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State of SING!: Fewer Days, Higher Prices

By GAVIN HUANG
and KAITLYN KWAN

Scheduling issues, budgetary concerns and other logistical problems have led to fewer practice days, an increase in ticket prices and the three SING! tech crews sharing set elements such as platforms. In spite of these changes, all three SING! slates have not expressed concerns regarding the completion of their productions prior to the performances.

Principal Stanley Teitel shortened the number of SING! practice weeks from six to five in order to avoid conflict with report card distribution and SAT administration. Last year, Teitel implemented a policy in which all students who received at least three grades of "Needs Improvement" or one grade of "Unsatisfactory" would be prohibited from participating in SING!. As a result of the policy, over 60 students, including the leads from last year's Junior and Soph-Frosh SING!, were cut from the production.

To avoid the same problem from occurring this year, Teitel eliminated the possibility of holding SING! on the weekend after Tuesday, March 16, the day report cards will be distributed. This left

the weekends of March 6 and March 13 as the only other possible dates for the performance. However, Teitel also eliminated the weekend of March 13 because the SAT will be administered that Saturday. According to Teitel, had SING! been on that weekend, "on Friday night, juniors would have gone last, so that would mean they wouldn't have gotten out until 10:30 to 11 o'clock and would have to be taking the SAT less than 12 hours later," he said. "That wouldn't have gone over well with the students or the parents."

After eliminating both weekends, Teitel was forced to schedule SING! for the weekend of March 6, giving all grades a total of five weeks to prepare for their productions.

According to sophomore and Soph-Frosh SING! Executive Producer Kelly Kwan, the shortage of time has been negatively affecting her grade's SING!. "We're under a lot of pressure to finish, especially because we have all these freshmen who don't really know what's going on," Kwan said. "There's definitely a lack of spirit this year just because we aren't focusing on getting everyone riled up, but rather on getting stuff done. It's going to come



Members of the Soph-Frosh Jazz crew practice for SING!.

to the last week."

Junior SING! Executive Producer Daniel Frankel, on the other hand, said that his grade's SING! was progressing well. "We're in a pretty good state," Frankel said. "We got a late start and that did cause some stress, but we're dealing with it pretty well. Everyone is being very helpful."

Junior SING! Costume Director Tiana Stute agreed. "It's definitely more stressful than in pre-

continued on page 4

170,000 Dollars Not Taken From School Budget

By BEN GARNER,
YEIN KIM
and SAM FURNIVAL

Less than a month after the Department of Education (DOE) announced a one percent budget cut for schools in early January, Principal Stanley Teitel received notice that the DOE would not, in fact, be cutting the proposed 170,000 dollars from Stuyvesant's budget.

Despite this windfall, the majority of the reinstated funding will not be added to the spring 2009-2010 semester budget; budgeting decisions had already been made with the cuts in mind.

"The [budget] decisions were based on having the cuts in effect," Teitel said.

Teitel used a small portion of the money along with the 60,000 dollar donation from the Parents' Association to help reinstate personnel pay salaries and programs such as Academic Intervention Services. The remaining funds will be added to next year's budget.

According to Teitel, despite the fact that this year's budget is not being cut, lean times may be ahead. "We're anticipating a poor budget for 2010," Teitel said.

"For the moment [we are] holding onto [the money] so that [...] if they [the DOE] come back in two months and say, 'Just kidding, we actually need that money now,' we don't have to dismantle something that we set up," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said.

Students reacted positively to the announcement.

"It's very beneficial for the school, less teachers need to be laid off, [and there is] more funding for the clubs," freshman Sam McKay said.

"It's awesome because hopefully there will be more money now," junior and speech team member Sejal Khan said. "The speech team needed more money, so it's good."

Teachers were hopeful about the largesse, but wary due to the number of recent cuts to the school's budget.

"[Not cutting the money] is a good thing but the DOE could take it away at any time because that's how the current city administration works," math teacher Melissa Protass said.

"I think that it's still unclear whether the DOE intends to come back and take some more money in earnest," Grossman said.

Larry Barth Named Permanent Phys Ed AP



Howard Chen / The Spectator
Assistant Principal of Physical Education Larry Barth works during one of his free periods.

By CHESTER DUBOV

At the Student Leadership Team (SLT) meeting on Wednesday, January 19, Principal Stanley Teitel announced that Interim Acting Assistant Principal (AP) Physical Education Larry Barth was selected by the administration as the permanent assistant principal. The Department of Education (DOE) made his appointment official on Monday, February 1, the first day of the spring term.

Barth is currently filling a spot that was vacated when former AP Martha Singer retired last year.

"Mr. Barth replaced Ms. Singer as assistant principal

when she retired," Teitel said. "He has done an excellent job so far, and I am sure he will continue to do so."

Barth was selected through the C-30 process—the DOE mandated protocol for filling administrative vacancies in schools. News of vacancies are posted on the DOE website, and candidates submit applications online to a preliminary DOE selecting body.

"I had to apply online," Barth said. "The DOE chooses five candidates to move on to interviews."

According to Barth, he "was interviewed before Christmas"

continued on page 4

Fundraising Efforts for Haiti Still Underway

By KATIE LEMBRIKOVA
and KAREN ZHENG

Members of the Stuyvesant community continue to fundraise money for relief efforts after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. Stuy Skate for Haiti and the Pokémon Fan Club tournament are two upcoming events that Stuyvesant individuals and clubs have organized for the cause.

Social Studies teacher Muriel Olivi will host the ice-skating event Stuy Skate for Haiti on Friday, February 12 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Battery Park City Ice Rink. During the event, students who show their student identification cards will have two of the ten dollars they paid for admission donated to the Doctors Without Borders' Haiti Relief Effort. Students will also receive a free skates rental, which normally costs three dollars, and a large cookie.

The event was originally supposed to take place on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 3 p.m., but was rescheduled due to a poor turnout. Olivi attributed the event's lack of success, in part, to "everyone [forgetting] their money," she said.

Olivi also cited SING! tryouts as a reason for the low turnout. "SING! happened and as a result nobody came to the fundraiser for Haiti," she said. "After SING! is over, the rink will be closed so this is the last chance to raise money."

Aside from making an announcement on the Stuyvesant

Web site, Olivi also plans on using posters to advertise the event.

Students have positive reactions to the fundraiser. "I will certainly be there," junior David Levitt said. "I felt like the failure of the first fundraiser was due to lack of publicity. I did not find out about it until afterwards. I hope this rescheduling will bring more funds and people."

"The good thing about this fundraiser is that there are no advance sale tickets. You can just show up, show your ID, and go skating," Olivi said. "You can bring more friends and make last minute decisions."

Clubs have also raised money for Haiti. Members of the Red Cross club have been walking around with cans, asking for donations. The Animal Rights Club is auctioning off unused materials and prizes from the Student Union (SU) Winter Carnival, which took place on Friday, December 11, 2009. The Pokémon Fan Club plans on donating proceeds from its annual tournament, which is expected to begin on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, to the Red Cross Club.

Instead of being used to buy club prizes, this year's five-dollar fee, which is two more dollars than previous years', will be donated to charity.

This is the first time the Pokémon Fan Club will open up a tournament to the whole school. To raise awareness, junior and Pokémon Fan Club president William Tsui created a Facebook event

titled 'Pokémon Heartgold/Soul-silver tournament in support of Haiti' and plans to send out a message to the SU Facebook group to gain more support.

The SU funded the club with 100 dollars in October of last year. "Since we already have the money we need, I thought we should donate [the tournament money] to people who need it more," Tsui said. He hopes to raise around 100 dollars at the tournament.

"From the beginning of the year, William wanted to do a charity fundraiser," senior and Pokémon Fan Club co-president Victoria Wu said. "[The tournament] would unify everyone and it's a good cause."

"Helping others in the world can be fun, too," Tsui said. "The school needs to be more aware of the horrible things going on in Haiti. I see many students really taking action for this [but] much larger clubs can get the word out even more. They can make a greater impact."

Students are glad to see their peers trying to support Haiti.

"It's great that the Stuyvesant community is reaching out to help Haiti," sophomore Maggie Yeung said.

"[These fundraisers] make the student body aware of problems in the world," junior and Pokémon Fan Club vice president Jensen Cheong said. "They're special because they take things we do for fun and use them to try and fundraise."

Opinions

Article on page 8.

Be a Good Person (Everybody Else is Doing It!)

Tragic events like the Haiti Earthquake lend themselves to charity, but when does donating become a fad?



Article on page 12.

Arts & Entertainment

Slum Searching Finds its Beat

Stuy band, "Slum Searching," seeks jazzy soul.

News

New Photo Enlargers Purchased for Photography Room

By BRIAN SOU

Six new photo enlargers costing 2,000 dollars apiece are being installed over February break in room 338 to replace the two-decade-old machines currently in use. The enlargers were pur-

tributed 4,000 dollars. The official school grant writer, Melissa Carroll, personally donated 2,500 dollars.

Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm helped photography teacher Jan Juracek to secure the funds.

"I steered her [Juracek] towards the Parents Association and Alumni Association, who were very generous [with funding]," Blumm said.

The enlargers project a beam of light through standard 35mm negative film onto photographic paper to produce black and white photographs.

According to Juracek, the Parents' Association donated their money because "parents want their children to receive a holistic education. The only way that arts can thrive is through the support of the parents and alumni," she said.

The new enlargers were purchased because the old models currently in use have been discontinued, making it nearly impossible for the technology department to find replacements for broken parts.

"The problem with the old machines is, if something as small as the timer or the light bulb broke, we would not be able to fix it because the model has been discontinued," Juracek said.

There are a total of 28 stations in the dark room, each equipped with its own enlarger. Seven of the enlargers are currently broken.

The installation will take place during the February break and will utilize parent volunteers. Once replaced, the old machines will be kept for spare parts and eventually, disposed of and recycled as scrap metal.

"She [Juracek] plans on hav-

"Parents want their children to receive a holistic education."
—Jan Juracek, photography teacher

ing parents come in to help install the enlargers," mechanist Kenneth Levigion said.

Before the new machines were purchased, students taking Black and White Photography were asked if it was necessary to continue using the dark room.

"Talking to students, I saw how adamant each one was about keeping the dark room. The room is not only important for students education-wise, but also experience-wise. It provides a hands-on, modern day [analog photography] experience in this computer-driven world," Juracek said.

Students currently taking or hoping to take the class were enthusiastic about working with the new machines.

"We haven't done much the first couple days, but as the term progresses I'm sure we will be using the machines a lot. I'm pretty excited about that," senior Sherman Ng said.

"It's good to see Stuy's technology finally being updated," junior Peter Wysinski said. "I'm looking forward to taking the class next year."

"The room is not only important for students education-wise, but also experience-wise. It provides a hands-on, modern day experience in this computer-driven world."
—Jan Juracek, photography teacher

chased in December and arrived in late January.

Private donations, not school funds, were used to purchase the enhancers. The Alumni Association donated 6,000 dollars and the Parents' Association con-

New Honors Chemistry

Research Class for Sophomores

By POOJA DESAI

For the spring term of the 2009-2010 school year, 34 sophomores are taking Honors Chemistry Research, a new class taught by Chemistry teacher Samantha Daves, that will replace one section of Honors Chemistry. Students enrolled in Honors Chemistry during the fall term had the opportunity to sign up for the class, and all students that signed up were selected.

merous laboratory techniques geared toward helping them if they choose to enter the Intel competition in their senior year. Although students will not be required to enter any research competitions this year, they will be required to complete a research project by the end of the term.

According to Assistant Principal of Chemistry and Physics Scott Thomas, the class will continue to be offered in the spring term of next year.

"This way we can see how students are doing in the fall term and those who want to take on extra can take research in the spring," Thomas said.

According to Daves, she is teaching the class because she "has been wanting to teach an elective for a while," she said.

It is not yet certain how budget issues may affect the new class, but Daves is not concerned about the need for new materials such as glassware. "We have most of the materials since we've had classes like this before," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Since the class is new, however, Daves is unsure of what materials she may need. "I'm planning the class as I go," Daves said. "We do have materials, but since it's a new class I might have to seek out funding."

According to Teitel, Honors Chemistry Research was offered briefly at Stuyvesant about 15 years ago, but the class was cut

due to budget and teacher availability issues. While the class focused more on entering research competitions than the new class does, and required students to enter the Toshiba competition, the materials from the class are still in the building and ready to use.

Some students were concerned that only Honors Chemistry students had the opportunity to sign up for the class. "It's unfair that all sophomores aren't given this opportunity," sophomore Rahnama Ferdous said. "I'm sure students in regular chemistry would love to be given the chance to be a part of this class."

According to Daves, part of the reason that only Honors Chemistry students had the chance to sign up is that the students are familiar with working at a fast pace.

Although only Honors Chemistry students could sign up this year, Daves hopes that the class will expand in later years. "[The class] works at a challenging pace, but hopefully it will grow in the future," Daves said.

Other students had positive responses to the new class.

"I'm not signed up for Intel, but I think it's a great chance for students to pursue their interests at an early stage," Aia Sarytcheva said. "The projects are time consuming, and it's great that students are introduced to the work level sophomore year."

"I think it's a great chance for students to pursue their interests at an early stage."
—Aia Sarytcheva, junior

Students in the new Honors Chemistry Research section will focus on the history of chemical innovations and learn nu-

Robotics and Strive Hold E-Cycling Drive

By ALLIE BURNS and MEGAN HAREWOOD

The Stuyvesant Robotics team and the Students Taking Resolute Initiative to Vindicate the Environment (STRIVE) club are currently holding an electronics recycling drive outside room 209. The drive, which began on Tuesday, February 2 and does not yet have an end date, encourages students and faculty members to drop off their electronic trash into a bin near the room. The objects are stored in the robotics lab and later picked up by The 4th Bin, a company that specializes in recycling electronics safely by making sure that all toxic components are disposed of properly. Broken or unwanted electronics such as mp3 players, computers, cameras and cell phones are all acceptable donation items.

about recycling electronics. "It's important to educate people of how and where they could recycle electronic items," senior and Robotics team Marketing President Betsy Soukup said.

"We've been taught since kindergarten to reduce, reuse and recycle. Now as we get older, we see how it is significant."

—Ashini Ganesalignam, sophomore

"It's important to educate people of how and where they could recycle electronic items."
—Betsy Soukup, senior and Robotics Marketing President

"A lot of Stuyvesant people are environmentally conscious," freshman Rosa Park said. "As people learn about it, more people will do it, especially if outlets like Facebook are utilized."

The team is considering expanding its recycling drive to materials other than electronics, including cans, paper and other items. "If it's successful, there is no reason we should not branch out into other things," Soukup said. "At least until the end of the semester, we're just going to focus on electronic items, but if it's successful, I don't see why future people on the team can't expand it."

Students expressed positive reactions to the recycling drive.

"Every day, students use an enormous amount of paper, and so much of that paper is just thrown in the trash," freshman Danny Funaro said.

"By recycling, we make sure to take better care of our surroundings especially in the long run."

—Rudi-Ann, sophomore

The Robotics team got the idea for a recycling drive from its robotics organization, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST). FIRST was founded in 1989 to inspire students to get involved with the engineering and technology fields. Every year, FIRST gives the teams a game challenge, and this year it was to support environmentally sound practices. "Dean Kamen, the founder of FIRST, presented the league with a challenge to recycle," sophomore and Robotics team Marketing member Doron Shapiro said.

The Robotics team and STRIVE decided to begin recycling electronics because of the lack of awareness about electronic waste.

"It's a good start,

but people need to be more aware of where their e-waste is going," biology teacher and STRIVE faculty advisor Jerry Citron said.

However, recycling electronics has complicated protocols. Ink cartridges must be disposed of differently than printers, as well as other large electronics. "It's easier in many cases to use virgin materials even though it's very bad for the environment," Citron said.

The Robotics team decided to get other clubs in the Stuyvesant community involved with the drive and contacted the environmentally-oriented STRIVE. According to Shapiro, the Robotics team considered getting Key Club, a community service club, involved as well but did not have enough time to contact the club. The two clubs have been working together to get the word out

run," sophomore Rudi-Ann Miller said.

According to sophomore Ashini Ganesalignam, recycling has a definite place in the Stuyvesant community. "We've been taught since kindergarten to reduce, reuse, and recycle," she said. "Now as we get older, we see how it is significant."

Larry Barth Named Permanent Phys Ed AP

continued from page 1

by a C-30 Level I committee composed of Parent Association representatives, SLT members and administrative officials.

"We have an interview process where every candidate gets interviewed for the same amount of time," senior and member of the Level I committee Briana Last said.

After the committee interviewed the candidates, Teitel made the final decision to hire Barth.

"Mr. Teitel bases his decision off the committee's recommendations, but he can do what he wants," Last said.

As interim acting assistant principal, Barth implemented several changes to the Physical Education Department, mostly

involving communication.

"One of the first things I did [as interim acting AP] was put up the medical and consent forms for sports teams online on the Stuyvesant website," Barth said. "I also put up directions for filling out medical forms on the bulletin boards outside room 513."

As permanent assistant principal, Barth plans to continue

improving communication within the department.

"I'm planning on having 'Athlete of the Month' put up on a bulletin board," Barth said.

"I want to promote the department during the assemblies we have at the beginning of the year [...] and give younger kids more exposure to the electives the department offers."

Students were happy to learn

that Barth was being retained.

"I am overjoyed that Mr. Barth was selected as permanent athletic director," senior Lily Ostrer said. "He really cares about what's best for Stuy athletics and athletes."

"Mr. Barth is a great guy," junior Casey Lamountain said. "I'm excited to see what he's going to do with Stuy sports."

Big Sibs Restart Tutoring



Paola Sokayeva / The Spectator

The sign that hangs above the Big Sibs office.

By ANIKA RASTGIR

The Big Sibs Chairs restarted their freshmen tutoring program on Monday, January 4 at the request of Assistant Principal Pupil Services Eleanor Archie after she informed them that more freshmen failed their classes in the second marking period of the first term than in the previous year. The program pairs up freshmen in need of tutoring with Big Sibs who can assist them in their problem area. The tutoring sessions took place Monday through Thursday in specified rooms on the fifth floor and lasted from 3:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.. These sessions are over for the fall term, but Big Sibs hope to restart them later in the spring term.

The program was implemented two years ago, but was discontinued last year because "the need for tutoring was not as great [last year]," Archie said.

"[Tutoring] was an emergency band-aid that was needed [this year]," Archie said. "Big Sibs have a responsibility to ease the transition into Stuyvesant socially and academically."

Senior and Big Sib Chair John Connuck agreed. "Tutoring was not something we were planning on doing, but it is a real and effective way to help freshmen," he said.

Big Sib tutoring was also reinstated to supplement the already existing tutoring program of ARISTA, Stuyvesant's chapter of the National Honor Society, after Academic Intervention Services

(AIS), the tutoring program run by the administration, was cancelled due to mid-year budget cuts. However, by the time the Big Sibs restarted tutoring, AIS had already been reinstated with additional funding provided by the Parents' Association.

Due to the lack of tutoring

because "[freshmen] may have other obligations," senior and Big Sib Chair Alex Genshaft said.

Although 48 notices were returned, only about 30 freshmen regularly attended tutoring. The freshmen who attended were assigned to Big Sibs who had expertise in the subject area they needed help in.

There were about eight to ten freshmen in each session. During the first tutoring session, "almost all the Big Sibs showed up, but as the freshmen paired up with a Big Sib, we had more Big Sibs than we needed," senior and Big Sib Chair Adeline Yeo said.

Individual and group tutoring sessions were also provided based on the amount of students who requested help, the number of available Big Sib tutors and the number of students interested in a certain subject. The most popular subject areas included music appreciation, mathematics, biology and physics.

Although certain students were invited to Big Sib tutoring, any freshman could utilize the program. "We had students from an honors math class. They were not failing, but wanted extra help," Yeo said.

Both Big Sibs and students said they saw advantages to having Big Sib tutoring over ARISTA tutoring and AIS.

According to Senior and Big Sib Chair Tara Anantharam, ARISTA and Big Sibs both use peer tutoring, but Big Sib tutoring "has a personal level because Big Sibs know their little sibs better," she said.

Freshman Sidney Bynum, who was tutored by her Big Sib Dorothy Weldon in mathematics after she expressed that she was struggling in the class, agreed. She was not failing the class, but still wanted help in the subject. "Tutoring is most helpful when it is someone that knows me,"

quired to have strong communication skills, which further improve their tutoring. "There is a difference between someone who is knowledgeable and someone who is knowledgeable and can explain information well," senior and Big Sib Chair Avril Coley said. "When students are selected to be Big Sibs, they need to have strong communication skills."

The Big Sib Chairs hope to continue tutoring next year. However, because this was a "pilot program that was organized quickly," they plan to make changes to improve tutoring in the future, Anantharam said.

According to Yeo, one problem that Big Sib tutoring encountered was low attendance. The Big Sib Chairs attributed this issue to a lack of awareness. "We were not anticipating many students because of how quickly [tutoring] started," she said. Yeo expects the number of students who come to tutoring to increase as more students become familiar with the program.

"[Big Sibs] need to get the word out about tutoring," Anantharam said. "Guidance counselors and teachers should reference us."

Another aspect they would like to change is the number of Big Sibs who engage in tutoring.

"We ask that all [Big Sibs] tutor. However, since tutoring is relatively new, we are not enforcing this regularly," Connuck said. "All Big Sibs will be expected to participate [in September]."

"Tutoring was not something we were planning on doing, but it is a real and effective way to help freshman."
—John Connuck, senior and Big Sib Chair

opportunities at the time, Archie sent out about 50 notices to the parents of the failing students, informing them about the tutoring program and encouraging the students to attend at the start of the third marking period of the fall term. However, tutoring sessions were not made mandatory

"Big Sibs have a responsibility to ease the transition into Stuyvesant socially and academically."
—Eleanor Archie, Assistant Principal Pupil Services

Bynum said. "It is a little more personal."

Some students find that AIS sessions have too many students per teacher to be able to be really helpful. "It is harder to get individual attention when one math teacher covers several different classes," sophomore Angela Fan said.

Big Sib tutors are also re-

News

Pascu Wins Award for Distinguished Math Teachers

By DEVON VARRICHIONE
and ALEX WANG

Mathematics teacher Oana Pascu received the 2009 Edyth May Sliffe Award for "Distinguished High School Mathematics Teaching" from the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) in late December 2009. She was nominated by juniors Jeremy Chan and Yichi Zhang, seniors Peter Cha and Shaoxiang Wang and alumni Paul Fisher ('09) and Benjamin Hirsch ('09).

Pascu has been at Stuyvesant for five years and is currently teaching Advanced Placement Calculus AB, sophomore Math Team and Honors Algebra and Trigonometry. Hirsch interacted with her as a member of the Math Team, Zhang and Fisher were in her Algebra and Trigonometry class and Cha was in her Honors Precalculus class. Although Chan never had Pascu as a teacher, he agreed to the nomination.

"Ms. Pascu is a very kind and patient teacher who finds very innovative ways of explaining somewhat abstract ideas."
—Nick Rivera, sophomore

According to the MAA Web site, the Sliffe Award was founded in 1986 when mathematics teacher Edyth Sliffe left the majority of her estate to the MAA in order to recognize the "many talented and dedicated mathematics teachers [who] are responsible for their school's consistently high scores in mathematics com-

petitions," she said.

The award is given to approximately 20 high school teachers, based on recommendations by students who take the American Mathematics Contest 12 (AMC 12), an exam designed for 11th and 12th grade students. For each of the two times the test is administered during the year, the top three scores from each school are combined to form a team score. Letters are sent to the 60 highest-scoring teams, asking them to recommend the teacher most responsible for their contest success. Both of Stuyvesant's teams, one for each of the test dates, were among the 60. However, the award rules only permit one teacher nomination per school, so the six students worked together to choose Pascu.

Previous recipients from Stuyvesant include mathematics teachers Richard Geller in 1990, Richard Rothenberg in 1995, Iftimie Simion in 1999, Daniel Jaye in 2001, Joseph Stern in 2004 and 2008 and Richard Cocoros in 2007. Of those six, only Geller and Cocoros are still teaching at Stuyvesant. Stern, who is currently pursuing his doctorate at Columbia University, is one of only two teachers from New York State who received the award twice.

"It's really special when the top kids on the math team basically say thank you for your work and guidance over the years," Cocoros said.

This year's nomination process occurred during the fall of the 2009-2010 school year, although the nominees were chosen based on the AMC scores from the previous school year. Pascu was not aware of her nomination until October 2009, a month after the students had submitted the nomination. She was notified through a letter sent by the MAA in late December. A total of 22 teachers, out of the 4,000 nominees, received the award this year.

"The students organize it themselves, which is why this award means so much," Pascu said. "That actually means a lot more than even the award [because] they went through so much trouble."

She cited Larry Zimmerman, her former mathematics teacher at Brooklyn Technical High

School, as her inspiration for becoming a mathematics teacher. "I remember him winning this award, which is part of the reason why this means a lot [to me]," she said. "We nominated him for it and he won [in 2002]," she said.

As part of her reward, Pascu received a certificate of recognition, a pin, a \$50 dollar prize, a letter of congratulations, a one-year membership to the MAA and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and multiple subscriptions to the journal Math

"I am always glad to see good teachers recognized for what they do."
—Paul Fisher ('09)

Horizons, which will be made available to students enrolled in Math Research classes. This will prevent the math department from having to purchase its usual annual subscription to the journal.

Principal Stanley Teitel expressed his approval of both Pascu's recognition and the positive effect he believes it will have on the mathematics department's reputation. "The Sliffe award is a tremendous honor," he said. "Ms. Pascu's recognition only adds to how good we think the math department really is."

Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara was also supportive. "Ms. Pascu is a phenomenal teacher and a wonderful, caring person," Ferrara said. "She has a talent for questioning so carefully to get the response she needs from the students to make sure that they understand the concepts."

Other teachers were not surprised that she won the award.

According to English teacher Vito Bonsignore, who taught



Mathematics teacher Oana Pascu (above) was recently awarded an award in Distinguished High School Mathematics Teaching.

John Mennell / The Spectator

we nominated her without telling her."

"I am always glad to see good teachers recognized for what they do," Fisher said. "You guys are lucky to have people like [Pascu] at your school. She works really hard for her students and I'm glad we could do something to let people know."

Though Pascu was only nominated by six students, others were just as supportive of her teaching.

"Ms. Pascu is a very kind and patient teacher who finds very innovative ways of explaining somewhat abstract ideas," said sophomore Nick Rivera, who is in Pascu's Math Team class. "She is definitely a bright mathematician and she is just about always able to answer questions that students come up with."

Grant Received for New Computers

By BERNICE CHAN

Stuyvesant High School received an 80,000 dollar grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) which will go toward purchasing eighty to ninety new Dell computers for the Computer Aided Design (CAD) rooms. The installation of the computers will occur by either the end of spring break or September, 2010.

The LMDC was created by then-Governor George Pataki and then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, to help rebuild and revitalize the area of Lower Manhattan south of Houston Street. Every public high school in Lower Manhattan was given the opportunity, by the corporation, to use 80 to 90 thousand dollars of grant money for their school.

Assistant Principal Technology Services Edward Wong wrote a proposal to LMDC last summer to use Stuyvesant's grant money to purchase new computers in the two CAD rooms. The proposal was approved and new Dell computers were sent to the school last November. These computers are currently

being stored in the basement until there is time to install them.

"Students are lucky that they don't have to deal with the old computers next year,"
—Katharina Fung, sophomore

Stuyvesant offers several classes which make use of CAD, including the required one-semester sopho-

more technology course Technical Drawing (TD1) and other more advanced courses.

Students who take TD1 classes begin the semester learning drafting techniques by hand and progress to using the CAD program, Cadkey, in the latter half of the term. Students use Cadkey to design objects, shapes and figures in different views and dimensions. The program is often used for substantive endeavors such as final projects.

Principal Stanley Teitel was glad these "small machines with beautiful monitors" would be replacing the bulky computers currently in the two CAD rooms.

Many students who have taken classes which use CAD had positive reactions toward the change.

"The computer I had to use in Technical Drawing this term was ancient," sophomore Meisze Yau said. "I'm glad we're getting new ones."

"Students are lucky that they don't have to deal with the old computers next year," sophomore Katharina Fung said.

However, other students who are more experienced with CAD felt that new computers were un-

necessary.

"New computers are nice, but they don't make much of a difference in how much we can do in the class," senior Jason Shum said. "We can still work on the old computers without a problem."

"We're still using the same programs, so there won't be that big of a difference," junior Jacky Kuang said.

Freshmen, on the other hand, are looking forward to using the new computers in their drafting classes next year.

"I'm more excited to take the classes next year now," freshman Ada Huang said.

Some staff members are looking forward to the installation of the new computers.

Technology teacher Steven Rothenberg feels the computers will "enhance the CAD experience of the students at the entry level and in the more advanced architectural classes," he said.

"New computers are going to really help the students experience CAD on an individual basis and it will increase the ability for the teachers to help them because the new equipment will have less down time," Rothenberg said. "I feel the

"I feel the potential of the Technology Department will be greatly increased and more state of the art,"
—Steven Rothenberg, technology teacher

potential of the Technology Department will be greatly increased and more state of the art."

The State of SING!

SING!—Missing its Tune

By YING YU SITU

Every year around February, the rivalry between juniors, seniors and "soph-frosh"—sophomores and freshmen—is set ablaze once more. With school spirit fresh in the air, Stuyvesant's hallways are home to the sweet sounds of a practicing choir and the heavy vibrations from a dance group hard at work, all of which mingle with the clattering of paintbrushes against plastic quarts and the drama coming from a cast rehearsal as they prepare for the annual theater competition: SING!

Yet this year, the notes seem to have fallen flat and the vibrations dulled as Stuyvesant students fall victim to a lack of SING! spirit and are hesitant to participate in the upcoming performances.

Much of this hesitation seems to stem from a scheduling conflict. All auditions were scheduled right before Regents and Finals Examination week began. "I wasn't sure if I should have gone to the chorus tryouts since I wasn't fully prepared for the Finals," freshman Jennifer Ly said. "If notice had gotten around sooner about the tryouts, I would have studied beforehand, and then I wouldn't have hesitated to try out."

To further complicate the scheduling, word of this year's SING! didn't get around to "most students until January 20," said Ly, when a mass of neon green signs invaded Stuyvesant's hallways, announcing "Boy Band tryouts" or "Tech crew sign up." Freshman Tiffany Phan described these announcements as having sprung up "overnight," she said.

Most of the publicizing was, in fact, done over popular the social networking site, Facebook.

"My updates from SING! primarily came from group messages and wall posts," junior Anna Hua said. "A better approach to getting the word around faster would have been to put more signs around the school about

a week or so before all the tryouts."

"I was surprised when I found out the cast auditions were the next day, but even more surprised when I found out that people knew ahead of time from Facebook updates," sophomore Cathy Fung said. "I don't have a Facebook."

SING! is also extremely time consuming and, therefore, poses a problem for many juniors who

Yet what truly makes it complicated for junior participation is the tight scheduling. Because Principal Teitel wants the performances before report card distribution and the SAT, the shows are set to happen on March 3, 5 and 6. Meanwhile, the 2010 SAT is scheduled for March 13, 2010. Juniors who are participating in SING! and plan to take the SAT the following week may struggle to manage their hectic sched-

ules. "We will have to be a little conservative about how much wood we use. We're planning on collaborating with the other Tech crews in order to use as little wood as possible as a whole," junior and junior Tech Crew director Annie Kim said in an e-mail interview. "Our sets will not look exactly the same but we're trying hard to use as many similar set pieces as possible."

But for some students, the major issue is simply a lack of interest in the event. "A lot of my friends are doing it [...] but I'm not sure it's my kind of thing," freshman Sarah Dinhofer said. "I'd rather have an extracurricular that I like. I don't consider myself good at acting and I don't want to do backstage work."

Senior Eric Shan agreed. "I wasn't interested last year, and I'm not interested this year," Shan said. "Everyone I know says it's fun and exciting, but I just don't see the appeal."

Regardless of this year's setbacks, students from each grade still had something motivating to say about the coming performance, despite the diminished SING! spirit.

"Soph-Frosh SING! will show the best of the sophomores and freshmen this year since many of us are dedicated to making it a great show," said Rafita.

"Junior SING! is definitely going to win. [...] We have the best crews with the most experience. And regardless of these setbacks, we still have the grade-to-grade competition and that makes it even more exciting," said Kim.

"We will definitely be able to pull through and give a spectacular performance," said Cen. "Senior SING! will most definitely win this."

wish to participate.

"When SING! practices officially begin we'll probably be in the building until 6:00 at the latest. In the days right before SING! we'll probably stay later," sophomore and Soph-Frosh coordinator Ahlam Rafita said in an e-mail interview. "[We have practices] everyday we have school, in addition to all-days during the weekend and during the upcoming vacation. Practices continue even during the week of the performance."

ules.

"If there wasn't so much work this year, I would definitely get into SING!" said junior Jenny Lee. "Lots of my friends and I have already registered for the March SATs, and even though we prepped beforehand, this is the best time to actually get more practice in it."

Aside from time issues, budget cuts are also another contributing factor.

"All grades are going to be affected," said Rafita. "In addi-

Fewer Days, Higher Prices

continued from page 1

vious years, but I think that with our past experience, things will work out," she said.

In addition to fewer practice days, SING! ticket prices for the weekend performances have been increased from 20 dollars to 25 dollars. According to Student Union (SU) President Paul Lee, tickets for Wednesday's New Haven performance will remain at 15 dollars.

"It was first Mr. Teitel's proposal. He mentioned that prices hadn't been changed in ten years, and he assured us that this wouldn't be something changed on a yearly basis," Lee said. "It will probably remain at this price for the next couple of SINGs."

The increase will bring in an estimated extra 2,000 dollars, which will help clubs and publications after a financially difficult year. The SU will also be selling food during the performances. According to Lee, the money made from SING! will be distributed amongst clubs and publications, as well as used for various other SU functions.

Another impact on SING! is that all three tech crews will now have to share platforms for their performances. According to Senior SING! Tech Director Jack Greisman, the loss of technology teacher Robert Rosen as Tech faculty advisor, coupled with the shortage of time and the tighter schedule of art teacher Leslie Bernstein, the remaining Tech faculty advisor, led to the change.

"We made some sacrifices with how we usually do things. We're trying to consolidate our sets, but we're also trying to use what's available. Part of that is sharing platforms if we need to," Senior SING! Tech Director Jack Greisman said. "However, they're still going to be unique to each of the sets and each of the performances. Basically it's working out which side of the platforms will be facing the audience. So even though we're sharing the platforms, no one should be able to notice."

According to sophomore and Soph-Frosh SING! Tech Director Liam Downs-Tepper, his tech crew has been struggling to complete its sets on time. "We're trying to collaborate with them," he said. "But we don't have as much time to work, we can't work when we do have time and we don't have the materials to do the work."

However, the recent changes have not put a damper on those participating in SING!

"I don't see any foreseeable problems," Junior SING! Fan Dance Director Matthew Zin said. "Everything's going according to plan."

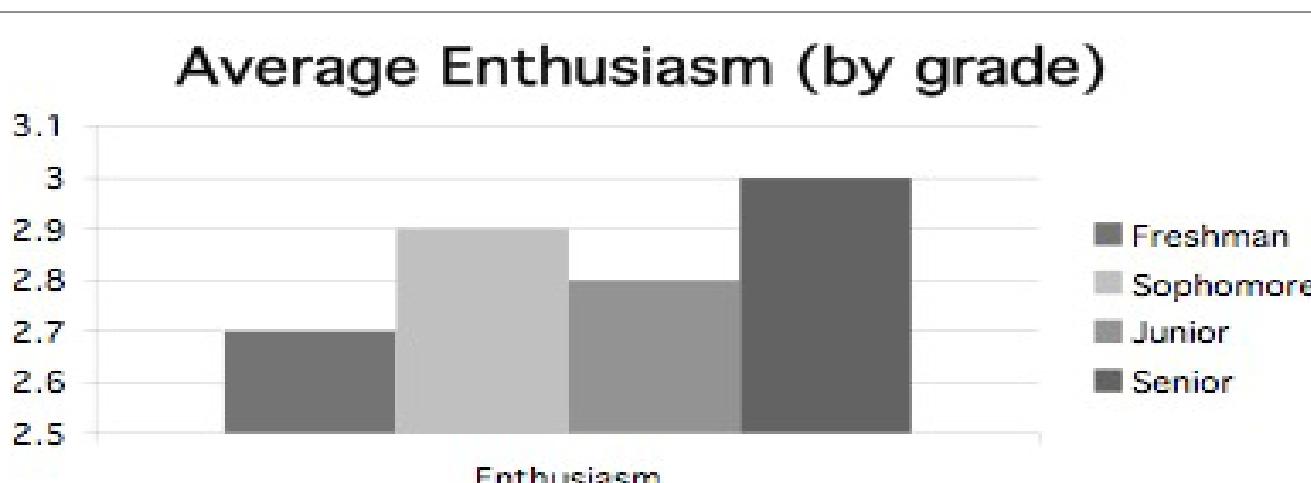
Senior SING! Executive Producer Jenny Che agreed. "So far, I haven't seen any major effects that [the changes] have had on our SING!. In spite of all this, we're still getting work done. People are pressed to work harder and work faster, and they're very passionate about what they're doing," she said. "In many ways, this shows people what our potential is."

"Stuyvesant students tend to work very well under pressure," Teitel said. "So I'm not too worried about that. [And] this way everyone who wants to participate will get the chance to participate this year."

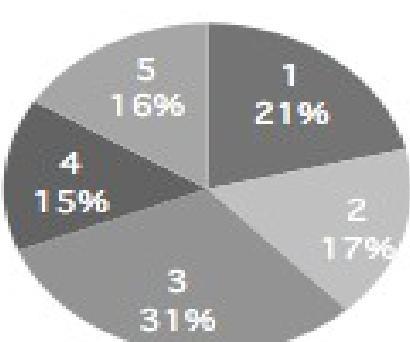


Sing_Lines

Average Enthusiasm (by grade)



Overall Enthusiasm (1: not at all enthusiastic; 5: extremely enthusiastic)



*A total of 314 students were surveyed.

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SAT I - 20 sessions / 80 hours

September 12, 2009 ~ End of January 2010

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- ② Saturday Morning Class
9:30 AM ~ 1:30 PM (5 different levels available)
- ③ Saturday Afternoon Class
2:00 PM ~ 6:00 PM (2 different levels available)

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Sunday classes begin on August 23, 2009.

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September 12, 2009 ~ January 23, 2010 / Saturdays and Sundays

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7th Grade**SSAT, ISEE, SHSAT**9:30 AM
~1:30 PM**8th Grade****9th Grade****PSAT + Essay**

9:30 AM~1:30 PM

10th Grade**PSAT + Essay or SAT I**

9:30 AM~1:30 PM

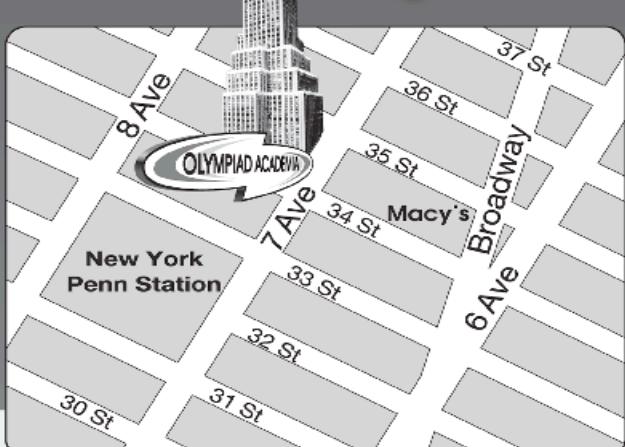
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 Sunday Class September 13th Start / 3:00 PM~6:00 PM – 21 sessions / 63 hours**U.S. Physics Team:**

Saturday Class Starting October / 3:00 PM~6:00 PM

USA Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO):**AMC & AIME :** September 12, 2009 ~ February 7, 2010 / 48 hours**USAMO :** Starting February / 48 hours**AMC 10 (2/9 Test)**

Tuesday / Thursday Class	5:00 PM~7:00 PM
Saturday Class	1:00 PM~3:00 PM

AMC 12 (2/9 Test) & AIME (3/16 Test)

Tuesday / Thursday Class	5:00 PM~7:00 PM
Saturday Class	1:00 PM~3:00 PM
Sunday Class	1:00 PM~3:00 PM

USAMO (4/27 Test)

Saturday Class	3:00 PM~5:00 PM
Sunday Class	3:00 PM~5:00 PM

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Features

From the Library to the Bowery



Howard Chen / The Spectator

A student preforms at Open Mic held at The Bowery Poetry Club.

By REBECCA ELLIOT

Open Mic performers abandoned the familiar library setting last month for a more poetic atmosphere. The Bowery Poetry Club (BPC) hosted Stuyvesant's Open Mic for the first time on Friday, January 22. The BPC, located at 308 Bowery (between 1st and 2nd streets), is a venue for poets, musicians and actors alike to share their work. The Open Mic, which was open to the public, began at 4:30 and ran until 5:40 p.m.

Sixteen performers read or sang poetry, prose and original musical numbers on topics ranging from fleeting crushes to the difficulty of perfecting the art of storytelling. Performers read from a stage at the back of the BPC and the audience sat in collapsible metal chairs that backed into the small café at the BPC's entrance. The performances were also broadcast live on the Bowery's Live Webcast at www.bowerypoetry.com.

Senior Paola Sokayeva, who worked at the BPC from September to December 2009, coordinated the event with the help of Gary Glazner, the Managing Director of Bowery Arts and Science, the non-profit wing of the BPC. She brought the idea of holding Open Mic there to the attention of senior and Open Mic Coordinator Claire Littlefield.

"I was telling him [Glazner] that we have a pretty active writing community and I told him about our Open Mics," Sokayeva said.

Glazner was enthusiastic about the idea largely because of Sokayeva's internship. "Having the Stuyvesant Open Mic was a result of Paola's work as an intern for the Bowery Poetry Club. Of-

ten our intern's end their terms with an event at the BPC," Glazner said.

Upon finding out about the opportunity to perform at the new venue, "I was really excited," Littlefield said. "I thought that was fantastic. And I think actually it was shortly after John Sands and Jeanann Verlee came to Stuy. So personally I was more aware of the fact that this was there." Littlefield read a poem about unrequited love titled "Peanuts." Sands and Verlee are slam poets who visited Stuyvesant earlier this year.

Regular Open Mic attendees were particularly excited about being able to read at the BPC.

"I was really excited because I thought it was pretty great that Claire and Paola were able to arrange that and bring our Open Mics, which are often so incredible, to a larger audience," said senior Allegra Wiprud, who read a biographical piece titled "Girls."

However, the audience was not as large as anticipated—on the Facebook page for the event, 63 people said they would be attending, but only around 30 showed up. This was disappointing, but did not have an overwhelmingly negative effect on the afternoon.

"I was expecting there to be an overwhelming amount of people there. I guess people kind of forgot about it," said senior Kyla Alterman, who read a spoken word poem titled "Dear Breakfast Cart Tea Man." "But I think the people who were there really enjoyed it."

Wiprud shared a similar sentiment. "I was kind of disappointed when I got there that it was only a Stuy audience," she said. "But it was cool to see and hear everybody in a setting that 'real live' poets and writers would perform in."

Littlefield was generally pleased with how the event turned out, as well. "I think it went really well. I was a little worried because so much SING! stuff started happening. But we filled all the chairs and everyone who was there I think had a good time. That to me I think is a success," Littlefield said.

Holding the Open Mic at the BPC produced unforeseen results and provided an atmosphere not attainable in Stuyvesant's library. While students from all grades tend to stop by the library during 10th period and after school, the BPC attracted mainly older students. "The crowd was mostly older people—seniors, and we knew each other—so people felt a little more comfortable and you heard a more mature range of material," Wiprud said.

Because of this Open Mic's success and the excitement students feel about reading in a public setting, Littlefield is considering trying to set up Open Mics at either the BPC or similar venues, such as Poets' House, in the future.

Glazner, who was unable to attend, said, "We would be happy to host future Stuyvesant Open Mic events."

Alan Sage: Breaching the Boundaries

By DANIELLE OBERDIER

If the Stuyvesant community were to break out into a war between the left-brained and the right-brained, senior Alan Sage would be the neutralizing force. Though Sage did not consider himself to be a science person when he entered Stuyvesant, his achievement in the 2010 Intel Science Talent Search disproves his initial self-assessment. In March, Sage will spend a week full of presentations and interviews in Washington D.C. competing for the top ten spots in the competition.

Sage began his training at the New York University Center for Genomics and Systems Biology in June of his sophomore year under the guidance of Kenneth Birnbaum, Ph.D. "Dr. Birnbaum is an excellent scientist and he wanted to challenge me," Sage said. "Many students work with a mentor constantly by their side, but I worked on my own and he would come to check in on me. I gained so much more from the experience because of that and I think it was a good decision on his part."

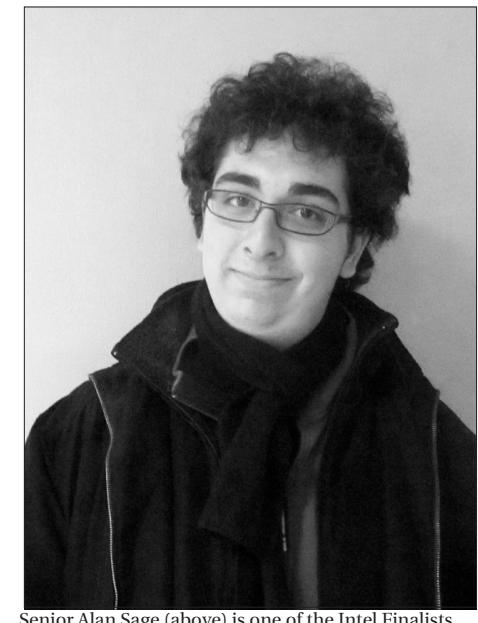
However, Sage did not begin working on his project "Characterization of a Glutamotropic Response in *Arabidopsis Thaliana*," until the middle of his junior year. When it became time to choose his project, Sage decided that he wanted to focus on root memory, which would allow him to explore more philosophical aspects of science.

"I found the possibility that plants might have cognitive processes incredible," Sage said. "It's amazing to think that even plants, which don't appear self-conscious, are aware of their own existence in some rudimentary way."

Sage's research focused on tropisms—plant responses to stimuli. If a plant is stimulated, it will either be attracted or repulsed by the stimulating material. Sage initially hoped to test plant memory to see if the direction they turn when stimulated by a substance is the same direction they turn when facing a non-chemical barrier later on in growth. Sage's results for root memory were inconclusive, and Dr. Birnbaum suggested that he gear his project more toward chemotropism—plant responses to chemicals. This was where Sage's extensive amount of work began.

Sage spent the summer after his junior year preparing an apparatus to detect tropisms using nutrient plates, on which the plants can be grown and observed. The plants grow along the plates until they reach a chemical in the center. At this point, the plant is either repulsed by or attracted to the chemical, which reveals the presence or lack of a tropism.

After he developed his assay, Sage decided to focus his project on plant responses to glutamate, one of the 20 amino acids. Sage explained that "there has been some work on glutamate in the past but no one had found this tropism yet," he said. After discovering that the plants were repulsed by glutamate, he set off to discover why. Sage eventually attributed



Senior Alan Sage (above) is one of the Intel Finalists announced on January 27.

the plants' responses to glutamate to the plants' "glutamate receptors," which are opened by glutamate as well as other amino acids.

The fact that plants responded to the presence of glutamate indicates that glutamate can affect plant behavior in a way similar to its role in affecting human behavior as a neurotransmitter—a compound that helps send signals in the brain. This distant connection makes glutamate a link between plant behavior and animal behavior. It is then possible, with more experimental findings such as those of Sage's that glutamate could aid in the understanding of the human nervous system.

"I ended up coming full circle to my original ideas about plant consciousness," Sage said. "In folklore plants have often been said to have spirits, and this provides some sort of scientific backing."

Though Sage clearly has a brain for science, he has always harbored a passion for literature. Sage feels that science and literature are more connected than most people believe. "I am disappointed that a lot of my favorite artists view science as a dark march towards progress and the end of man," Sage said. "I believe that art and science are both seeking knowledge and I don't think it's a bad thing to be seeking more knowledge."

Sage's philosophy has given him many options as to where to take his career. At this point he is unsure of what he wants to do. However, having been accepted to Yale Early Action with results from Harvard, Stanford and NYU Abu Dhabi yet to come, Sage has a bright future ahead of him.

"I've begun to view the world as art," Sage said. "I wrote once that science is a literary criticism of the world, and all my favorite books are all very mathematically constructed. Everything's there for a reason and I find that to be a beautiful thing."

958

Total number of students admitted to Stuyvesant

692

Number of Asians admitted

157

Number of whites admitted

17

Number of Hispanics admitted

7

Number of blacks admitted

1

Number of Native Americans admitted

58

Percent of students admitted who are male

42

Percent of students admitted who are female

Source: <http://www.Gothamschools.org>

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Ringing in the News Year

Everything begins anew in February at Stuyvesant. We have just returned from our Finals Week to new schedules, new teachers and a new term. Similarly, at The Spectator, we have returned from the fall semester with a new editorial board, and would like to take this opportunity to familiarize you with our goals and visions for the paper's future.

We would like to assert to our readers that first and foremost, The Spectator and the new editorial board stand for professionalism. We take our role as the "pulse of the student body" very seriously, and want to make sure that we serve both the student body and the school as a whole. We familiarize all new members of the paper with our charter and our Style Guide, which dictate the rules and guidelines that The Spectator follows, from privacy regulations to how to cite a quote. The Spectator is a school newspaper, but we strive to be more than that. We're not playing journalistic make-believe, but rather, feel strongly that we can make an impact on the way our school is viewed, how it is run and the overall student experience. Because we want to be treated as a real newspaper, we understand that we must conduct ourselves as such.

First, we will endeavor to gather information as accurately and respectfully as possible. The success of our newspaper depends on both the students and faculty, and it is necessary that we earn and keep their trust. It has long been a standard practice of ours to respect anonymity, and to not disclose any information that interview-

ees give us in confidence. In order to further prevent misquoting, and to avoid any discrepancies that may arise about what is said in interviews, we are working to equip all members of our staff with voice recorders for interviewing, which will be used if the subject permits. In addition to gathering accurate information, we place high importance on conducting interviews in a respectful manner, and will be reviewing our Spectator interview guide with new writers. Furthermore, we plan to post the guide on our Website so that faculty and students can familiarize themselves with our procedures, and contact us if they feel that protocol is violated by our writers.

As the new editorial board, we acknowledge that we have had our share of errors over the past year. We own up to our mistakes, and have learned from them. This year, we will work to make stricter deadlines for our writers so that production is less hurried, hopefully with the result of a more error-free newspaper.

As technology becomes more advanced and news is becoming increasingly web-based, we will continue expanding The Spectator Website by adding various new features. We will be posting a calendar of upcoming events, more comprehensive than the one we have in each issue of The Spectator, to help keep the Stuyvesant community better informed about the goings-on in and around the school. The Web Department has also decided to run a podcast, which will discuss different aspects of the school and the student body from the view of our editors and some staff members.

We will also be putting up other videos, photos and recordings on the Website as alternative mediums of journalism

As students, we are just as in touch and involved with the organizations we report on as any of our readers. All staff members, regardless of their positions in the paper, are members of the student body on which they report, and take equal parts in the activities, such as SING! or the Student Union, that make up the extracurricular culture of Stuyvesant. However, we have a primary journalistic responsibility to provide the student body with reporting that is as unbiased as possible. To fulfill this obligation, we must write and comment on our subject matter from a removed standpoint. Our main commitment is to uphold the high, traditional, journalistic standards of the paper, and we will continue to strive for reporting with impartiality and informed detachment, save for our editorials and reviews.

As any new editorial board, we owe a tremendous debt to the editors who came before us. Their work in maintaining and improving the quality of the paper was prodigious, and their success has paved the way for more substantive and accurate reporting. We thank the outgoing editors for all their hard work, and resolve to continue the practices of responsible journalism that have, under their stewardship, become synonymous with The Spectator. We look forward to both continuing in their footsteps and forging our own path as we work, as always, toward a more perfect paper.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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The Spectator

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FOR THE RECORD

• Zoe Levin was not included in the byline of "A&E Picks the Best Jam of the Decade."

**Thanks to Luc Cohen and Rebecca Elliott,
Editors in Chief ('09-'10)
—Ani Sefaj and Samira Siddique,
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**Thanks to the Spectator's 2009-10 Editorial
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Opinions

Point

Not a Silver Bullet



By SARAH KAPLAN

In recent years, charter schools—schools that receive public funding but are subject to less oversight and far fewer restrictions than traditional public schools—have been treated as a silver bullet, a panacea for all of our nation's education problems. They're popular among politicians because they sound like something that can improve our country's flailing education system. They're independent, their teachers aren't unionized and funding a charter school—where teachers and principals work on their own to figure out how to solve the school's problems—is a lot easier for politicians than sitting down and trying to develop a comprehensive education plan that can be applied to all public schools.

This is why President Obama is requiring states to expand their charter schools programs if they want to receive a piece of the 4.35 billion dollars that the federal government will be distributing as part of his "Race to the Top" initiative to improve education standards. For a president who advocates

as often it means that they aren't held accountable for their failures. More than seven percent of charter schools opened since 1992 have closed because of financial problems and mismanagement. The Urban Pioneer Experiential Academy, a charter school in San Francisco, was investigated after two students died on a wilderness trip. Not only had the school had a number of previous safety problems, but it was found to have committed academic fraud—graduating students with fewer credits than required. The school was also suffering from severe financial problems—allocating only two dollars a month per student for instructional costs and no funding at all for equipment, staff development or a number of other necessities.

According to a report released by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation in 2006, charter schools can lead to segregation and social fragmentation. Charter schools are highly specialized, serving students with specific interests

Instead of neglecting the problems—failing schools in order to set up new ones—why don't we try to work with the system we have?

instead of providing a comprehensive education. Charter schools rarely have special-needs programs and they enroll 30 percent fewer special needs students than regular public schools. And enrollment at charter schools is self-selecting—parents must seek out the schools themselves. This means that students at charter schools are the ones whose parents had the knowledge and the resources to find the school and apply.

These problems mean that charter schools aren't really the model of innovation and reform that they're made out to be. In fact, many charter schools are worse than traditional ones. According to a study conducted by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes in June 2009, only 17 percent of the country's charter schools performed better than public schools, while more than twice that number underperformed when compared with traditional schools. Evidently, charter schools are not the silver bullet that politicians make them out to be.

Our school system is broken; that much is undeniable. But instead of neglecting the problems—failing schools in order to set up new ones—why don't we try to work with the system we have? Instead of claiming that the teachers unions are too hard to work with and setting up a system that excludes them entirely, why don't we work with the teachers and help them to reevaluate their priorities? Since when has America been a country that gives up on its institutions?

The fact of the matter is that only a very small minority of students will ever go to charter schools. Charter schools are more of a placebo than a panacea. Instead of dedicating 4.35 billion dollars from the federal education budget to these schools, President Obama should be working to improve the schools we already have—the ones that serve 75 million students every year.

change and transparency and condemns sluggish bureaucracies, charter schools are easy to sell politically.

But the truth is that charter schools are often far from the innovative and independent institutions that our politicians make them out to be. They are plagued by many of the same problems as regular public schools: they can be badly organized and poorly run, they rarely outperform public schools and they are not the solution to our nation's education problems.

Though charter schools' freedom gives them an opportunity to introduce innovative methods for education, just

Counter-point

A Charter for Success



By DANIEL SOLOMON

President Barack Obama swept into office last year on a promise to modernize and reform the nation's education system. He and his Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, have undertaken this task in earnest, with Duncan starting the Race to the Top program. The initiative, with the incentive of four billion dollars in federal funds, encourages states to allow for the creation of more charter schools.

Charters, which are not governed by the same rules as regular public schools, are an innovative, albeit controversial, solution to the problems that plague our country's classrooms. They largely operate in chronically under-served minority communities. Their philosophy lies in accountability, choice and autonomy. They are institutions that are privately run and receive public money and taxpayer support while enjoying freedom from the onerous contractual restrictions that constrain their publicly-run counterparts. Charters can sack under-performing staff and link student achievement to teacher pay. However, with this freedom comes responsibility.

Some fresh ideas, like the longer school days and innovative curricula of Pave, have come out of charters and they have shown potential for innovation.

ty—the school can be shuttered if it fails to meet the goals laid out in its charter. Finally, all those who teach at and attend these institutions are there by choice.

This flexibility and the intrinsic accountability mechanism that accompanies it make charter schools an indispensable component of educational reform. According to a new study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) on New York City's charter schools, "a student who attends a charter high school is about seven percent more likely to earn a Regents diploma by age 20 for each year he spends in that school" compared to his peers in a regular public school. The NBER also concluded that "on average, [minority students] who attended a charter school for all of grades kindergarten through eight would close about 86 percent of the [black-white achieve-

ment gap] in math and 66 percent of the achievement gap in English," a far better showing than minority pupils enrolled in regular public schools.

One of these New York City institutions is the Pave Academy Charter School in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Founded two years ago, Pave has provided an alternative to Red Hook's struggling public schools for many of the Brooklyn community's parents and schoolchildren. Through an extended school day and year, an emphasis on reading and math and an intimate learning environment, the school fosters success. When it first opened its doors, Pave's students scored in the 52nd percentile on the fall first grade standardized assessments. By the spring, the charter school's first-graders had advanced to the 74th percentile.

Yet, charters are not without their faults. They have been dogged by allegations of siphoning off public funds for private use, union-busting, selectivity (known as creaming) in their admissions process and misrepresenting their achievements. In an interview, math teacher Gary Rubinstein echoed this sentiment. Charter schools "are a PR game, a fraud [...] they're creaming the kids," Rubinstein said. "Why won't they take special [education] kids?"

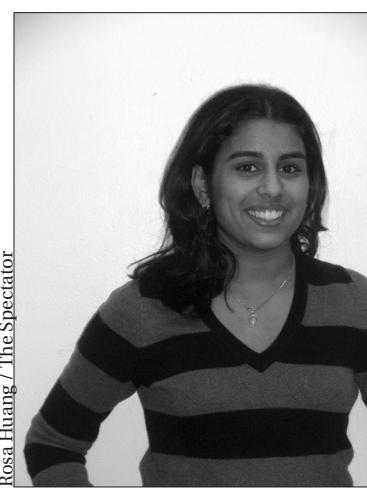
An article published on May 19, 2009 on InsideSchools.org, titled "Most Vulnerable Students Shut out of Charter Schools," reported that "an analysis of student data involving some of the most challenging students to educate, students who are homeless, special education students, and English Language Learners (ELL), shows that charter schools don't serve or enroll the [same number of these students] as local public schools." Basically, the charters operate in the inner city, but they don't enroll the area's most underserved pupils. These institutions have a profit motive and, just like a healthcare company that rejects patients with pre-existing conditions, charter schools weed out those with disabilities and students who come from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds.

Another point of contention lies in the charters' unwillingness to allow their employees to unionize. Some work rules—like those regulating the hiring and firing of teachers—that their union imposes on the school system are problematic, but staff at charter schools should still be permitted to organize to keep their employers in check. In New York, the charters are largely successful, but on a national scale, their effectiveness is questionable. National studies, such as one conducted by Stanford University, have found that student performance at charter schools is roughly equivalent to those of pupils at traditional public schools. This statistic can be explained by the disproportionate number of minorities charters serve, and their tendency to under-perform compared to their white and Asian peers. But nonetheless, the data undercuts proponents of charters.

Because of these issues, I can offer only a lukewarm endorsement of the charter school system. Some fresh ideas, like the longer school days and innovative curricula of Pave, have come out of charters and they have shown potential for innovation. However, the profit motive in education is permanently suspect and the kinks in the charter school model must be worked out. We should use the charters to experiment—taking advantage of their laxer regulations not present in public schools to see which teaching methods work and which don't. Charter schools are one piece of educational reform that may help students compete in the world economy. They are one part of what we must do to create a world-class educational system.

Opinions

Losing Days, Not Students



By SHILPA AGRAWAL

Learning from past mistakes? This year we've skipped over that lesson. When I walk through the halls of Stuyvesant, I see my peers involved in SING! stressed left and right. This stress is more than just the annual SING! stress, however. The tense students, the simpler costumes and the sloppy dances are all offshoots of the fact that this

While it was considerate of the administration to avoid the problem of cutting failing students this year [...] the people participating in SING! are also losing two weeks of preparation time.

year, the period to work on SING! was shortened by two weeks.

According to Principal Stanley Teitel, students had two options for the date of SING! performances this year. The final performance could have been on Saturday, March 20, or Saturday, March 6. Students were not given March 13 as an option because many juniors would be taking the SAT on that date. The administration ultimately chose March 6 over March 20 because of last year's fiasco with report cards, which were handed out one day before the first performance. If students have three grades of "Needs Improvement" (N) or an "Unsatisfactory" (U) on their first marking period report card, they are cut from the show. Last year, when the report cards were handed out right before SING!, over 50 students—many of them cast and dance members and directors of various crews—were cut from the show. This year, report cards for the first marking period will be handed out on March 16, and in order to prevent the last minute cuts from SING!, the performances were decided to be before report card distribution. While it was considerate of the administration to avoid the problem of cutting failing students from SING! by scheduling the performances earlier than usual, the people participating are also losing two weeks of preparation time.

Two whole weeks. That is

one-third of the total time that we are currently allotted to work on SING!. An additional two weeks of preparation could mean a production with funnier jokes, flashier costumes, better-memorized lines, cleaner dances and sharper performances all around.

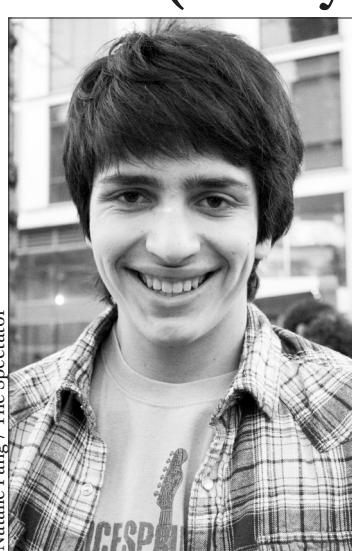
To some, the two weeks may seem like a minimal amount of time, but there is a larger issue in the decision to shorten the preparation time for SING!. By trying to avoid enforcing its own policies on cutting, the administration ends up curtailing valuable rehearsal time. There is a very clear student policy for SING!: If you fail a class in the third marking period of the first semester, or have three N's or a single U in the first marking period of the second semester, you cannot participate in SING!. Last year, many students who were removed from the show were frustrated with the administration. However, the policy was not new to them, and was clearly laid out to everyone who agreed to participate in SING!. It is a student's responsibility to maintain his or her own grades, and if a student cannot maintain them, then the producers and directors of SING! should reconsider and readjust who they choose to participate.

It is arguable that this policy is not fair in the first place, and that people should not be cut from SING! at all. But this policy, and similar policies, is present in other activities as well. You must pass at least four of your classes to be eligible for a sports team, and those running for Student Union grade caucuses must be passing all of their classes. Academics, especially in a rigorous high school like Stuyvesant, should be among one's top priorities. It is the student's responsibility to uphold this standard, even in the midst of the commotion of SING!.

The shorter time to work on SING! hurts the event in the long run. Junior Tiana Stute, director of the costume crew for Junior SING!, is adamantly opposed to the idea of SING! being shortened. "I'm going to have to stay even later in school, work more every night and then SING! will be over, but everyone will still fail," she said. As a co-director of a crew in SING!, she has many responsibilities to uphold, but now, she, and other participants of SING!, feels as if the whole process is rushed. The shorter time to work is hurting those participants who are responsible and would not be affected by report cards coming out.

From last year's cuts, one would expect students to take their studies more seriously and put their efforts into SING! while maintaining their grades. With the earlier dates of SING!, students are relatively free of worries. They now have the ability to slack off without being cut from SING!, unless their teachers pull them out of the performances. When I asked Teitel if he thinks being less strict about grades for SING! will have a detrimental effect on SING! participants' grades, he quickly responded, "I hope not." We are already seeing a stressful effect on responsible participants who have to deal with getting two weeks less of preparation. We can only hope that other students participating in SING! don't have such a lax attitude toward their grades this time around. Let's also hope that despite the two-week time cut, SING! participants can manage to work more quickly to pull together a good performance.

Be a Good Person (Everybody Else is Doing It!)



By LEOPOLD SPOHNGELLERT

The recent 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti killed nearly 170,000 people, and the American Red Cross estimates that nearly three million people in total were affected. These people, who already live some of the most impoverished lives in the world, cannot recover from such a disaster alone. All around the world, in response to the crisis in Haiti, there has been a tremendous amount of support. In America,

lars and thousands of troops toward the relief effort, in addition to food and basic supplies.

The Stuyvesant community has been making efforts to help the Haitian people by means of bake sales, raffles, and ice-skating events. The students of Stuyvesant have raised over two thousand dollars. I find a rare sense of pride in my government and in my school as I see the immense efforts to help this country that is in such unimaginable pain.

At times, it seems like donating to a cause such as the Haitian relief fund becomes a fad, like a certain pair of shoes or the top 10 iTunes songs. People initially donate because they see the terrible initial effect that such a disaster can have, and they also see that most of their peers are donating. But after the front-page article depictions of suffering begin to fade from our papers, and the perceived need for aid dwindles, relief efforts begin to shrink. Relief organizations understand this, and from the moment the disaster struck in Haiti, they employed every possible means of acquiring donations. CNN news anchor Anderson Cooper observed the dwindling media coverage of Haiti while he was there. "It's going to stop getting the coverage it's been getting, and the people who are here are going to remain here," he said.

It is troubling that it takes such times of crisis to get people to work toward a good cause. It is as if large death tolls and devastating pictures of destruction are the only things that can bring people to give to a cause. I was even ashamed of myself when I almost balked at giving the three dollars I had on me when asked for a donation. If such disaster doesn't bring out the charity in me, then what will?

While we may feel passionate about a cause, often it doesn't cross our minds to get involved, whether it is for Haiti or something else. On a day-to-day basis, most of us do little for charity. Seniors Allegra Wiprud and Lily

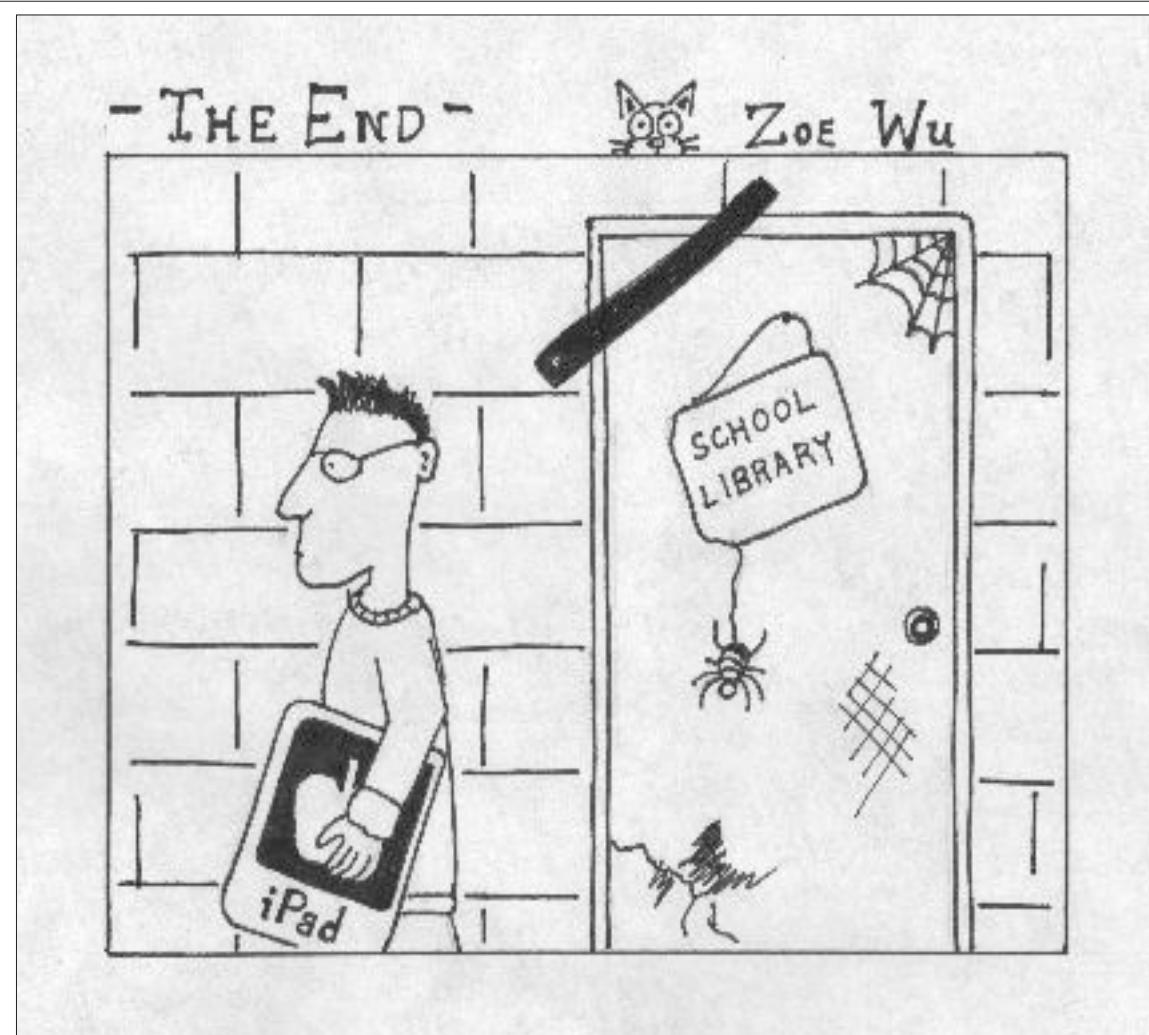
Ostrer were able to raise thousands of dollars through asking for donations and holding bake sales by themselves. If all or even a majority of students were to get involved, as some did, the effect we could have would far surpass anything a minority of students could accomplish. Instead, we are content to let the few motivated students do most of the work, while

However, at times, it seems like donating to a cause such as the Haitian relief fund becomes a fad, like a certain pair of shoes or the top 10 iTunes songs.

we just slip a dollar into a box and feel good about ourselves.

If we can transform this temporary fad of getting involved with a meaningful cause into a more lasting, extensive effort, then there will be a widespread and meaningful result. We all see charities that are worth fighting for—ones that we find significant. We don't have to get involved with something that has been getting a lot of attention just for the sake of getting involved with a popular cause. Pick something that is meaningful to you, and that you think is worth helping; if that happens to be the crisis in Haiti, then get involved with helping Haiti. However, don't simply donate and walk away, because there is always work to be done. We don't all have to save the world and start performing miracles, but we can all help.

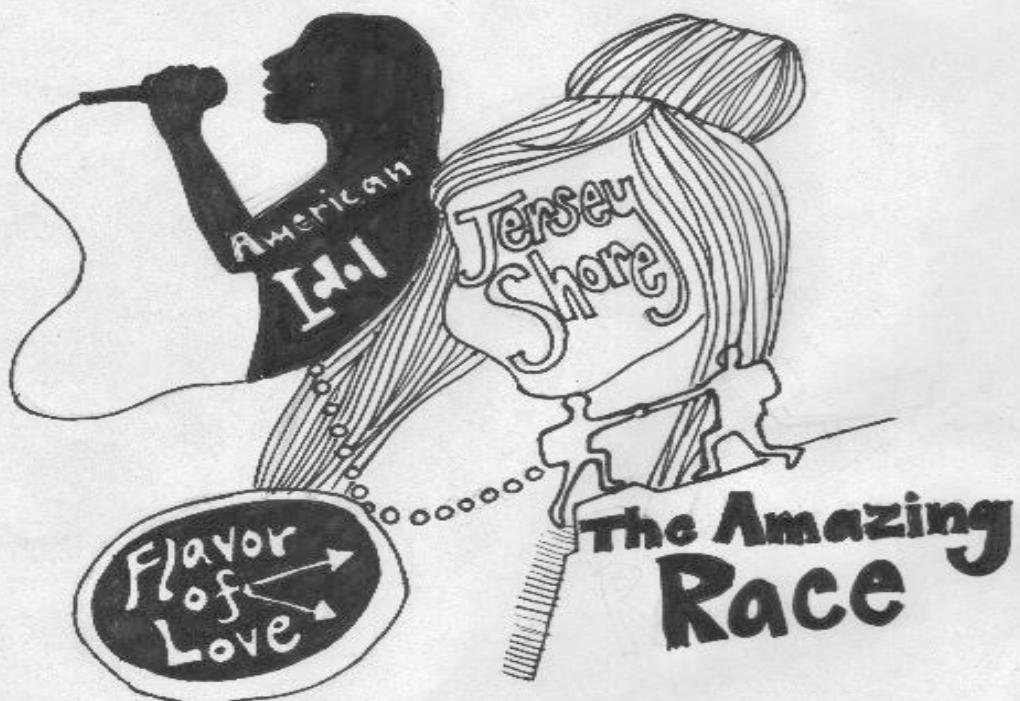
OP-ART



Arts & Entertainment

OPINIONS IN A&E

Not-So-Candid Camera



By LEE KHO

Has the phrase "reality television" become an oxymoron? Nowadays, it seems like any given reality show, whether it is about a man trying to pick his "true love" out of 25 random women, or six extremely tan youths fist-pumping their way through summer vacation, is as close to real life as a cartoon about a talking sponge.

I have never been an avid viewer of these shows that supposedly put "real" people in "real" situations, but I have seen and heard enough about them to say that television stations are trying to pull a fast one on American viewers. Just the premises of these shows can raise eyebrows.

Think about "Survivor": a group of normal people living on a remote island with nothing but pots, water canteens and basic human instinct, and "The Amazing Race": teams of two traveling the world with limited money, solving clues and performing outlandish and sometimes absurd tasks. These shows may be somewhat appealing due to their bizarre natures, but they truly insult one's intelligence. Are these feats even possible? Sure they are, but perhaps not on a weekly basis. And how do these situations reflect reality in any way?

Over the years, reality television has gone from unbelievable to absolutely ludicrous, especially with existing shows about individuals finding their "soul mates."

"The Bachelor" may be intended to pull on its viewers' heartstrings and play off of their hopelessly romantic and optimistic views of true love actually existing in the world, but it is definitely not fooling anyone, or at least, it should not. It is very difficult to believe a rich, handsome prince (they actually had a prince on the show once) can fall desperately in love with a woman on national television. What is not difficult to believe is that after a grand total of 13 seasons of "The Bachelor," none of the featured couples are currently together. The show continues to fall short of its original goal, season after season. There have been many other

shows with similar premises of "finding true love"—"Rock of Love with Bret Michaels" and "The Bachelorette" to name a few—and none of them seem to have achieved much for the contestants other than temporary fame and trashy reputations. The fact that there were three seasons of "Flavor of Love," with former rapper Flavor Flav unsuccessfully finding love among a total of 65 contestants, says a great deal about the legitimacy of the whole series, and dating shows in general.

The only shows that may have some authenticity are the ones that involve people vying for recognition in their respective fields. Shows like "Top Chef" and "America's Next Top Model" rely a surprisingly large amount on the contestants' real talents and training, though I suspect that drama is created and encouraged by people behind the cameras. Arguments between contestants and judges are enhanced and ultimately blown out of proportion, building a palpable excitement that keeps a consistent viewing base each week.

So, if these shows are so utterly ridiculous and fantastical, why do we watch them? There is no straightforward answer to this, but there are several aspects of reality television that magnetically draw people in. During competition shows, viewers grow attached to the people on the show. By simply turning on our televisions, we get to see people at their highest and lowest points all in a one hour time slot. We get to peer into the contestants' lives and personalities in the most intimate settings—when they are under pressure and the most vulnerable. Shows like "American Idol," where the fates of promising individuals, like Adam Lambert and Kris Allen, are literally in the viewers' hands, allow people to become emotionally attached to contestants.

Perhaps it is the raw, unadulterated shock value and unpredictability of these shows which reels us in. Watching these shows can also make us feel more secure about ourselves. It can be very reassuring to be able to watch gelled up pseudo-New Jerseyans wildly partying at a club and say firmly to yourself, "Well, at least I'm not one of them."

Even after all this, I cannot say that I dislike reality television. On the contrary, I find reality shows of today to be endearing. Yes, they can be absurd, trashy, pointless and melodramatic at times, but their addictiveness and mass ap-

We get to peer into the contestants' lives and personalities in the most intimate of settings: when they are under pressure and most vulnerable.

peal is undeniable. So, for whatever reasons people watch it, I forgive reality television for its intentionally misleading nature because of what it brings to us—some shouts, a few tears, lots of laughter and sometimes even song.

Stuy Squad Show to Benefit Haiti

By GAVIN HUANG

Hoping to out-dazzle last year's show, Stuy Squad, Stuyvesant's dance club, met its expectations after putting on an eclectic show which boasted an array of modern, traditional, ballroom and even comedic dance performances. The coordinated step and hip-hop crews excited the audience while the graceful ballroom and individual performances had some breathtaking moves. The show's low ticket price of two dollars brought in a large audience, with half the proceeds going to next year's show and the other half going to earthquake relief efforts in Haiti.

Seniors and Stuy Squad presidents Lorraine Thomas and Oprah Miles started organizing the show last year after their predecessors' mediocre run. They organized crews earlier, held tryouts in the fall and started practicing in November. Ballroom performances were chosen from amongst Silvana Choy's senior Ballroom Dancing (PD7) classes' final projects for the January 21 show.

"We tried to make [the show] as diverse as possible because we didn't want it to be all one race or all one dance style together, so it was pretty spread out," Miles said.

The show's ballroom repertoire was heavy on swing, which took up three acts of the show. The first was an ambitious swing routine performed by a quartet. Although they were noticeably rusty, seniors Alex Ting, Steph-



Kevin Mui and Jennifer Yue dance a waltz at the annual Stuy Squad performance.

Olivia Cheng / The Spectator

nie Shen, Billy Guo and Maggie Huang pulled off a complicated act filled with flips, kicks and lively jive. The other swing routines of the night displayed a greater deal of preparation and originality. Seniors Luc Cohen and Candice Bautista performed a creative and humorous swing routine that threw the audience back to the 1920s, while seniors Masudur Rahman and Kinari Sakamoto took us to the 1950s in a very impressive and electrify-

ing "Jailhouse Rock" routine.

For ballroom beginners, many of the pairs were remarkably skilled. Seniors Josef Kushner and Katerina Patouri performed a fabulously elegant tango, seniors Kevin Mui and Jennifer Yue performed a waltz filled with powerful lifts and seniors Ivan Liang and Ivy Lio performed a vivacious cha-cha to "Let's Get Loud."

Many of Stuy Squad's crews, notably the Step Crew, were exu-

berant while others had shakier performances. On par with the club's ranking of crews, Hip-Hop A's routine showed greater coordination and flashier moves while the B and C crews were less synchronized with slightly shorter acts and less impressive routines. Nonetheless, Stuy Squad's overall crew performances mirrored the great deal of preparation that went into the show. The step crew stomped onto stage as a well-oiled machine and the

contemporary dance crew performed a contrastingly graceful number.

The show was also notable for its mix of cultural dances. The Indian and belly dancing crews laced their traditional performances with intricate modern twists, while a reggae routine made for an appropriate end to a show dedicated to helping the Caribbean island nation of Haiti.

Notable individual acts included junior Simon Ayzman's comical interpretive dance sequence and a duet by senior Kinari Sakamoto and junior Riho Tsuji, who exhibited their mastery of gymnastics, though unfortunately, it was difficult to see because of lighting problems. Similar technical problems followed through most of the show, but performers found ways to get around them. Kushner and Patouri continued their tango routine even after the music stopped and emcees Rahman and Cohen worked well without microphones.

Amid the generally remarkable dance performances, the best routine of the night was the chemistry between Rahman and Cohen as emcees. With little preparation, they winged the night as hosts and succeeded in transitioning between performances with humor, creativity and some guy-guy dancing. The successful show put on by Stuy Squad is a good indicator that we can expect a very exciting—and very competitive—SING! this year.

Arts & Entertainment

By JACOB SUNSHINE

The shrieking of horns fills the dusty and smoky cellar flanked by brick walls, as too-cool-for-school spectators sit and watch, snapping their fingers, emitting "yeah's" and guttural noises from their throats. It was all too familiar a scene. And yet onstage was a different sort of band—not old black men with long beards and funky hats, but high school students. Such was the setting for Slum Searching's second concert at the Cornelia Street Café on Friday, January 15.

Slum Searching is a jazz music collective made up of Stuyvesant Alumni Benjamin Hirsch ('09) on trumpet, Allen Kramer ('09) on guitar and Natan Last ('08) on drums and percussion, current Stuyvesant students, senior Andrew Chow on piano and junior Huei Lin on saxophone, (?) and LaGuardia junior Ruben Sonz-Barnes on the upright bass.

The band's name is, appropriately, an anagram of the late jazz bassist Charles Mingus, generated by word whiz Last. They played two of Mingus' compositions during their set.

"Slum Searching is an incredibly talented group of musicians. Although we all have a strong jazz background, our influences vary greatly, from Parker's bebop to Derek Trucks to Stevie Wonder," Chow said.

Hirsch, whose father owns the Cornelia Street Café, formed the band to get a graduation concert together at the club last year. However, the band's experience playing together stretches back even further. All

Slum Searching Finds its Beat

the musicians had played with each other at some point during various concerts, particularly as part of the Stuyvesant Composers Forum. "We jammed together," Chow said. "[We] felt

The improved chops of each of the players gave the music a hotter flavor, and yet the song selection was more on the mellow side. The band was less histrionic, and more melodic. Rhyth-

Lin's sound had a certain breathiness to it, bringing to mind the late Stan Getz or Cannonball Adderly. His tone lent itself perfectly to his bluesy cadences and avant-garde wailings, particularly on the Wayne Shorter composition, "Witch Hunt."

Kramer, while playing as bluesy as ever, added to his arsenal of guitar weapons the bottleneck slide, which slithered tastefully over Lin's Derek-Trucksque composition "Agenda."

Chow's piano playing sounded ethereal and spacey, allowing the sound of the piano and his interesting chord voicings to speak for themselves. This was particularly evident in the gorgeous introduction to the Chick Corea composition, "Spain," where Latin and Modern Classical influences permeated his improvisation.

Most notably, Last integrated a number of hip hop influences, possibly inspired by Questlove of the Roots, into his playing. His energetic but relaxed grooves soared over the music, particularly on the Freddie Hubbard composition, "Red Clay."

Of course there were moments when the players' juvenility showed. Hirsch sometimes got a little carried away with his solos, making the volume of his performance an issue, and Last's fills sometimes landed in the wrong place, leaving the band off beat for a moment or so.

But overall, these are minor quips with in what was a great performance. What was most noticeable was the personality and fire that each player left on the stage that night, and the impressive level of interaction between

the musicians. The original compositions and the funkiness of the band left the crowd dancing in the aisles and clapping



we had the right chemistry."

The Cornelia Street concert was the reunion of the band members, back with a vengeance from their respective colleges. What ensued was music that transcended time, and that swung as hard as anything.

mic interaction was particularly evident in Mingus' gorgeous tune "Self Portrait in Three Colors."

Hirsch's bebop chops and fast chromatic lines were staggering in technique, and his tone was fat with sound, filling up the air in the club like a massive balloon.

"Slum Searching is an incredibly talented group of musicians. Although we all have a strong jazz background, our influences vary greatly, from Parker's bebop to Derek Trucks to Stevie Wonder."

—Andrew Chow, senior

their hands with enthusiasm.

When the night was over, listeners left with the sound of horns ringing in their ears as they walked into the night, and on the cobblestone streets, under the bright lights of Greenwich Village.

The Mountains on 17th Street

By BENJAMIN KOATZ

"We all have our own roles in a larger drama," said Ruben Museum of Art (RMA) Educator and School Coordinator David Bowles, while standing in front of an 18th Century Indian depiction of the multifaceted god Vishnu. Taking his wisdom from ancient Hindu scriptures, like the Bhagavad Gita, Bowles begins to break down the art of the subcontinent for a group of 15 teenagers. The group stud-

collection of Donald Rubin, is a six-floor gallery located on 150 West 17th Street that has been open for five years. There are many upcoming exhibitions such as "Remember that You Will Die" (opening Friday, March 19), which explore the concept of death in the Himalayas and compare it to Christian European traditions. Including paintings and sculptures that utilize human remains, the exhibit shocks viewers into an aura of inevitability and reminds them that life, on Earth at least, is short. "Bardo," another exhibit opening on Friday, February 12 addresses the idea of death as a form of spiritual enlightenment. The Bardo exhibit will be focusing on "the transition to afterlife, and its meaning to an individual," said Teen and College Program Coordinator Pauline Noyes, a five-year staff member of the Ruben Museum.

In addition to housing hundreds of priceless pieces from Mongolia to Bhutan, the museum has a program to help a young artist or art enthusiast get a foot into the museum world—RMA Teens. This program serves as both an artistic and intellectual outlet for high school students searching for an internship.

The program allows teens to study Himalayan art and culture. Furthermore, it is a career opportunity. Those who attend enough meetings, and receive enough training, can systematically elevate into a paying job as a tour guide in the Ruben Museum itself. Teens for this free program are selected through an application process.

Sometimes the students in the program "sit down and do some art, or analyze a statue [in the museum] from the first cen-

tury," said sophomore Emma Handte, a member of RMA Teens. Usually, meetings are spent studying works at the museum through different lenses.

Many participants are anchored to the Thursday meetings because of the variety of activities offered, such as group trips to other museums. Recently, they traveled to the Museum of Modern Art to study the Tim Burton Exhibit in the context of Himalayan Art and Buddhist motifs.

Other activities include special classes and drawing lessons, offered on Thursdays as well, though special classes are offered only once every few weeks. The focus of the special classes is constantly shifting—one class may concentrate on Yoga, while the next week, the class could be about Jainism and other ancient Indian cultures.

Handte had trouble picking her favorite aspect of the program. She "just loves to take time out of [her] busy Stuy schedule, to enhance [her] understanding of other cultures," she said.

Sophomore Tasnim Rahman, who is also involved in the program, was enchanted by the experience of going to other museums that hold more modern pieces of artwork than the RMA does. "You can look at [modern art that is] so wacky and think: 'hey it looks almost the same as [artwork] made so long ago,'" she said.

Rahman loves that the students get to make a zine, a small-circulation non-profit magazine, filled with their own RMA-related artwork. "It allows us to be able to retell the stories depicted in the Ruben through another perspective," she said. Along with the zine, the students



The entrance to the Rubin Museum of Art, located at 150 West 17th Street.

Tong Wan/The Spectator

are introduced to experts in their separate fields, who augment the teaching of Noyes with specialized knowledge. But the wide range of activities is not necessarily the best part of RMA teens.

"It's just nice to have a program like this with peers who love art just as much," Rahman said.

The Ruben Museum of Art is a relatively new source for South Asian and Tibetan art

and sculpture. But its reputation is slowly growing, partly because of the stories brought back by the students in RMA Teens, and those who visit the museum on their own. With a collection to rival any other Himalayan Art museum in the West, it is both an opportunity for artistic growth for youth and a source for a highly foreign culture in Lower Manhattan.

ies everything from the sweeping blue background, to the serpentine lotus flowers, to the giant blue God in the center of the portrait, in this museum of Himalayan culture.

The RMA, once the private

school of Donald Rubin, is a six-floor gallery located on 150 West 17th Street that has been open for five years. There are many upcoming exhibitions such as "Remember that You Will Die" (opening Friday, March 19), which explore the concept of death in the Himalayas and compare it to Christian European traditions. Including paintings and sculptures that utilize human remains, the exhibit shocks viewers into an aura of inevitability and reminds them that life, on Earth at least, is short. "Bardo," another exhibit opening on Friday, February 12 addresses the idea of death as a form of spiritual enlightenment. The Bardo exhibit will be focusing on "the transition to afterlife, and its meaning to an individual," said Teen and College Program Coordinator Pauline Noyes, a five-year staff member of the Ruben Museum.

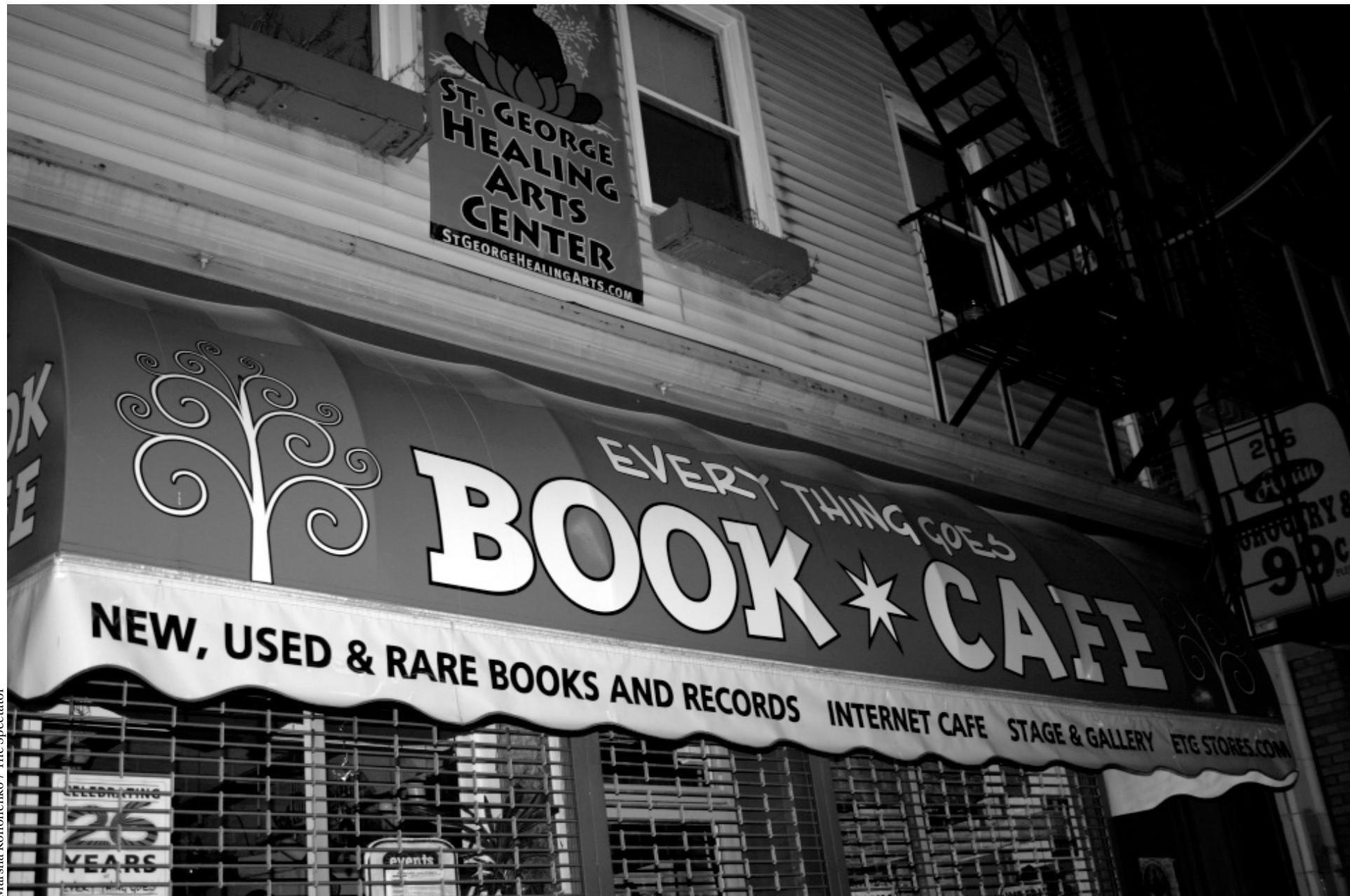
In addition to housing hundreds of priceless pieces from Mongolia to Bhutan, the museum has a program to help a young artist or art enthusiast get a foot into the museum world—RMA Teens. This program serves as both an artistic and intellectual outlet for high school students searching for an internship.

The program allows teens to study Himalayan art and culture. Furthermore, it is a career opportunity. Those who attend enough meetings, and receive enough training, can systematically elevate into a paying job as a tour guide in the Ruben Museum itself. Teens for this free program are selected through an application process.

Sometimes the students in the program "sit down and do some art, or analyze a statue [in the museum] from the first cen-

Arts & Entertainment

The North Shore



Marsh Kononenko / The Spectator

Everything Goes Book Café (above) is located on 208 Bay Street in Staten Island.

By HELEN SONG

At first glance at the MTA New York City subway map, there is little reason to take notice of Staten Island. Beyond

"We're interested in people meeting each other and sharing their gifts."
—Steve Daughs, co-owner of Every Thing Goes

one lone railroad that runs straight down the borough, Staten Island may not even appear to be a part of New York City. However, the borough, which is split into two regions—the North Shore and the South Shore—has its fair share of unique stores and experiences. The North Shore is easily accessible by the Staten Island Ferry and is more urban than most people think from their preconceived notions of Staten Island. By traveling just a few blocks from the Ferry terminal, into the heart of the North Shore, it is clear that Staten Island has more to offer than just the Staten Island Mall.

One block from the Ferry terminal, the neon lights of SHOW Gallery, located at 156 Stuyvesant Place, capture the attention of the otherwise lack-luster street. Although the space is limited and the gallery itself is usually crowded, SHOW often carries unique exhibitions. The exhibits feature a wide selection of mediums from simple photographs to installations of brightly colored, crocheted coral reefs. The most recent exhibition, entitled "GLAM!," features photographs taken by legendary photographer Mick Rock of iconic Glam rock musicians such as David Bowie, Freddy Mercury and Iggy Pop.

A short walk from SHOW leads to the original store of the Every Thing Goes (ETG) chain of thrift shops, located throughout the Thompkinsville area. The ETG thrift stores, started by a group of friends who pooled their financial resources and skills together, are collectively owned and operated. "We own the building," co-owner Steve Daughs said. "We're allowed to do what we want and less along the lines of what makes money." The ETG Book Café, which opened in 1983, started the chain which now includes a clothing store and a furniture store. Located at 208 Bay Street, the book café offers a wide selection of used books, which usually sell for \$5 or less, as well as 45-rpm vinyl records, organic fair-trade coffee, tea and dark chocolate. The stress-free atmosphere of the store invites people to relax and lose themselves in the pages of their books. The store also hosts free weekend performances by local Staten Island and other New York City artists. "We're

interested in people meeting each other and sharing their gifts. We think the reason there is so much bad in the world is because people just haven't met each other," Daughs said. Additionally, because of the store's prime location near the Ferry, which is ridden by many tourists "we get people from all over the world," Daughs said.

The helpful staff at the café can also be found at the partner ETG Clothing store. ETG Clothing, located at 140 Bay Street, is the destination for anyone looking for a great selection of thrift and vintage finds at low prices. With a wide variety of both women's and men's clothing, shoes, bags and other accessories, ETG Clothing offers most of its stock for \$3 to \$15. The unique vintage selection is priced a little higher, but

quins, reminiscent of decades past, are neatly arranged by size.

For more upscale goods, Marie's Two Timer Boutique, located at 1755 Victory Blvd, has a great assortment of women's clothing, accessories and shoes at low prices. Marie's Two Timer Boutique was founded by Marie Gnall twenty years ago and still remains Staten Island's only consignment shop. The boutique is immaculately stocked with designer clothing that can be found at any department store along with unique vintage items. "We have high-end wear with good prices," said store clerk Andrea, who declined to give her last name. All of the clothing and shoes sell between \$10 and \$25, while the designer handbags can go for as high as \$100.

Staten Island also has a history that isn't told through art galleries and stores. The St. George Theatre, located at 36 Hyatt Street, is often overlooked, but the decadent interior creates a unique atmosphere, that no other theater in the North Shore offers. Originally, the Italian and Spanish Baroque inspired theater, adorned with grand chandeliers and giant paintings of Spanish bullfights, began as a space for vaudeville shows when it opened in 1929. The grand theater, which can easily fit any show that Broadway has to offer, now holds all forms of performance arts, including plays by local troupes, comedy shows and screenings of classic films such as the musical adaptation of Pinocchio. The St. George Theatre combines the elegance of art with the comfort of Staten Island.

The North Shore of Staten

Island is an area that most Stuyvesant students have yet to discover. The distinctive

The distinctive stores and galleries along with the wealth of culture prove that Staten Island, or at least the North Shore, is no longer a landfill.

stores and galleries along with the wealth of culture prove that Staten Island, or at least the North Shore, is no longer a landfill.

*SHOW Gallery
156 Stuyvesant Place*

*Every Thing Goes Book Café
208 Bay St*

*Every Thing Goes Clothing
140 Bay St*

*Marie's Two Timer Boutique
1755 Victory Blvd*

*St. George Theatre
36 Hyatt Street*

The Italian and Spanish Baroque inspired theater combines the elegance of art and the comfort of Staten Island.

still low in comparison to other stores. Dresses from the 1980s are in abundance and shirts with fluorescent colors and se-

Arts & Entertainment

The Murray Kahn Stage Gets a Makeover

By HYEMIN YI
with additional reporting by
JAMES HONG

The Stuyvesant Theatre Community (STC) got a big treat over winter break when the stage in the Murray Kahn Theatre was refurnished by Volmar Construction Inc. Former custodian Rob Bocchino made arrangements for the Department of Education to pay to get the stage redone again.

The dimensions of the stage did not change. Rather, the stage, which is made of pine wood, was glazed over. The floor was "sanded and stained with three coats of polyurethane," custodial engineer Fred Arnebold said.

During STC productions and SING!, the stage is often damaged by the transportation of various props, and is stained by the paint from art crews. Set pieces such as the choral risers—the steps used by the chorus—are especially damaging.

We had the stage redone about four years ago and SING! destroyed it right away and its been progressively getting worse."

—Kern Levigion, school mechanist

only be taken off for special occasions.

"We weren't allowed to perform without the mat. It was the most ridiculous thing. You can't see the mat or the stage itself from the audience, unless you're sitting on the balcony, so it wasn't a problem," said junior Willa Beckman, who recently performed on the stage for the winter drama, *All My Sons*. "[For SING!] everyone who sits on the balcony and the stage, it's not going to look good."

Nevertheless, students agree that the new stage brings about a better aesthetic to the theater, and even a new level of professionalism. "The stage definitely looked beautiful. The moment we were allowed to touch it, our crew was afraid to damage it. It was just so pretty," junior and STC Tech director Annie

"The stage definitely looked beautiful. The moment we were allowed to touch it, our crew was afraid to damage it. It was just so pretty."
—Annie Kim, junior and STC Tech director

"We had the stage redone about four years ago and SING! destroyed it right away and its been progressively getting worse," school mechanist Kern Levigion said. "It cost over ten thousand dollars to just get the stage redone and that's why we're putting the marley on it." The layer of marley, a removable rubber cover, is intended to protect the stage, especially during SING!.

One side of the marley is black and the other is white. It is intended to imitate the standard black stage used for theater productions and the standard white stage used for choral concerts. As such, the marley will be used accordingly. The marley will only be removed for special events, such as award ceremonies for which other groups use the theater.

Some students did not expect the marley to be used for performances and were upset upon learning that it would

"As a member of the theater community, it's an exciting thing to work on anything new. I'm excited to perform on it."
—Abie Sidell, junior and director of All My Sons

Kim said.

"As a member of the theater community, it's an exciting thing to work on anything new," junior and director of All My Sons Abie Sidell said. "I'm excited to perform on it."

Poems in the Pictures



By TONG NIU

As a Chinese proverb once said, "In every poem there's a picture and in every picture there's a poem." In a recent field trip, both pictures and poetry united to create an educational experience for a group of Stuyvesant students. Afterschool on Thursday, January 14 a group of students experienced eye-opening scenes captured by photographers in the exhibit "Portraits of Poets" at the National

and faculty advisor for WotW Holly Weissand two invited alumni, Abby Deutsch ('02) and Ezra Glenn ('06). The group took the subway to the National Arts Club in Gramercy Park on the Upper East Side. WotW, a program inspired by the "Poetry in Motion" program, which posts poetry on buses and in subway stations, posts literary works along the hallways and classrooms of Stuyvesant. "Poetry in Motion" and "Portraits of Poets" are among the many exhibits coordinated by Quinn to promote poetry appreciation.

The "Portraits of Poets" exhibit opened on Wednesday, January 6 with vintage portraits of Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot and Lucille Clifton. Displaying portraits of artists of the past century, and photographs of poets in their childhood homes gave the students a taste of the times in which these writers grew up. "I hope that the wide geographical spectrum came across," Quinn said. "On the walls, we had portraits of poets from California to DC, Boston to Hawaii, and I think the role of New York City across the decades came through loud and clear."

The exhibit also included collages, drawings and oil paintings done by the poets themselves. Quinn "took us on a tour [of] this one really beautiful room whose walls were just covered in photos and a few paintings of poets," junior and co-head of WotW Elizabeth Litvitskiy said. "No names were on the pictures, by the way, and [Quinn] knew each and every one of them and a lot about them."

"[Quinn's] enthusiasm was so contagious. I couldn't forget her. I suppose meeting her was the most memorable part of the trip," junior and WotW co-head Sophia Abbot said. "It encouraged me to throw everything I have into my writing, because holding back will only hurt me."

The students were exposed to a lot more than enthusiasm. They delved into deeper aspects of the lives of their favorite poets, learning more about them than just the snippets of emotions and experiences revealed in their poems. Portraits taken by Alfred Eisenstaedt and Gerard Malanga introduce to readers the writers who penned the words. And while it is easy to forget the human experiences and interpersonal

relationships that inspire such poetry, the exhibit helps to reestablish that connection between writer and reader. "The address of a poem, from the maker's soul to the reader's soul, is unique," Quinn said. "No piano, no canvas, no troupe of exquisitely trained dancers is necessary for that contact to be made. One has only to crack open a book to be dazzled and transformed."

Indeed the trip has been a memorable experience for all its partakers. Bringing together pictures and poetry, Quinn has created both a visual and emotional experience. She brought a new perspective to the students, introducing them not only to a broader literary world, but to the history behind each of the fundamental figures who helped shape that world, as well. "My favorite

"It encouraged me to throw everything I have into my writing."
—Sophia Abbot, junior and Writing on the Wall co-head

Arts Club, as well as the elusive words of famous poets such as Gerald Stern and Marie Ponsot.

The trip, organized by English teacher Emily Moore, was held in order to expose students to the multitude of poets from the past century. "I decided to organize the trip to the National Arts Club to see the Poetry Society of America's centennial exhibit 'Portraits of Poets' because my wonderful friend and former boss Alice Quinn invited us," Moore said. "As the head of the Poetry Society of America, she was excited about the exhibit and wanted to give students the chance to see it."

Ten students, from all four grades and various writing communities such as Caliper and Writing on the Wall (WotW), joined Moore, English teacher

"One has only to crack open a book to be dazzled and transformed."
—Alice Quinn, Curator of "Portraits of Poets"

part was hearing some of the stories about different poets' lives and the history behind some of the paintings that were on display," junior Randy Arthur said.

"The trip was a total pleasure from my perspective," Moore said. "I hope that the students enjoyed the National Arts Club, their new connection with the Poetry Society of America and the chance to view glimpses of the diverse and fascinating lives of several generations of American poets."

Arts & Entertainment

1000 Paper Cranes for Peace

By KRISTINA MANI

In response to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the Allied Forces dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Over 140,000 civilians were killed on this unforgettable day and thousands more died from the effects of the bomb. This is the classic history lesson. However, the AP Japanese class of Japanese teacher Chie Helinski delves deeper into the typical lesson—beyond the casualty numbers—to gain a personal perspective on the lives that were threatened and lost.

Helinski has taught the story of "A Thousand Paper Cranes" for many years, but this year's AP Japanese class wanted to do more than just learn the tale. "I want them to experience it in a more personal way," Helinski said. For the first time, the class set a goal of folding 1000 paper cranes—the traditional number in Japanese culture to fulfill a wish and obtain better health—to continue the story's message of peace.

The traditional tale revolves around Sadako, a young girl who develops Leukemia after surviving the attack on Hiroshima. Her classmates stay by her side during her entire hospital stay, urging her to keep fighting the cancer. Sadako and her friends begin to fold cranes, a Japanese symbol for long life, hoping to slow down the illness. They fold 1500 cranes before Sadako dies.

Though Sadako folds 1500 cranes, the AP Japanese class plans to make a minimum of 1000 cranes. Senior and a leader of the

project, Fiona Mak was inspired by "the children's determination to fight for their right to live," she said. Through Sadako's story, the cranes take on a new meaning. Not only do they symbolize long life and the cry for peace, but they also represent all of the innocent lives that were lost during World War II. "These personal insights really touched us and we want to not only spread the idea of peace by making these cranes, but also show that we acknowledge their pain and we want to help them to heal," Mak said.

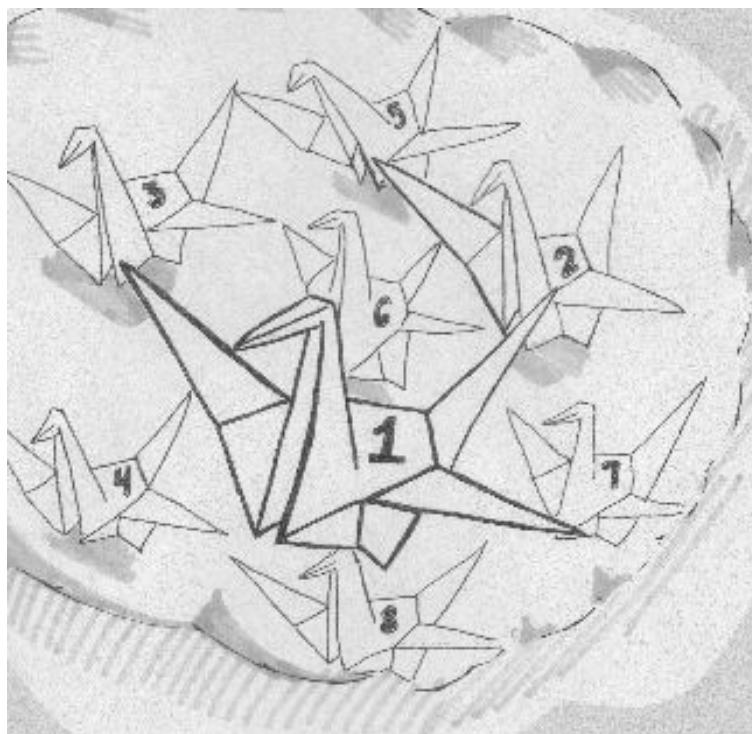
Not only do the cranes symbolize long life and the cry for peace, but they represent all the innocent lives that were lost during World War II.

Four students in the class, Mak, Olivia Cheng, Tecla Walter and Zithinzar Lwin, are in charge of organizing the project. "The students took the initiative and if they agree with the message, why

not make the cranes," Helinski said. The students are currently finalizing the details of the crane making process, but they hope to start this month and finish in April or May. Some of the students already know how to do origami, but others are learning how to make paper cranes straight from their AP Japanese textbooks.

The students are very enthusiastic and determined to participate in the peace movement. "I'm very excited. I think it is going to be a lot of fun and really enjoyable for everyone to share in this experience," Cheng said. Cheng believes that 1000 should be a minimum goal. "There are more than 3000 students in the student body, so if each person made one, we would have at least 3000," she said. Although it is completely voluntary, the AP Japanese class hopes to get the entire school involved in creating these cranes.

This project gives Stuyvesant an opportunity to participate in Japanese culture. Cheng believes that through this project, "all students separated by grades can do something together and connect better as a community," she said. Yet, the biggest challenge they face is attracting a wider audience and getting more people to participate. The class plans to make a Facebook group, hang up posters and show a promotional video to spread awareness. A box will also be set up inside the Japanese classroom so that any Stuyvesant student can drop off the cranes they make individually. Origami paper, as well as instructions concerning dimensions, will be provided and can



be picked up in the Japanese classroom. Class members also plan to contact the Japanese culture club about the project.

Some students disregard the idea, thinking that folding cranes will have no crucial effect on the spread of peace. "It seems like they are working towards an unrealistic goal," sophomore Katie Bor said. "I feel that there are so many better ways to actually get out there and help people around the world rather than just fold cranes."

However, Mak disagrees. "If [people] just take a few minutes out of their busy lives, and read

about what happened and the pain and suffering that these people had gone through, then they would be at least a little more welcome to this concept," she said.

Helinski offered to take her classes' cranes to the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima Peace Park next summer. The cranes will join thousands of others that are presented at the memorial to remember and honor Sadako and the lives lost in World War II. "We are not just taking paper across the world.

These cranes give us an opportunity to bring a part of Stuyvesant to Japan," Cheng said.

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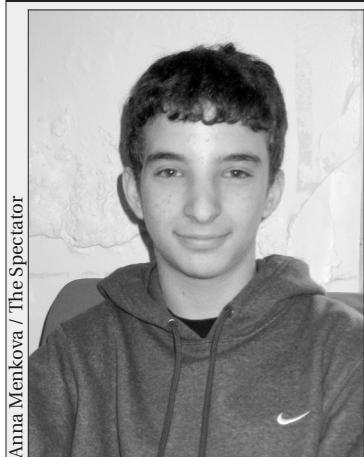
"He needs remedial classes"

Robert "The Birds" Vinluan and Kiran "The Bees" Sury



Sports

Horseshoes and Hand Grenades



Anna Menkova / The Spectator

By CHARLIE GINGOLD

"Almost" doesn't count, especially in sports. Just ask the 2007-2008 New England Patriots, Bill Buckner and Kev-

What will be remembered from this season? Probably nothing.

in Dyson. A loss is a loss, no matter how close the game is. Sports fans, myself in-

cluded, usually aren't happy with their team coming in second place, or giving a good effort but eventually losing. Winning a championship—or at least making the playoffs—is always the objective.

The New York Yankees, Los Angeles Lakers and some of Stuyvesant's own sports teams, such as the swimming and fencing teams, know exactly how high the expectations are for teams. A year without a championship is usually seen as a failure to both the players and fans.

Recently, some of the teams that I follow have somewhat disappointed me. The New York Jets and some of Stuyvesant's winter teams have fallen short of their goals. The Jets, with high hopes of a Super Bowl, failed to beat the Indianapolis Colts in the AFC Championship game. And after having winning records last year, both the boys' and girls' basketball teams, the Running Rebels and the Phoenix, missed the playoffs. They came close, but that's not going to be remembered.

What will be remembered from this season? Probably nothing. This is very disappointing, considering that I spent hours of my weeks these past months watching Jets games on TV and basketball games in Stuyvesant's gymnasiums. Maybe a Mark Sanchez rushing touchdown or a Jack Margolis 30 point game will be recalled here and there, but

not much else will be taken out of this winter in sports.

If "almost" did count, the world would be a much better place. I would get a 100 on every test, George W. Bush would never have been elected president and the Jamaican Bobsled team would have won a gold

If everyone relaxed a little bit, then the fear of failure that exists in many athletes would not be so strong.

medal in the 1988 Winter Olympics. A loss of the electoral vote and a crash on one of their last runs left both Al Gore and the Jamaican team empty-handed.

Similarly, the Jets' head coach, Rex Ryan, wouldn't have had to make excuses for being so confident, and Stuyvesant's sports teams would be enjoying some postseason action.

But this is wishful thinking. "Almost" will never count.

However, it can get better. The solution: don't put so much pressure on teams to succeed, especially in high school. If winning isn't praised so highly, then losing won't feel as bad. Maybe teams that finish the season just under .500, or lose in the early rounds of the playoffs, will be remembered and appreciated.

I'm all for competition. In fact, I'm very competitive. I take games of ping pong, connect four and checkers all very seriously. But I've been starting to feel that being overly competitive isn't such a great thing after all. If everyone relaxed a little bit, then the fear of failure that exists in many athletes would not be so strong. Fans wouldn't be so emotionally invested in their favorite teams. I wouldn't be so depressed every time the Jets get eliminated from the playoffs or a Stuyvesant team fails to make the playoffs.

While my new idea seems to eliminate everything that is bad about playing and following sports, it also eliminates everything that is great about playing and following sports—the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. The excitement of riding the fine line between these two emotions is what many sports fans live for.

However, investing so much into your home team may not be worth it. Many fans are left feeling miserable. For a mediocre team, there should not be any expectations. Then

all success will come as a pleasant surprise, without disappointment and depression.

At Stuyvesant, we are ac-

As of now, "almost" only counts for horseshoes and hand grenades.

customed to pressure. But all that pressure ever does is build fear of failure, which only leads to disappointment. Just as Stuyvesant students are disappointed when they do not live up to their expectations or their parents' expectations, players and fans also get disappointed. A bad grade or a bad performance in a game is equally disheartening.

Sports fans must decide how strongly they want to support a team. With less pressure on athletes to succeed, "almost" may count for something. But as of now, "almost" only counts for horseshoes and hand grenades.

Boys' Indoor Track

Illness and Injury Can't Slow Track Team

continued from page 20

Coach Mendes noted that although the indoor and cross country teams are equally successful in the Borough Championships during both seasons, the latter is more successful at the City Championships. This year's City Championship will take place on February 27.

There are many field events that constitute a meet. Long jump, high jump, triple jump, pole vault and shot put are all factored into the scoring at each meet. "Unfortunately, here at Stuyvesant, our facilities are limited," Mendes said. "We have a limited availability of places where we can learn the events. So many people use the Armory, and we don't have rectangular hallways in school where we can do the workouts."



Rosa Huang / The Spectator

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Sports

Raising the Bar: Girls' Gymnastics in High School

continued from page 20

cause the judges have a list of imperfections that they can deduct points from. Judges check for bent knees, flexed toes, loss of balance or wobbling, stopping in between specific skills, wobbly arms and the height of a jump during specific skills. These imperfections can lead to a deduction of 0.1-0.4 points. A major 0.5 point deduction is given for a fall in any event. This deduction is also given if a gymnast touches the ground to prevent herself from falling.

Judges have also begun to penalize gymnasts for performing unnecessary skills poorly. "The judges this year told us that if we add extra skills that are unnecessary to our routines and we do not perfectly execute them, they hurt us rather than help us," senior and co-captain Molly Balsam said.

The first, and the shortest of the four events, is vaulting. Gymnasts run towards the table, a slightly-inclined metallic apparatus, jump off a spring and do a skill as they are going over the vault. The height of the vault can be adjusted to meet the team's preferences. Each gymnast performs a vault two times and the better of the two scores is the score the girl receives for the event.

An important element for vault is the run up. There is no set distance that the gymnasts are required to run, so gymnasts begin running from where they are comfortable. The run up is important because it builds up the momentum that the gymnasts require to successfully jump over the vault. A bad run up can cause

a gymnast to mistime her jump or jump over the springboard.

The next event is the balance beam. Gymnasts are given up to two minutes to perform a routine on a wooden beam and then dismount the beam. If they fall off during the performance they are allowed to get back on the beam, but each fall leads to point deductions.

Staying on the beam is one of the greater challenges for the gymnasts. The beam is only four inches wide but is five feet high, making it an intimidating apparatus for them to perform on. Every skill on the beam must be performed perfectly to keep from falling. "You have to make sure you do everything straight and clean because the tiniest error can cause you to fall," senior Alexandra Greenberg said.

Gymnasts who have fallen off the beam once are likely to become nervous and lose confidence, making them more prone to another fall. "Whenever one of us falls off the beam during competition, we all yell out 'shake it off' so that they know it's ok and all they have to do is regain their composure and get right back up there," Balsam said.

Floor exercise features a mixture of dancing and tumbling, during which the gymnasts must perform a series of skills while staying in the boundaries of the 42 inch by 42 inch square floor exercise mat. Music is an integral part of the routine and must be between 60 and 90 seconds long and cannot contain words. Gymnasts usually link certain skills to music so they can remember the order and timing of their skills.

Uneven parallel bars is the lowest scoring of the four events. The apparatuses involved are

two horizontal bars, one lower than the other. The height of both bars can be changed depending on preference. Usually, the five gymnasts performing on the uneven parallel bars collectively decide on a height and all five compete with that height. Gymnasts are required to start on the lower bar and must transition to the higher bar at least

**"Execution is
the only
thing we can
improve
on bars."
—Vasken
Choubaralian,
coach and
physical
education
teacher**

once during their performance. They are allowed to transition back to the lower bar, but most of the gymnasts on the team are not able to accomplish this feat. If a gymnast falls off the uneven parallel bars, she is required to get back on within 30 seconds. Refusal to do so results in a severe penalty to her score.

The low scores on uneven

parallel bars are due to the gymnasts' low starting values—given to the gymnasts because many of them are not able to perform the required skills for the event. "Execution is the only thing we can improve on bars," Choubaralian said. "It's hard to add something new to bars within one season."

It is up to the gymnast to decide how difficult she wants her performance to be. The Felines prefer to balance difficulty and execution when choosing their routine. Most of the gymnasts are willing to take risks during their routines by adding more difficult skills that they have not perfectly mastered. However, each of the gymnasts has her own preference for the skills she will incorporate.

"I pretty much do the tricks that I am comfortable with and that I know are some of my hardest tricks," junior and all-around gymnast Chloe Hirschowitz said. "I base my difficulty on what other people are doing. I always try to take it a step farther than whoever I am competing against."

Every season ends with an eight team finals meet on the second Wednesday of February at Aviator Sports & Recreation Gymnastics Center. Last year, the finals produced scores much higher than those in the regular season. The Felines scored an average of 102.71 in their five regular season meets, and this score jumped to 116.00 in the finals. The scores of the eight participating teams increased by an average of 12.62.

There may be several reasons for the substantial increase in scores that finals produce. The gymnasts have gained experience throughout the regular season and feel pressure to perform better at finals. This has trans-

lated into better routines for the gymnasts. Judging may also be a factor in the jump in scores. There is one judge for each event at finals, whereas there are only one or two judges in total at the regular season meets. "Judg-

**"I always try to
take it a step
farther than
whoever I am
competing
against."
—Chloe
Hirschowitz,
junior**

ing isn't as rushed. It's much more calculated at finals," senior Alexandra Greenberg said.

In gymnastics, perfection is defined by a score of 10.0. However, this feat has yet to be achieved and may not be accomplished in the near future. "We're being judged on an Olympic standard and the girls in the Olympics don't even get 10's," Choubaralian said. Though this standard may be a far way off, the girls train hard every day to get even a little bit closer to it.

Imelda Ko: Playing by the Moment

continued from page 20

her a much-needed break from schoolwork. "When you're playing a sport, your mind can go blank," Ko said. "You don't need to think about that failed test or homework assignment—at least for a little bit." Yet sports have been more than a mere break for Ko. She speaks of sports as if they have motivated her more than anything else could.

"There's something rewarding about putting all your effort into a play—about throwing yourself towards a goal," Kosaid.

Ko's playing style embodies the coaching mantra, "Leave it all on the court." Ko not only puts all her effort into each play, but she is not afraid to sacrifice her body for a point. "She always tries her best," senior and fellow co-captain of volleyball and basketball Alex Albright said. "Even in something as simple as running at the end of practice, she's always leading the pack."

Her aggressive attitude was perhaps most evident during the All Seniors Volleyball game—an all-star game of sorts for high school seniors. Ko spoke proudly of a dig she made during the game, which kept the point alive. A dig is a volleyball hit, in which a player dives for the ball, striking it before it hits the ground.

But Ko's all-or-nothing playing style has had its drawbacks. During the final month of last year's basketball season,

her knee gave out while she was chasing a loose ball. Injuries are unfortunate for any athlete, but especially painful for a player that views the spring as the "off-season," and a time to train for the next year. Although Ko spent the month on crutches, she was happy to cheer her team on from the sideline: "It's awful to finish a season injured, but it was great to still be there for the team," Ko said.

Despite the months of rehabilitation and physical therapy, the injury did not have a lasting effect on her play. This year she made the plays she typically makes, and was the same supportive teammate as before. The only difference was that now she appreciated what could very easily be taken away from her.

"I started playing basketball, shooting around every weekend starting from when I was 9 or 10, but now, I can't imagine myself not playing a sport because it has become a part of who I am," Ko said.

Not only has Ko made sports a part of herself, she has shared her love for the game with all of her teammates. "It's immediately clear that she's a captain," Albright said. "It's not that she's wearing a C on her jersey. The team respects her and listens to her."

Imelda Ko will be attending Bowdoin next year, where she hopes to play volleyball.

Boys' Swimming

Top Seeded Pirates Look to Reverse Playoff Misfortunes

continued from page 20

ponents by large margins. However, the team did have some rough patches in the early portion of the season. "It [the season] started off a little choppy because the rookies were just getting used to how the team runs and what is expected of them, but they caught on pretty quickly," senior and co-captain Alex Ting said. "The nine rookies and the returners all get along pretty well and help each other grow in terms of swimming."

While its record did not show any signs of struggle, the team definitely thought it had room for improvement. In fact, the veterans on the team stepped in and began talking to the newcomers to help them focus.

"We've started to come together the last two to three weeks as a team," said senior and co-captain John Connuck, before their regular season finale against DeWitt Clinton on January 22, which they won 65-32. "They [the team] realize that it's serious and we have a good shot at winning and we've talked to them about it. Practices have gotten a lot harder, and we've become a lot stricter on them as well."

One of the underclassmen on the team, sophomore En Wei Hu Van Wright, has particularly shined and become one of the top swimmers in the city, swim-

ming the 100 yard backstroke in 53.4 seconds (the third best time in the entire city) and excelling in many other events as well. Meanwhile, senior Peter Malychev has continued to be one of the most consistent swimmers on the team, excelling in both the 200 and 100 yard freestyle races.

Going forward, the Pirates face tough competition in the playoffs, which will be a twelve-team tournament. However,

before they look to become city champions, they have a more proximal goal to accomplish. "For now, our main focus is on the Opens Championships on February sixth and seventh, where we hope to defend our 15-year streak," Ting said. To help the team rest for the playoffs, Bologna insists that he will begin to ease up the rigor of the practices.

Despite its long run of success, the team knows from its recent playoff failings, against Fort Hamilton last year, and Brooklyn Technical the year before, that it cannot take anything for granted. "Compared to the schools we'll be competing against in the playoffs, the teams we've been playing so far aren't that great," Malychev said. "We've got a tough road ahead of us." That road, however, was eased considerably when the Pirates discovered that Brooklyn Technical High School and Fort Hamilton, seeded numbers two and three respec-

tively, will be on the other half of the tournament bracket and the Pirates will only have to face one of them in the finals, should they advance that far. Adding to their confidence is the fact that they have comfortably defeated both Hunter College High School and Bronx High School of Science, the main competition in their bracket, once already this season.

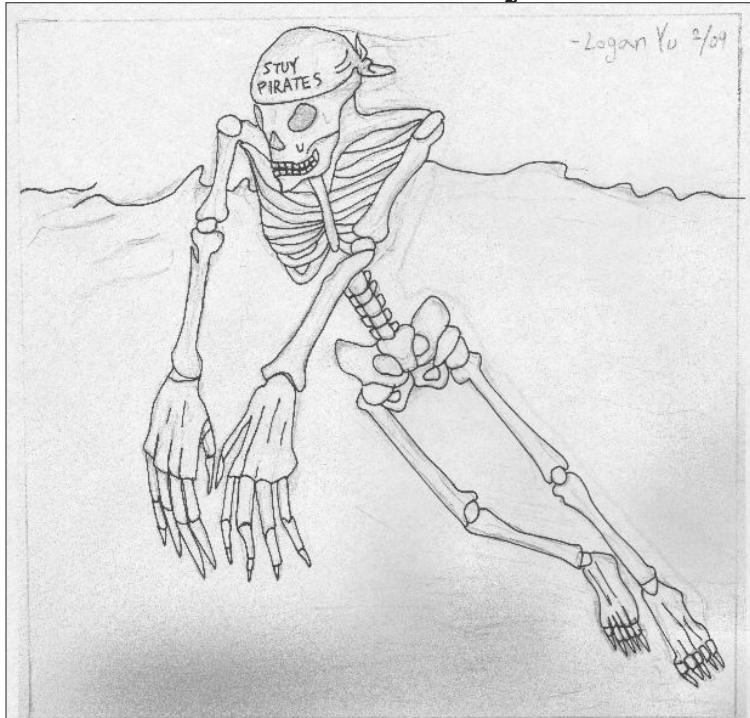
Ting believes that the team should take advantage of the opportunity. "Our seeding places us in a great position with a lot of potential to win City Championships this year. We are taking it one step at a time trying to continue the legacy of the Stuyvesant Pirates," he said.

Bologna has tremendous faith in his swimmers, as well, and believes that in the end, their efforts throughout the season will determine the final result. "They just have to trust that they're prepared properly throughout the season. If they know personally that they've worked hard during our practices, then it will pay off in the end. If some kids didn't give it their all, then the results will be something they're not looking forward to," Bologna said. "It all depends on how much they want it. If they are hungry for a championship, then we have the ability to win it."

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Swimming

Top Seeded Pirates Look to Reverse Playoff Misfortunes



By YIFENG ZHAO

Once again, Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team has reached the Public Schools Ath-

letic Association's Citywide Playoffs. The Pirates have not lost a single regular season meet. Yet, for the experienced members of the team, that has now become

the top ranked seed in the playoffs for the third straight season, this is where they would like the similarities with their previous disappointing playoff run to end.

The Pirates is a team with one of the proudest legacies at Stuyvesant, and its members have come to expect success. Even with the loss of talented seniors, the team continues to remain undefeated in the regular season year after year. Head coach and physical education teacher Peter Bologna attributes the constant flow of talent to the work ethic students bring with them to Stuyvesant. "Stuyvesant students are a different bunch from students at many other high schools," Bologna said. "They really put their minds to something, and it seems that swimming is something the school is good at year in and year out."

To At this point, this season has offered much of the same type of success and the team has been consistently defeating op-

continued on page 19

Raising the Bar: Girls' Gymnastics in High School



Courtesy of Anca Dogariu
Junior Chloe Hirschowitz competes on the balance beam at a recent meet.

By MOIN SATTAR

In the summer Olympic Games, gymnastics is one of the most widely viewed events due to the suspense of watching someone teeter on the balance beam, and the awe of seeing the jumps the gymnasts perform. However, not many people understand the difficulty level of each event, nor do they realize how the gymnasts are being scored. This knowledge decreases even more when it comes to high school gymnastics, which is why the sport does not get as much recognition as do sports like basketball and football. Gymnastics is one of the more difficult sports a high school athlete can participate in, and success is not easy to come by.

For most teams, success is measured by the number of wins and losses. The Felines, Stuyvesant's girls' varsity gymnastics team, however, do not fit into

this category. In girls' gymnastics, the playoffs are not decided by wins and losses, but rather, by the average team score for the five regular season meets.

Every meet is separated into four events: vaulting, uneven parallel bars, balance beam and floor exercise. A maximum of five gymnasts may compete in each event, but only the top four scores in each event are added together to get the subscore for that event. The subscores are then added together to get the team's total score for the meet. Each of the four events requires the gymnasts to possess and display unique skills to the judges.

There are three categories of skills: A skills, B skills and C skills. C's are the hardest of the skills, B's are of medium difficulty and A's are the easiest. Uneven parallel bars, balance beam and floor exercise require a minimum of four B skills and one C skill. However, physical

education teacher and coach Vasken Choubaralian prefers that the girls have four B's and two C's in their routines. "This way, if they mess up one C, they have a chance to make it up with a second C," he said.

The performance of each gymnast in each event is scored with a numerical value from 0.0 to 10.0. Judges take into consideration both the difficulty and the execution of the performance before assigning a score. Based on the difficulty of the routine, a starting value is given. This is the maximum score that can be achieved. From this starting value, judges will deduct points for imperfections. Neither Choubaralian nor the gymnasts are told the starting value of their performance.

In order for a gymnast to get a good score, her routine must be very well executed be-

continued on page 19

Imelda Ko: Playing by the Moment



Frederick Dai / The Spectator

Senior Imelda Ko sporting her basketball jersey

By JACK GREISMAN

the playoffs again this year.

This past season with the Vixens, Ko had 24 aces, 38 digs and 36 kills. "She's an excellent athlete," coach of the Vixens and physical education teacher Phil Fisher said. "Once she developed her techniques and passes, she was also a very good role model."

While her numbers may be impressive, Ko has never cared much about her statistics. "I am never thinking about how many points I have scored or how many service points I have won," Ko said. "I play for each point, or for each rally—I play by the moment."

Ko is a two-sport athlete. She has played for the Phoenix, Stuyvesant's girls varsity basketball team, each winter, and for the Vixens, Stuyvesant's girls varsity volleyball team, the past three falls. Ko was on the girls junior varsity volleyball team her freshman year. She was a captain of the Vixens this past season, and is currently a captain of the Phoenix.

Ko has averaged over 4 points a game for the past two seasons with the Phoenix, who are hoping to make

continued on page 19

Boys' Indoor Track

Illness and Injury Can't Slow Track Team

By OLIVIA CHU

that Surkont, who has already qualified for the 3200 meter race of the City Championships, is an up and coming star.

"It's great to hear and it's encouraging to know, because it just motivates me to do better," said Surkont, when asked about the team's confidence in him. "Our team, in general, is very supportive of one another so each individual achievement is seen as one for the team [...] [The juniors' and seniors'] knowledge has been invaluable and I would not be in this position without them."

The team, which consists of approximately 95 percent of the distance runners from the cross country team, has found success in all four grades. Coach Mendes has been very impressed with freshmen Jack Stevenson, Kangjiao Lei and Cameron Abma. He is hopeful that they will be able to place in the upcoming races, and said that they are definitely capable and in the position to do so at this point.

A strong junior class consisting of Andy Chen, Billy Barnes and Jinghao Yan, as well as an experienced senior class, has anchored the team. The fastest relay team as of now consists of seniors Pace Lee and Elvis Mitropoulos, who recently returned from an illness, and Surkont and Barnes. This lineup is hoping to duplicate the success of last year's team which placed second in the 4x200 meter race.

continued on page 18