root for each other," Fisher said. Obviously, the fact that these girls are a tightly knit group has contributed to a successful season.

This year, Fisher has put more emphasis on watching tapes of previous games. The tapes are filmed by the managers, who are members of the boys' varsity volleyball team. For some practices, the team will simply go up to a room on the fifth floor where they watch the tape from their most recent game. The girls mentioned that the tapes help show bad habits that are unable to notice themselves during the games. Also, watching the mistakes in the timing of jumping for blocks is another facet of the game the team can work on during these meetings.

The team hopes to advance further in the playoffs than they did last year, when they lost in

"If we get pumped enough we can beat whoever."
—Alex Albright, senior and co-captain

the second round to McKee-Staten Island Technical High School. With a veteran team that features strong leadership and team chemistry, a city championship is a realistic possibility.

Girls' Golf

By SANGHO PARK

The Birdies', Stuyvesant's girls' varsity golf team, ended their season on Thursday, October 29, after a devastating loss to Susan Wagner High School in the first round of the playoffs. After going 7-1 in the regular season, with the only loss coming from a close match against Bronx Science, the Birdies looked forward to their playoff run and a possible city championship bid, only to be disappointed by another close loss.

Sophomore Sarah Soo Hoo won the first match for the Birdies, beating senior Stephanie Occhiogrosso of Susan Wagner 1-0. After that, however, the Birdies seemed to fall apart, something they had not done in the regular season. Susan Wagner made a comeback, winning three consecutive matches, good enough for a win in the Public School Athletic League's best of five scoring system. Sophomore Suzy Kim won the final match, but it was too late.

Some of the Birdies felt play-

"It was uncomfortable playing on an unfamiliar golf course."
—Jessica Plotnikov, sophomore

ing on Forrest Park golf course for the first time contributed to their loss. "It was uncomfortable playing on an unfamiliar golf course," sophomore Jessica Plotnikov said. "I think it was the lack of experience on such a course that led to our loss." Throughout the season, the Birdies alternated matches at Mosholu golf course and Van Cortlandt park golf course, which are both in the Bronx. Their playoff game was at the Forrest Park golf

course in Queens.

After a disappointing loss to Benjamin N. Cardozo High School last year in the second round of the playoffs, the Birdies had higher expectations this season. This year's team, after losing all its seniors, consisted only of underclassmen. The Birdies had hoped to use this, as well as the small size of their team to their advantage by working together as a close knit team, but they came up short.

"The worst part about the loss is that we were clearly the better team," coach and English teacher Emilio Nieves said. "It was a slow start which killed us and I truly believe that was the reason we lost."

Although this season ended in disappointment, the Birdies are looking forward to next year, when all seven starters will return.

"It's great to know that we all gathered experience this season," Soo Hoo said. "We can learn from this year's mistakes to have a more successful season next time around."

Although Hunter had more scoring opportunities, 5-3, and more corners, 7-0, than the Mimbas, the halftime score remained 0-0. The half was scoreless mainly due to Sze, who had five saves in the first half, and 10 in the game.

The Mimbas carried their first half momentum into the start of the second half. In the first few minutes, Bowie and senior and co-captain Rebecca Elliott both had shots on goal,

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas' Bid for Playoff Berth Falls Short in Final Game

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the 34th minute, senior Ashleigh Bowie was able to beat a Hunter defender and flash the ball across the face of goal, but there was no one on the other side to redirect the ball into the empty net. Again in the 35th minute, freshman Ellie Abrams took a shot at goal, which was bobbled by the goalkeeper, but there was no one to strike the rebound.

"We really came together as a team and we listened to each other, worked out things we've been trying to work out all season."
—Devika Gurung, senior and co-captain

but neither was able to score.

Hunter took over the rest of the game and finally capitalized in the 55th minute. On their first eight corner kicks, Hunter sent balls into the middle of the penalty box and hoped that someone would deflect the ball past the goalkeeper. This time, Hunter senior Gillie Collins dribbled the ball to the end line and chipped it over Sze's head for a goal.

Down 1-0, the Mimbas only chance to make the playoffs was to score two goals to avoid a loss and a tie. Sophomore Emma Hoffman, Elliott, and Bowie each tried to get a goal back in the 57th, 58th and 64th minutes, respectively, but none were able to get the ball past the Hunter backline.

Despite their loss, Lendzian was proud of her team's effort. "It was definitely a game where they needed heart" she said. "I think they did their best. They left it all out on the field."

"Even though it didn't have the outcome we would have wished for," senior and co-captain Devika Gurung said. "We really came together as a team and we listened to each other, worked out things we've been trying to work out all season."

This turnaround can be credited to the experience the Mimbas built as a team. "When we started off, it was rocky, we had a lot of new players and we didn't really work as a team" junior Anastasia Gazgalis said. "After the first couple of games, we began to move as a unit."

This is the first time in the past 17 years that the Mimbas have not made the playoffs. While disappointed, Lendzian does not consider this season a complete failure. "The season was an overall success because each girl learned at least some soccer skills or some life skills" she said.

Run DHC

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better than everyone else," Barnes said about running alongside Hyman-Cohen. "But eventually it starts to become a kind of motivation."

Hyman-Cohen's success is no accident, though, as he has proven his willingness to work hard. "What separates him, however is definitely his work ethic," Chiusano said. "He was a model for the entire time."

Hyman-Cohen "sets an example for everyone else because he's always at practice and he always works really hard," Barnes said.

He attributes his success to three main things: "Just a lot of hard work, and dedication, and all that cliché stuff, and coach [Mendes]," Hyman-Cohen said. "Coach Mendes's guidance has been invaluable to me. Without him, I would be nowhere

"I started running seriously the summer before my freshman year."
—Daniel Hyman-Cohen, senior

near as good as I am, and the team would be significantly weaker."

At the outset of his senior year at Stuyvesant, Hyman-Cohen's future is already looking very bright. He has been recruited by several colleges, including Williams, Bowdoin, Wesleyan, Haverford, NYU, and Columbia University. "It's a question of how intense I want my college running experience to be," Hyman-Cohen said. "Columbia has the best program by far, and therefore would probably be the most time-consuming and high-pressure."

Though he has yet to make a decision as to which school he is most interested in, "He'll definitely be a varsity athlete on any school he goes to, probably by his freshman year, which is saying a lot," Mendes said.

As he begins his senior year, Hyman-Cohen's sparkling ca-

reer at Stuyvesant is far from over, as he will try to lead Stuyvesant's boys' cross-country team to its second city championship in three years on Saturday, November 14. Mendes has high hopes for Hyman-Cohen's final year at Stuyvesant. Among a long list of very talented athletes that Mendes has coached in a long and very impressive career, Hyman-Cohen currently ranks second. However, "he should be number one by the end of the year, because he was only a junior last year and was already number two," Mendes said.

"He's extremely dedicated, he's very talented, and he has a great desire to win, which he does more often than not," Mendes said. With the dedication he has shown and a bit of hard work, Hyman-Cohen should have little trouble continuing to do so.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens Set For the Kill as Playoffs Approach



The Vixens hope to advance further in the playoffs than they did last year, and have been using new techniques such as watching tapes of previous games.

By XERXES SANII

As the regular season winds down for the Vixens, Stuyvesant's varsity girls' volleyball team, they find themselves undefeated and looking to go deep into the playoffs. Although the competition in the division is a little weaker this year than it has been in the past, coach and physical education teacher Phil Fisher has worked hard to keep this team ready for the strong competition ahead in the playoffs.

Fisher has set up plenty of tournaments and scrimmages against higher-level talent. The Vixens had a scrimmage against LaGuardia, ranked second in

their division, which they won on Monday, October 26. They dominated play and had LaGuardia off balance for much of the game. The girls really started clicking toward the end as they mounted kill after kill to put the game away.

All the players, along with the coach, saw the team's true fighting spirit in their matches against Benjamin Cardozo, the fourth ranked team in the city. The New York Post ranked the Vixens as on the bubble of the top 10 teams in the city. In the semifinals of a tournament, the Vixens lost to Cardozo, but

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Two Brothers



After Arik Raviv was adopted by the family of his close friend, Andrés Fernandez, the two brought their new connection onto the soccer field.

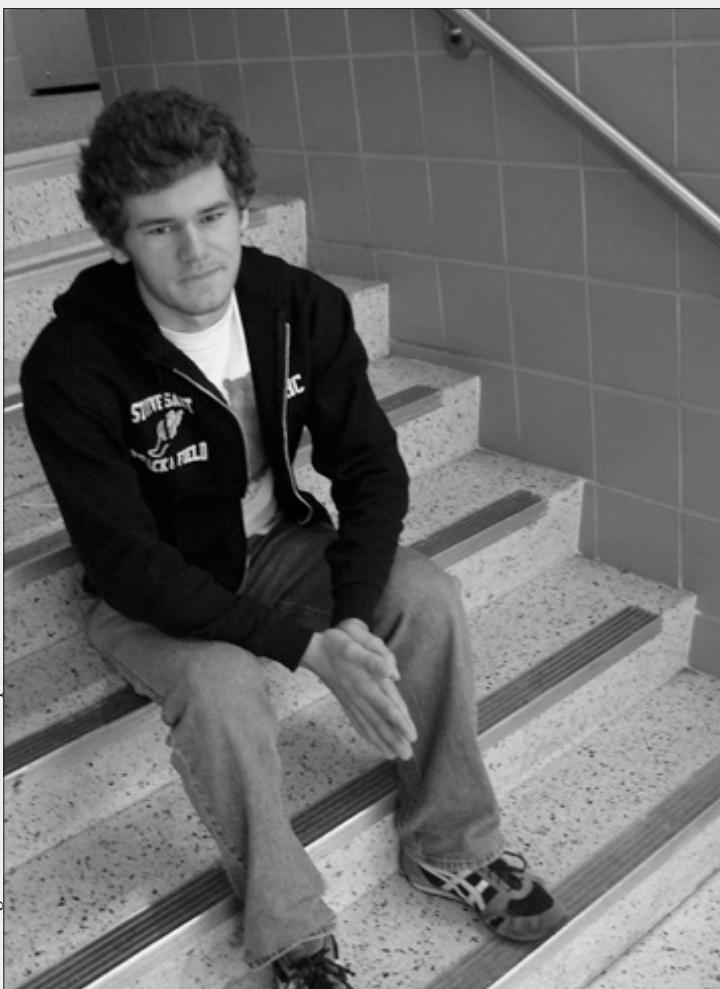
By SAM RABKIN

What began as a simple exchange of words between junior and midfielder Arik Raviv and an opponent escalated in a matter of seconds. During a Stuyvesant FC boys' varsity soccer game against Julia Richman Educational Center on Monday, September 21,

Raviv was kicked by someone on the opposing team. In an instant, senior and captain Andrés Fernandez was by Raviv's side, and had to be restrained from attacking the Julia Richman player. Then again, Fernandez has been always there for his closest

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Run DHC



Daniel Hyman-Cohen started running the summer before his freshman year.

By CORY BEHROOZI

He has conquered the Central Park reservoir. He has defeated the great hill on 103rd Street that so many runners struggle to overtake. His teammates follow in his footsteps, albeit far behind, but his dominating presence always guides them onwards and pushes them to run harder.

Every once in a while, there comes around an athlete who is truly special, and who can compete on virtually any level—an athlete like senior Daniel Hyman-Cohen of the boys' cross-country and track teams. According to coach Mark Men-

des, Hyman-Cohen is "probably the best distance runner in New York City—public, private, or Catholic league," Mendes said.

"I started running seriously the summer before my freshman year," Hyman-Cohen said. His father "ran for James Madison High School in Brooklyn in the early 1970s," and was his inspiration to join Stuyvesant's track team, he said.

Hyman-Cohen came to Stuyvesant ready to be a major part of the boys' cross-country and track teams. "[He] didn't so much come into his own as much as hatch fully formed," said Hyman-Cohen's former

teammate, Mark Chiusano ('08). "What I remember most was not the races, which he was always fantastic in, but more our workouts together. He was two years younger and most of the time he put us to shame."

"He came in as a very dedicated, very talented athlete, and he's only improved since then," Mendes said.

Hyman-Cohen immediately proved himself upon his arrival at Stuyvesant. "I think his first memorable race was in his freshman year," Mendes said, when Hyman-Cohen competed at The Manhattan College Invitational, a very prestigious cross-country meet "which brings athletes from all over the east, and from Canada, and sometimes the Midwest." At the event, there are usually seven freshman races with an average of 250 runners per race. "He won his freshman race and had the fastest freshman time of the day, so that was pretty special," Mendes said.

"I don't remember much about my freshman year, but I knew I was decent very early on," Hyman-Cohen said. In fact, he won every freshman race he ran in and became the only Stuyvesant runner at the time to make the varsity team as a freshman.

Hyman-Cohen's success and importance to the team continued to grow as his career at Stuyvesant progressed. "He provided the perfect balance for the '07-'08 team: keeping us in line, offering a solid companionship in workouts, and every weekend inspiring us with absolutely incredible races," Chiusano said.

His years as an upperclassman have been just as productive. "Daniel has been a shining example," junior William Barnes said. "At first I guess it's a little intimidating because he's so good and he's so much

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Girls' Soccer

Mimbas' Bid for Playoff Berth Falls Short in Final Game

By MOIN SATTAR

While rain pounded the pitch, the thunder and lightning jolted a second life into the Mimbas, Stuyvesant's girls' soccer team. When the Mimbas began their penultimate game of the season on Thursday, October 15, against Hunter College High School, they found themselves two points away from a playoff spot.

With a win, the Mimbas would have gained three points in the Manhattan A-II Division standings, knocking Hunter out and putting themselves into the playoffs. A tie would have given each team one point and a loss would have put Hunter five points ahead; in either of these two scenarios Stuyvesant's season would be over.

The Mimbas played the first half, but the game was called at halftime due to inclement weather with the score tied 0-0. Coach Suzanne Lendzian called the Public Schools Athletic

League (PSAL) soccer commissioner immediately following the game, in an effort to try to reschedule the game.

The PSAL soccer commissioner originally wanted to play only the second half, but later decided that the weather was so bad that the whole game should be replayed. "The PSAL and the soccer commissioner decided that it would be better for the girls to decide this game out on the field instead of deciding it by rule" Lendzian said.

Although they would have reached the playoffs if the game had not been rescheduled, the members of the Hunter team did not mind replaying the game. "We were excited to play," Hunter senior Sabrina Ghalili said. "We wanted to get into playoffs by our own merit."

Not everyone was thrilled by the rescheduling of the game. Pat Santamaria, coach of the Hunter's girls' soccer team, was dismayed to hear that his team had to replay their game against the Mimbas. "The rule states that

if you play one half, the score shall stand," Santamaria said. "PSAL, in their infinite wisdom, decided that we needed to play the whole game all over again. Why? How? I don't know."

The game was rescheduled for Tuesday, October 20. In the first half, Hunter held possession of the ball and forced Mimbas junior and goalkeeper Vivian Sze to make numerous saves.

The Mimbas' first scoring opportunity came in the 19th minute off the foot of junior Lauren De Vito, but her shot missed. Hunter effortlessly brought the ball down the field with a counterattack. Levy and Hunter freshman Magdalena Zielonka were able to get shots in goals before the Mimbas could clear the ball and end the threat.

The last 10 minutes of the first half belonged to the Mimbas. The midfielders and forwards were able to apply pressure to Hunter's defense. In

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