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Stuyvesant Excels in ExploraVision Regional Competition



(left to right) Alison Reed, David Kurkovskiy, and Norine Chan were named regional winners for their research project.

By ANNE CHEN
and SHARON CHO

Stuyvesant performed exceptionally well in the 2011 Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) ExploraVision Awards competition. The school had the second highest number of honorable mention teams in the nation, with 14 out of 500 teams receiving this distinction. Additionally, sophomores Norine Chan, Alison Reed, and David Kurkovskiy were named regional winners for their research projects.

This marks a large increase in the number of honorable mention teams from Stuyvesant, considering there were only two in 2010 and four in 2009. The change can be attributed to the increasing number of participants, particularly from the Research and Regents Chemistry classes of chemistry teacher Samantha Daves.

The ExploraVision Awards program is an annual science

research competition run by the Toshiba company and NSTA for students in grades K-12 who reside in the United States, U.S. Territories, or Canada. Each team consists of two to four students—not necessarily from the same school—who simulate real research and development teams. They research a scientific problem of interest and design a potential invention that could be made using future technology.

Their research paper described the history of the existing technology, how the technology could be altered for use in the future or the invention of a new type of technology, what breakthroughs would be required to make this possible, and the consequences of using the technology in this supposed manner. The teams also created drawings of their proposed invention and five Web pages they could potentially create.

All students enrolled in the Research Chemistry course

were required to submit a project to ExploraVision. "I held special lessons on how they should do research, the main things that they should incorporate into their reports, and how they should present it," Daves said. "I went over drafts multiple times with the students, and just tried to help them throughout the whole process."

The sophomore regional winning team was one of six winners in the grades 10-12 division. For their project, Chan, Reed, and Kurkovskiy proposed the idea of a three-dimensional kidney bio-printer, named 3Drenal, which would allow human kidneys to be reproduced flawlessly. It would use stem cells taken from the bone marrow of patients who suffer from renal failure and need a replacement organ. A mechanically made organ would let the patient receive a needed kidney sooner and lessen the risk of rejection.

"The idea is to be able to take a patient's stem cells and print what they need," Chan said. "Using the patient's stem cells lessens the risk of the body rejecting the kidney because it's the patient's own cells." The team decided upon stem cells from bone marrow, in particular, because this practice avoids the ethics debate over stem cell research. Moreover, bone marrow cells are able to develop into a wider range of cells. The innovation will also have a checking system. "As it's being printed, the checking system will take a microsample of what's being printed and run urine through it [to test it]," Chan said.

The research process was

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Harvard and Princeton Reinstate Early Action Option

By SOULIN HAQUE,
MIRANDA LI,
and SARAH MIN

Harvard University and Princeton University both announced on Thursday, February 24, that they are adopting a single-choice early action admission option for the high school class of 2012.

Early action is a non-binding process that allows students to apply to schools by November 1 and receive their results by mid-December. Yale University is the only other Ivy League institution with an early admission program; the other Ivy League schools have an early decision option, which obligates accepted applicants to attend the institution.

According to articles from the Princeton Web site and The Harvard Crimson Web site, Harvard and Princeton both had an early admission option prior to 2007, but ended it in the hope that other colleges would follow suit. However,

the University of Virginia was the only one to do so, and it reinstated its early action program in 2010.

Harvard administrators eliminated the option, because they felt favored applicants from privileged backgrounds since many underprivileged students apply to multiple schools in order to compare financial aid packages. "Students from more sophisticated backgrounds and affluent high schools often apply early to increase their chances of admission, while minority students and students from rural areas, other countries, and high schools with fewer resources miss out," the then-Interim University President Derek Bok said in "Harvard Announces Return of Early Action Admissions Program," published on Thursday, February 24, in The Harvard Crimson.

Princeton University soon did the same. Dean of Admissions Janet Lavin Rapelye stated that their main reason "in eliminating an early program was to encourage ex-

cellent students from a broad array of backgrounds and geographical areas to consider Princeton, and to assure them that their applications would be reviewed with the same care and attention as every other applicant," she said in "Princeton to Reinstate Early Admission Program," published on the Princeton Web site on Thursday, February 24.

However, the lack of an early admission option had a few pitfalls. Administrators at both Harvard and Princeton lost applicants, including low-income and minority students, to schools with an early admission option.

To remedy this, Harvard will add recruiting programs that encourage students to partake in existing programs, such as the Undergraduate Minority Recruitment and Return to High School programs, which aim to heighten interest in Harvard among students of diverse backgrounds.

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The Best and the Brightest

Racism at Stuyvesant: Is the issue really that black and white?

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Arts & Entertainment

A Voice That Carries Across the Atlantic

The voice behind the Totoro mask: senior Sang-A Bae.

Published Poet Visits Poetry Classes

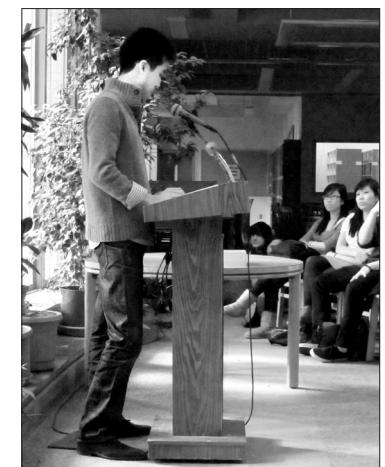
By NADIA HOSSAIN
and CHRISTIA ZHENG

Jason Koo, published poet and the author of "Man on Extremely Small Island," gave a poetry reading in Stuyvesant's library on Friday, March 4. The event was intended for English teacher Emily Moore's poetry classes, but anyone interested was encouraged to attend.

Moore, who coordinated the visit, met Koo through a mutual friend two years ago. She invited him, because "it's so great to meet a living writer, especially a young, cool living writer like Jason Koo," she said.

Koo earned his BA in English from Yale, his MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Houston and his PhD in English and Creative Writing from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The recipient of numerous awards, including the De Novo Poetry Prize and the Asian American Writers' Workshop Members' Choice Award for the best Asian American book of 2009, his work has been published in journals such as "The Yale Review" and "The Missouri Review."

Koo started off the afternoon by reciting "A Natural History of My Name," which, he later said, was inspired by his own nicknames, such as "Haiku"—which sounds like "Hi Koo."



Poet Jason Koo gave a poetry reading and question and answer session in Stuyvesant's library on Friday, March 4.

Abe Levitan / The Spectator

His poems describe everyday experiences and are vehicles to comment on his cultural identity and lifestyle, such as "Why Can't You Meet a Nice Korean Girl." The poem relates his mother's wish for him to marry a "nice Korean girl," to his dream of getting to know Lucy Liu, who is not Korean, but is "close enough," he said.

Koo, who is Korean-American, attributes his studious character, as well as his alienation, to his cultural background. "It's just really

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Students Win Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

By EDRIC HUANG
and EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

The personal narrative you wrote for English class. A snapshot from your photography class. Some poetry you hastily jotted on a notepad during your subway ride. A painting inspired by a doodle scribbled in the margins of a notebook. All of these works, often written off as amateur, may in fact be respectable works of literature and art.

It is such works, created and submitted by Stuyvesant students, that garnered many awards in the 2011 National Scholastic Art and Writing Competition. At the regional level, 11 students won Gold Key awards and 11 won Silver Key awards for writing; four won Gold Keys awards for art. Additionally, seniors Shilpa Agrawal and Rebecca Scher received gold and silver medals, respectively, for writing, at the national level.

The competition is open to middle and high school students who reside in the U.S. or Canada, or who attend an American school abroad. Students submit their work in December to be reviewed by a regional affiliate of the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. The works are judged on the basis of originality, technical skill, and personal voice.

This year, there were over 180,000 submissions from 30 categories. In the New York City region, Scholastic bestowed 351 Gold Key awards. The Gold Key submissions, which were the highest of the regional level, were forwarded for national-level review in February, and the 1,300 students who received national awards were no-

tified in March. This year's national award winners will be honored at the National Ceremony in Carnegie Hall on Tuesday, May 31, and their works will appear in various Scholastic publications.

"Some of the pieces submitted and awarded were pieces done in class," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said. "At the same time, of course, the teachers aren't teaching these kids specifically how to write to win this competition."

Agrawal, who submitted a short story, personal essay, and nonfiction portfolio, received a gold medal for her short story titled "Box-Spring Mattress." It tells the story of a young Indian woman named Shalini and her arranged marriage, while painting a portrait of India, colored by Agrawal's own experiences. "The reader gets to learn a lot about not only the young woman, but her traditions, her thoughts, and the man she is married to, all while she's doing the simple act of making a bed," Agrawal said.

She originally handed in the piece as an Advanced Placement Great Books assignment, which was to write a short story with a clear narrative and inner monologue. "The works I submitted were written in a school setting, so I had already gotten feedback on them," Agrawal said. "Then, I edited them on my own with the help of some friends."

"I am not at all surprised that Shilpa received accolades for her work," said English teacher Jonathan Weil, who had Agrawal in his Creative Non-fiction class last se-

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Published Poet Visits Poetry Classes

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isolating to be Asian-American in Missouri," he said.

Students appreciated Koo's relatable personal stories and jovial spirit. "Jason Koo was charming and knew how to please the crowd. He kept the audience engaged," junior Nancy Sun said. "His nonchalant presence and charming humor on the podium transcended in his poems as well."

Koo, whose poems are generally lighthearted and entertaining, allowed some students to perceive poetry in an entirely new manner.

"His poetry was really unique. Not a lot of people would write about LeBron's elbow," senior Michelle Hor said. "It shows you have to think outside the box and you can't write about generic things."

After the six-poem recitation, there was a question and answer segment.

"It was great to hear about his writing process, particularly his style of spending days working on a single poem instead of pumping it all out in one sitting," senior Sophia Abbot said. "It's important for us as students to remember that writing is a process and the first attempts at a piece are never the same as the final product."

Nine Stuyvesant Students Advance to Biology Olympiad Semifinals

By NANCY CHEN

Do you ever wonder why you did not inherit your mother's cute dimples? Do you understand the inner workings of the trees swaying in the breeze? Do you know how your lungs take in life-sustaining oxygen?

Juniors Jonathan Ha, Jennifer Zhao, Janan Zhu, Bill Lin, Edward Li, and seniors Brendan Huang, Faheem Zaman, Daniel Hayeem, and Andy Huang could tell you the answer. They were announced as this year's semifinalists in the USA Biology Olympiad (USABO) on Tuesday, March 8.

The USABO is a national biology competition for students hoping to represent the United States in the International Biology Olympiad (IBO). It consists of a series of tests starting with the 50-minute Open Exam, which contains 50 multiple choice questions. It covers highly advanced topics, including cell biology, physiology, human anatomy, and genetics. Students who meet the cut-off mark and score in the top ten percent are named semifinalists.

"Everything in the world is based on biology," Li said. "It's exciting learning about life and how it works." He added that the test "forces me to study more and gives me a goal to reach so that it's not just studying for fun."

Biology Olympiad team faculty adviser Roslyn Bierieg agreed that the breadth of information on the exam poses a challenge. "The material is based on the [Advanced Placement] Biology book, and way beyond that. The wording [of the questions] is difficult, and you never know what they're going to ask," she said.

This year's Open Exam cut off score was 29 out of 49, as one question of the 50 total was disqualified. The highest scorers from the 23 Stuyvesant students who took the exam were Ha and Huang, who each scored a 36, not far behind the highest score in the nation, 42.

To prepare, students studied independently using their AP Biol-

ogy textbooks. Their studies were supplemented by after-school review sessions led by Bierieg and lectures held by various biology teachers, including Dr. John Utting and Dr. Jonathan Gastel. Topics explored during these lectures ranged from enzyme kinetics and cell respiration to evolution.

"You can't just concentrate on one topic," said Zhu, who took the exam last year. "The format of the exam can be intimidating if you haven't taken it before."

Students also utilized practice exams and previous exam questions as study material. In comparison to these exams, this year, "there were some easy questions about ecology and evolution, so it slowed me down a bit. I was being cautious," Lin said.

The nine semifinalists will take the USABO Semifinal Exam, which will be administered after school on Friday, March 25. The top 20 scorers in the nation will move on to the National Finals, which will be held at Purdue University from Sunday, June 6, to Saturday, June 19. Last year, four Stuyvesant students participated in the final exam.

The four highest-ranked finalists in the National Finals will move on to represent the United States in the IBO, which will be held in Taipei, Taiwan in July. Though Stuyvesant usually does well in the USABO, no Stuyvesant student has competed in the IBO yet. If students qualify this year, they will compete with representatives from over 55 countries in practical and theoretical examinations and will be graded individually for gold, silver, and bronze medals. According to IBO Web site, The United States, which has been participating in the IBO since 2003, has won a total of 20 gold medals, six silver medals, and two bronze medals to date.

"It's an honor and a privilege working with [the students]," Bierieg said. "The beauty is that beside all the other courses that they take, they make the commitment to spend time studying on their own."

Global Citizens Corporation Holds Peace and Conflict Event

By MARTA BAKULA

The Stuyvesant Global Citizens Corp (GCC) held a Peace and Conflict Event to raise awareness amongst the Stuyvesant student body about important problems facing Uganda. The event occurred on Wednesday, March 16, in the Action Center in Battery Park City.

The club showed a documentary made by Invisible Children to raise awareness about the civil war in northern Uganda. The war, which started in the early 1980s, is a continuing conflict between two rebel groups and the Ugandan government. Thousands of children have been forced to serve as soldiers.

Invisible Children is an organization that makes documentaries exposing the hardships these children face and attempts to tackle the issues of peace and education in Uganda. It provides hundreds of secondary school and university scholarships to Ugandan students, rebuilds schools devastated by war, and supplies these schools with equipment, technology, and resources.

Last year, members of Invis-

ible Children came to speak to students and show their documentary, "Invisible Children: Rough Cut," about the hardships of the children affected by the war.

Juniors and GCC members Genghis Chau and Linda Cai helped prepare for this year's event. "Many people don't really think about the conflict in Uganda," Chau said. "The things that the army makes them do, like kidnapping their family members or killing other people, are certainly subjects that we should be raising awareness of."

The documentary "Sunday" exhibited the struggles of the children involved in the civil war. It focused on a teenage boy and child soldier named Sunday, who was orphaned at a young age and forced to live in a displacement camp. In this camp, he struggled to survive in a society plagued by poverty, malnutrition, and disease.

"These documentaries bring the stories into America," junior and Stuyvesant GCC President Tiffany Wang said. "They really make you realize how bad the conditions are."

The documentary showing

was followed by a discussion amongst the twenty attendees and GCC members regarding the crisis in Uganda. They then received free food and played games in which the prizes were rubber bracelets with the name "Invisible Children" printed on them.

Social studies teacher and GCC faculty adviser Brenda Garcia said, "It is important to make many people aware of this, because it's a conflict that has taken place for over two decades and has a great impact on society. We hope the United States will intervene and potentially help other countries as best they can."

The Stuyvesant GCC typically holds many Peace and Conflict Events throughout the school year in order to raise funds for Invisible Children and increase awareness about the current situation in Uganda.

"It all starts by knowing what is happening around the world," Wang said. "Essentially, no matter where someone is from, we are and always will be a global community that needs to help one another out to our fullest abilities."

Five Stuyvesant Students Advance to Physics Olympiad Semifinals

By LINDSAY BU

Though quantum mechanics and electromagnetism problems often befuddle even the brightest students, there is a select group of Stuyvesant students that loves spending its free time engrossed in these types of problems.

Seniors Chin-lee Jaoke and Yichi Zhang, and juniors Kevin Peng, Rene Zhang, and Max Wang, who advanced to the semifinals of the United States Physics Olympiad (USAPhO), are part of that group.

USAPhO is a national physics competition that selects students to be participants in the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO). This year, 30 Stuyvesant students, along with over 3,000 others from various high schools nationwide, participated in the first stage of the selection process, the F=ma exam.

The 75-minute multiple-choice test focused strictly on mechanics, which includes projectile motion, kinematics, fluid motion, and rotational motion.

According to the IPhO Web site, although the "extensive use of calculus" is not required for the examination, students were still encouraged to have a solid foundation in the subject for the exam.

"Physics is heavily math based, and my strong background in mathematics further sparked my interest in physics," Peng said in an e-mail interview.

Approximately 400 top scorers of this exam moved on to the semi-final round of the competition.

The semifinal exam is used as the basis for selection of the U.S. Physics Team members for IPhO. This three-hour long and six free response question exam

is far more intensive than the first F=ma test, though the topics covered are the same.

the drive to study independently for this exam. "I did not believe I would do well on the open exam because I have not taken a course in physics since freshman year, but I still spent a good amount of time preparing for both the open and the semi-finalist exam," Peng said in an e-mail interview.

The twenty top scorers on the semifinalist exam then travel to the University of Maryland-College Park at the end of May for the annual U.S. Physics Team Training Camp. For ten days there, they take part in intense studying, testing, and problem solving.

At the end of the training camp, five students are selected for the Traveling Team. These students will represent the U.S. Physics Team in the IPhO. They receive three additional days of intense laboratory work.

The only Stuyvesant student to be selected as a U.S. Physics Team member was Danny Zhu ('08), who was chosen in both 2007 and 2008.

According to the American Association of Physics Teacher Web site, the United States has participated in the IPhO since 1986. Since then, the nation has consistently ranked near the top 10 out of the over 60 countries competing in the competition. The U.S. Physics Team has received 41 gold medals, 28 silver medals, 29 bronze medals, and 11 honorable mentions. Zhu won a gold medal in 2008 when he was part of the traveling team.

Nonetheless, "It's encouraging that this year we have five semifinalists when last year we only had three," Dr. Ali said. "Hopefully, if the students work hard and the teachers do what they can to help them, at least one of the 2011 finalists will be from Stuyvesant."

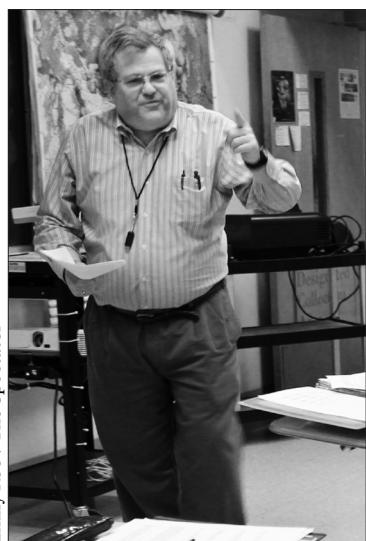
"For such a hard exam, it's essential that students personally invest their time and effort to studying the material.

Teachers cannot do much but provide resources for which the students can read," physics teacher and Physics Olympiad team faculty adviser Dr. Jamal Ali said.

Students needed to have

the right attitude and work ethic to succeed.

Mock Trial Team Eliminated From Tournament



Emily Koo / The Spectator

Stuyvesant's Mock Trial team is composed of students from Mr. Weil's Civil Law class.

By ALEX GURVETS
and NOAH ROSENBERG

Stuyvesant's Mock Trial team, coached by social studies teacher Eric Weil, advanced through the first two rounds of the New York City High School Mock Trial Tournament. However, the team was eliminated from the tournament in the latest round on Thursday, March 10.

The tournament is organized by the New York State Bar Association's Law, Youth, and Citizenship Committee and coordinated by the Justice Resource Center (JRC), a provider of civic and law education programs in New York City.

Stuyvesant takes part in two New York State law competitions over the course of the year. The current, spring competition is called Mock Trial, while the fall competition is called Moot Court. The two competitions are substantially different in structure. Whereas Moot Court is an examination of a predetermined legal case, Mock Trial is a fully staged trial before a judge, with a prosecutor, defendant, and witnesses. In both programs, all materials and evidence that the students are allowed to use in the trials are made up by the organizers and distributed to the teams.

In the New York State Mock Trial tournament, students debate one case for the entire season. In this year's case, Pat Parker v. Village of Empireville and Board of Trustees of the Village of Em-

pireville, former high school student Pat Parker brought a lawsuit against the city of Empireville, after it refused to honor a parking pass she had bought from the government that would have allowed her to park near the high school. In the affidavit, Parker insisted that the village's action was unconstitutional.

Students were given a 100-page case background guide detailing the specifics of the case. Each round, different teams face off and assume the role of the plaintiff or the defendant. In the first and third rounds, Stuyvesant argued the case of the defendant, and, in the second, argued the case of the plaintiff.

According to the New York State Bar Association's Web site, the "Mock Trial program is a competition that has two purposes. The first is to teach high school students basic trial practice skills. Students learn how to conduct direct and cross examinations, present opening and closing statements, think on their feet, and learn the dynamics of a courtroom."

The Web site continues, "The second and most important purpose of this competition is to teach professionalism. Students learn ethics, civility and how to be zealous but courteous advocates for their clients. Good sportsmanship and respect for all participants are central to this competition."

Performance is judged on a scale of one to five by the judges presiding over the competition. Each school's team is also ranked from one to 10 based on its level of professionalism during the trial.

Stuyvesant's Mock Trial team is composed of students from Weil's Civil Law class, who are mostly seniors. Six self-selected students on the team act as primaries and regularly participate in the competitions, while the other 18 serve as back-ups, in case of absence.

Weil tries to practice for the competition for 20 minutes of each Civil Law class. "We spent time for a good part of the first marking period going over the case. These kids had to essentially learn a person's life history," Weil said. "They had to learn all about the lives of the plaintiff, and the witnesses for both sides. On top of that they had to develop the abil-

ity to make cross-examinations, direct examinations, and objections. So they packed into 10, 11 days what other schools had three or four months to work with."

"We didn't have enough time to prepare," Liu said. "All the other teams, they got the materials in November or December and they've been preparing since then. We got ours the first day of class, which was on February 1st."

Stuyvesant's team made it through the two preliminary rounds, which eliminated 48 schools from the 96 that entered the tournament. The team did not score high enough to pass the third round, however, and was eliminated along with 15 other teams from different schools.

"When we lost they made a bunch of objections that we had never expected they'd make. We should have prepped a lot more for the unexpected," said senior Peter Liu, one of the six primaries.

Liu added that while other schools had guests from prestigious law firms come in to help them prepare, Stuyvesant's team was solely taught by Weil, without any aid from outside sources.

Weil, a former attorney, is in his first year of teaching at Stuyvesant and is new to the coaching position. "When I came on board, they wanted to have an attorney [as a coach], I suppose, so since I was an attorney before, they had me do it. Apparently, for at least one semester, nobody had taken over the coaching job," he said.

Huang said Weil plays an important role on the team, mostly because he "brings up points we might not have thought of."

No Stuyvesant team has ever won the New York State High School Mock Trial Tournament in the 14 years since Stuyvesant began participating. However, the team members have still enjoyed the time spent participating in the competition.

"[Mock Trial] definitely helped us with [Civil Law], to understand what it would be like in a courtroom," Liu said. "It was a lot of fun, and it taught us a lot about how law works, and how to think on our feet."

"We got bounced, but these kids did one hell of a job," Weil said. "I'm going to throw them a party."

Harvard and Princeton Reinstate Early Action Option

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Junior Kathleen Escoto said, "These programs could be effective in helping more minority students learn about the schools and open them up to more people who are interested. This in turn would make more people able to and want to apply."

"It's a great chance for people who are sure of their favorite school to have a better chance," Stuyvesant alumna Aviva Hakano-glu ('10), a current Harvard student, said in an e-mail interview. "On the other hand, for financial aid, it is a really difficult scenario. If you're looking for fairness, colleges should just have regular decision. But of course, every school wants the best, so from their perspective, having early admissions is a positive."

Princeton President Shirley Tilghman hopes that early action will give time to low-income applicants to consider the financial aid available before deciding which school to attend. "By reinstating an early program, we hope we can achieve two goals: provide opportunities for early application for students who know that Princeton is their first choice, while at the same time sustaining and even enhancing the progress we have made in recent years in diversifying our applicant pool and admitting the strongest possible class," she said in the Princeton Web site article.

Senior Shirley Liang doubts this would occur. "The number of minority and low-income applicants will not change with the reinstatement of early action," Liang said. "A lot of the people applying to Harvard have the school as their first choice already. Whether or not there's EA, it's still going to be the same type of people who are going to apply."

Principal Stanley Teitel believes the reinstatement of the early action program will not have a major effect on the Stuyvesant student body. "This year, almost half of the senior class did early action or early decision. That number will [not] change in the future," he said. "Students would prefer to apply early, simply because they do one application, and if it's accepted

[they] don't have to spend all that time filling forms, writing essays, or spending money on application fees."

This year's graduating class had 141 students apply to Harvard and 91 to Princeton. In 2006, the year before early action was eliminated, 11 out of 31 students who applied were accepted early to Harvard and 7 out of 8 were accepted early to Princeton. For the regular decision, the acceptance rates were 16 percent and 12 percent respectively.

"The only benefit from the reinstatement of this program would be that it [makes schools] more competitive," senior Darius Zhang. "Other schools who did not take away the early action would be stealing their students, and if the students accept those seats, they're losing potential talent."

College Adviser Patricia Cleary acknowledges that it may be easier for students to get into schools with the early option and that the students would prefer to have it. "Kids like [early action] for two reasons. First, if they have a school in mind, they can reduce their list a bit. Secondly, they can say how selective and give you a slight advantage because these schools are restrictive."

Many juniors want to apply to Harvard or Princeton, because of the early action option. "Early action would set me for the rest of the year," junior Tiffany Wang said, who wants to apply early to Harvard and regular to Princeton. "If I find out that I got in using early action, then I can enjoy the rest of the year after years [of hard work]. If I get deferred, then I would apply again using regular application process anyway."

"Being a minority, I think [early action] would open up opportunities for many students who would not usually apply, whether it's due to ethnic makeup or financial reasons," Escoto said. "Instead of just having people who apply to a bunch of prestigious schools, it would bring more people who genuinely want to go there."

Cleary says that the reinstated early action option is "going to help our students earlier and perhaps then alleviate a little stress. It's nice to have a school in your pocket."

Students Win Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

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mester. "I found Shilpa to be fabulous, sensitive, and deeply reflective, with a sophisticated sense of craft and most importantly, a desire to keep learning as a writer."

Scher received a silver medal for her general writing portfolio, which consisted of memoirs, personal narratives, short works of fiction, and poetry. "I took three different workshop classes, and at the end of them, I had to compile portfolios with works about personal experiences," Scher said. "It was easy for me to go back to those and pull out the works I was most proud of and the ones that were my favorites."

She is most proud of her personal essay, titled "Geographic Envy," which was written as a potential college essay. The piece is her attempt at understanding herself in relation to where she was raised. It discusses her occasional resentment of the urban lifestyle and the desire for the simplicity of the suburban experience. "I took such a risk with the topic," Scher said. "It's pretty self-aware, but it conveys an idea I've long struggled to express, and I'm pleased with the

word choice."

English teacher Emily Moore, who taught Scher last spring, encouraged her to try out for the competition. "The workshops we did in class certainly could have made it easy to find works to submit, and they require students to take their writing seriously," she said. "Not only is [Scher] a great writer on the page, but she contributes a lot inside and outside of the classroom. She loves writing, and she's also a great presenter of her writing in the form of slam poetry."

Grossman believes that the competition serves an important purpose. "Any organization that promotes student writing by acclaim is fantastic, and it's a nice validation for students and the amount of work they put into it."

Agrawal encourages students who are aspiring writers or artists to submit their work to similar competitions. "When you submit writing, you connect to it personally and feel confident about it," Agrawal said. "It gave me the opportunity to reevaluate and revisit my work and have different perspectives about it, which is something I encourage any student interested in writing to do."

Stuyvesant Excels in ExploraVision Regional Competition

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not without difficulties. "The most difficult part was getting all of the ideas together," Kurkovskiy said.

"It was like a love-hate relationship. It was hard to get through but in the end, it was really worth it," Chan said.

The next step for the national competition requires the team to create a working Web site and animations. The team members have and will be working with programs such as AutoCAD, DreamWeaver, Fireworks, and Final Cut Pro.

"The hardest thing is that we don't know how to use these programs," Chan said.

However, the team will be aided by artist, software system designer, and former Stuyvesant alumnus ('59) Paul Oratofsky. After biology teacher Dr. Jonathan Gastel contacted him, Oratofsky decided to get involved because he has "been looking to be connected with something substantial," he said. He will

provide guidance since some of the computer programs "have a steep learning curve and are very cryptic," he said.

The team was coached by chemistry teachers Dr. Zhen-Chuan Li and Samantha Daves and mentored by biology teachers Anne Manwell and Dr. Gastel. Manwell and Dr. Gastel mostly served as editors, clarifying on the biological aspects of the project.

"My main contribution was to share my experiences from last year," Dr. Gastel said. "Last year's and this year's projects are common in that they combine biological fields and growth factors and solid state engineering."

Last year's regional winners Donna Lee, Angela Fan, Mimi Yen, and Michelle Zhang designed the I-CEE: IKVAV — Scaffolding Center-Surround Eyesight Enhancement, which would use color-filtering photovoltaic cells to restore color vision and improve resolution in the human

eye.

Each student, mentor, and coach in the regional winning team receives a Toshiba camcorder. The team's school receives a Toshiba laptop. Winning students will also be presented with a plaque at Stuyvesant's awards ceremony, at which the honorable mention teams will also be acknowledged. The date of the ceremony is to be determined.

The national winners will be announced on Monday, May 2, after judges review the Web sites of individual teams for creativity, originality, and substance. They will determine a first place winner and second place winner for each of the four divisions: grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12.

"This type of experience is very rewarding for the students," Dr. Gastel said. "Even if they didn't win, they should feel that they've developed their research skills and critical thinking skills and in how they communicate their ideas."

News

StuyPulse Faces Complications at New York Regional



Courtesy of Derek Berg

StuyPulse members working on the base for their robot, DESdroid.

By MOHAMMAD HOSSAIN

Stuyvesant's robotics team, StuyPulse, competed at the FIRST New York Regional Event at the Jacob Javits Center from Friday, March 11 to Sunday, March 13. The team placed 47th out of 66 in the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC), far from its first place finish last year, and 18th and 27th of out 60 in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC). However, the team did win the Excellence in Design Award, and one of its members was named a Dean's List Finalist.

FRC was one of 43 regional competitions that qualified teams to compete at the FIRST Championship at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Missouri, which will be held from Wednesday, April 27 to Saturday, April 30.

The FRC robot, DESdroid, competed in a game called Logomotion, which required the robots to place inflated tubes onto racks and deploy minibots to climb a pole to score points. DES-

droid made it to the quarterfinals before being eliminated, despite having a broken arm and a minibot that would not deploy.

"We ran into problems, with the minibot having a lot of issues. But I'm happy with the team's performance, as they've made some accomplishments and worked together despite setbacks," faculty adviser James Lonardo said.

The team had prepared for the competition, since the kickoff on Thursday, January 8, when the game for this year's FRC competition was introduced to the general public. "We worked over two hundred hours on the robot for over six weeks. We pretty much live in school," said senior Alex Dong, who noted that the team, led by faculty advisers Rafael Colon and Lonardo, often stayed until 10 p.m. working on the robot.

The two FTC robots also experienced some problems while in competition. The objective in the FTC challenge, named "GET OVER IT!" was to place mul-

tiple batons into goals to score points. Stuyvesant's robots faced electronic problems, with the robots failing to move during some matches.

StuyPulse did leave the competition with the Excellence in Design Award, sponsored by the design software maker Autodesk. With the help of mentors and his team members, senior Elliot Cohen animated the winning short film, which is called "FIRST Contact" and depicts an alien creature working with the help of a robot. The award "honors clear and compelling evidence of excellence in design development, documentation, communication, and presentation."

Director of Programming Alejandro Carrillo won the Dean's List Finalist Award, which honors students who display leadership while on the robotics team. The team nominated Carrillo for his work in the programming division, which included organizing a curriculum on robotics for the novice programmers.

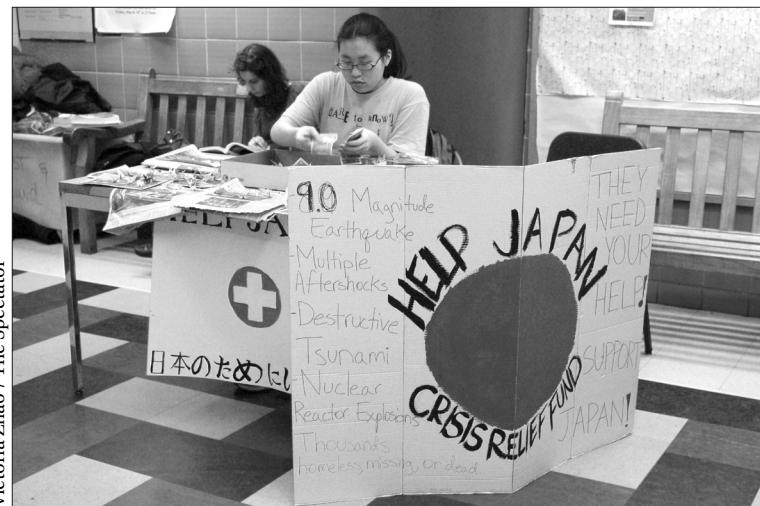
"I was shocked and absolutely thankful that my team did this for me," said Carrillo, who will go on to compete for the Dean's List Award at the national level.

The team is now preparing for the next regional competition, which will take place in Hartford from Thursday, March 31 to Wednesday, April 2. It is their last chance to qualify for the national competition.

"We've got two weeks until the next competition, and we'll be using the time we have to make improvements and resolve issues in time for Hartford," Lonardo said.

"We've seen what we have to do at NY, and we're looking forward to Hartford, and we're going to win," Carrillo said.

Students Fundraise for Japanese Relief



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

Students from the Japanese classes have set up tables on the second floor to collect donations for either the American Red Cross or the Japan Society.

By ALLIE BURNS
and FARZANA YEASMIN

In light of the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on Friday, March 11, the students at Stuyvesant have joined together to raise money to support relief efforts.

Students in the Japanese classes have a personal connection to helping with the relief effort. Japanese teacher Chie Helinski is from Tokyo, and though her family members are safe, the students' pen pals from Sendai, a city hit hard by the earthquake, have been unreachable.

The students have set up tables on the second and fifth floors, where they have been asking for donations and handing out origami cranes to donors. The tables will be up for as long as they continue to raise funds, and the money raised will be sent to either the American Red Cross or the Japan Society.

While it is not mandatory for everyone taking Japanese to help fundraise, each class has contributed to the cause.

Senior Aia Sarytcheva is spearheading the classes' fundraising efforts. "All the Japanese classes have made some kind of contribution, whether it's paper for the origami or giving up their free periods or spreading the word, so we've all definitely mobilized," she said.

"We have a family-esque bond, forged by our Japanese class, and we want to give back to the thing that keeps us together," junior Swara Saraiya said. "Japan is in an awful, devastating situation, and I want to help the country that needs every bit of help it can get."

The Stuyvesant Red Cross Club has also been working daily for Japan relief. "Our goal is to assist people in Japan and raise awareness about their situation," sophomore and club member Matthew Chin said.

Red Cross began fundraising on Monday, February 14, setting up a table by the bridge and giving out Red Cross wristbands for every two dollars donated. "We raised \$800 the first day," freshman and club member Hyunsu Kim said. "If everyone in Stuy gives a dollar, that'd be \$3,000 dollars that could be used to help." Red Cross will send its funds directly to the American Red Cross, which is fundraising for Japan. The other half will be given to Helinski, who will send it to the Japan Society, a nonprofit organization that strives to strengthen the relationship between America and Japan.

The Red Cross Club and the students in the Japanese classes collaborated to host a bake sale on Friday, March 18. Members and volunteers from both groups brought in baked goods to sell during the day, raising over \$1,000.

SPARK faculty adviser Angel Colon urges the Stuyvesant community to come together to make fundraising a success. "One of the things we're really promoting is the Stuy network. I'm sure there were some members of our community that were affected or who know people who were affected by the earthquake," Colon said. "Something to keep in mind is that if it happened there, it could easily happen here."

Students who are not part of either SPARK or the Japanese classes "can tell all their friends and persuade them [to donate]," Chin said.

"We all feel that we need to do something to contribute because doing nothing is the worst thing we could do," Sarytcheva said. "As far as what we've done so far, it's been an incredible team effort."

Nobel Laureate Roald Hoffman Speaks to Stuyvesant Community

By EUGENIA SANCHEZ

Fifty-six years after graduating from Stuyvesant, Nobel Laureate Dr. Roald Hoffman returned to give a lecture to the school community titled "A Little Chemistry, and More About What I Learned From Stuyvesant and 45 Years at Cornell." Dr. Hoffman talked about his experience at Stuyvesant and his scientific career, ending with some advice for current students.

"He has a great fondness for Stuyvesant. We thought it would be a chance to connect the school—past, present, and future—as this alum could inspire our current students to become future leaders," Parents' Association (PA) Co-President Wai Wah Chin said.

After surviving Nazi occupation during his childhood in Poland, Dr. Hoffman moved to New York. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School in 1955. In his autobiography for the Nobel Foundation he writes, "Among my classmates were not only future scientists, but lawyers, historians, writers—a remarkable group of boys."

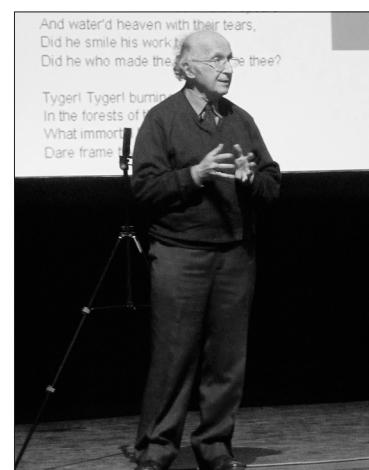
He went on to receive a PhD from Harvard University and share the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Kenichi Fukui in 1981. According to the Nobel Foundation, the two were given the award for "their theories, developed independently, concerning the course of chemical reactions."

Dr. Hoffman has also received recognition beyond the world of science, becoming famous in the literary world for his poetry, books, and plays, and for exposing the creative and humanistic sides of chemistry. In his books, which include "Chemistry Imagined: Reflections on Science, Oxygen," and "Memory Effects," among others, Dr. Hoffman combines science with essays, poems, and art, all of which are inspired by chemistry. In a recent interview at the Imperial College of London, Dr. Hoffman said, "I love the English language and its hidden, associative ways; and secondly, I try and I am not afraid of exposing my failures in trying to write. Poetry and chemistry have like value, for they are both deep, human ways to understand the same and not the same, to live in this beautiful and terrible world."

Lecture tickets, which sold for \$10 through PayPal, could be purchased on the PA's Web site, as well as could an opportunity to dine with Dr. Hoffman for \$500. The PA organized the event with the help of Co-Presidents Chin and Alex Cai, and Corresponding Secretary Barbara Reiser, along with Stuyvesant staff. Roughly 300 people attended.

"With his international travel, talks around the globe, and continuing work, he is a very, very difficult man to schedule," Chin said. "We are lucky to have him here. We chose Dr. Hoffman because he's Stuy Alum. He's one of you [...] He's a great researcher, but he also believes in education."

After introductions from Principal Stanley Teitel and Chin, Dr. Hoffman ascended to the stage. He spoke about his



Dr. Roald Hoffman gave a lecture on in the Murray Kahn Theatre on Saturday, March 12.

childhood, showing the audience important pictures from his early life, including the attic in which he hid from the Nazis, his class picture in a refugee camp, and an image taken by a local newspaper when he won the Intel Science Competition while a student at Stuyvesant.

He then spoke about the fundamentals of applied theoretical chemistry. "Chemistry is about transformations and the interesting thing is that we can understand the transformations we see at the macroscopic level in terms of microscopic structures—atoms, and molecules," Dr. Hoffman said. Despite his love for the subject, he admitted that "while I was at Stuyvesant, I took all the Advanced Placement courses that were available, that is, except chemistry."

Dr. Hoffman attempted to share his love of the field with his audience. He showed the audience a diagram of several molecules and said, "Look at these molecules. They're simply beautiful and beautifully simple."

However, he also stressed the importance of incorporating the humanities into your studies. "I know you go to a science school, and your main drive may be science, but it's very important that you appreciate the arts, foreign language, and literature," he said.

"Here's a man who is not only a remarkable scientist and educator but also has the generosity to come back to speak to Stuyvesant students. He was moving and gave solid advice to the students. I think it was a wonderful way for students to spend a Saturday afternoon," biology teacher Marissa Maggio said.

After nearly an hour, he ended the lecture by saying, "I will now give you some unsolicited advice regarding college: relax. The college you go to will not determine the rest of your life."

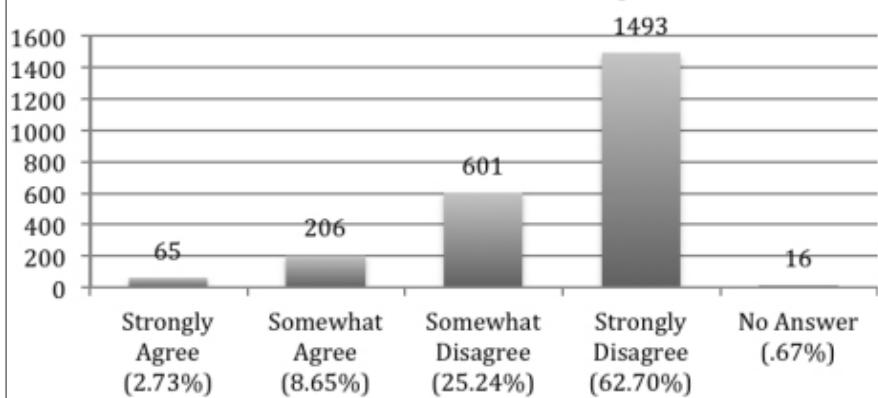
Dr. Hoffman, who was presented with a special award for his excellence and dedication to Stuyvesant, also stayed for a question and answer session. The audience could buy a variety of his poetry books, which he was willing to sign.

"It was very inspirational and exciting to see that someone who used to walk the same hallways that we do everyday could do such important things with his life," freshman Dorit Rein said. "His speech was interesting and inspiring and it helped me to envision a future beyond Stuyvesant."

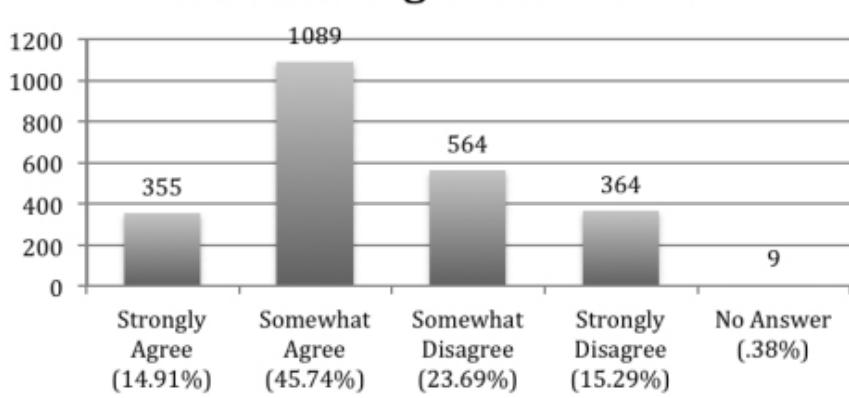
Features

Survey Results

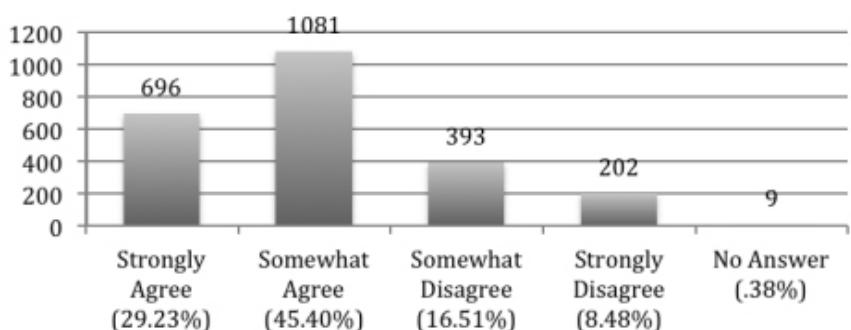
I have been discriminated against at school because of my race.



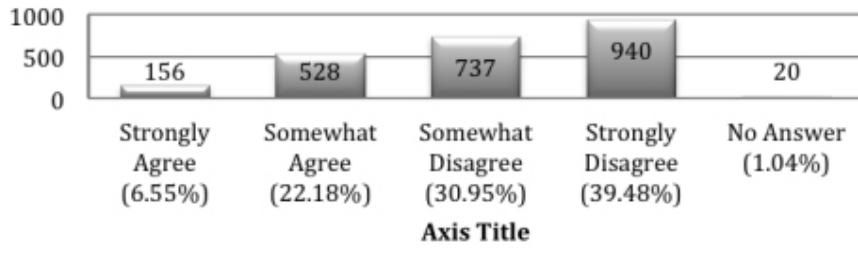
My friends come from the same ethnic background as I do.



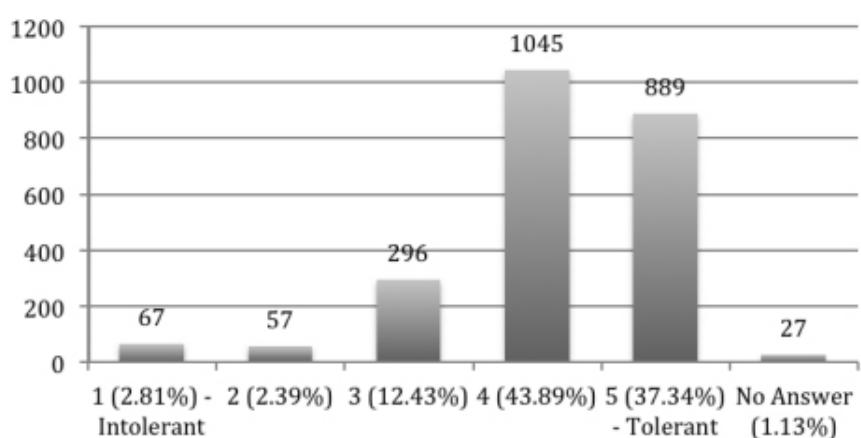
I have been in social situations at school in which racial comments and/or jokes have been made.



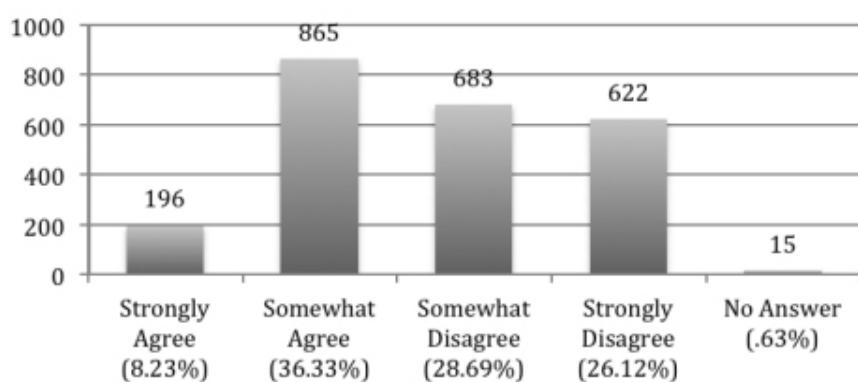
In these situations, I have found that these jokes and/or comments reflect underlying racial issues.



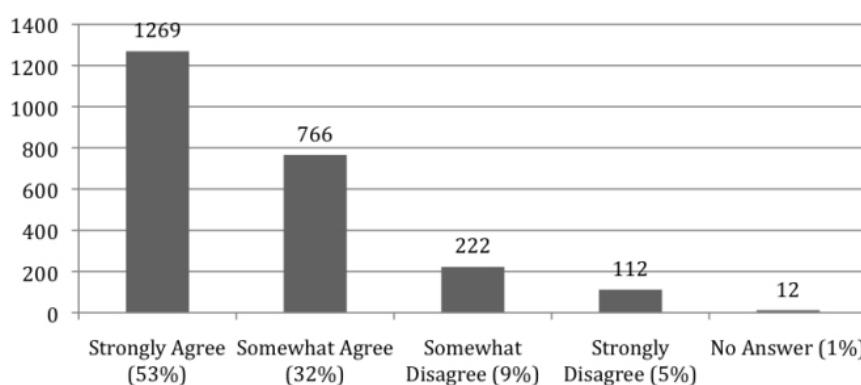
Tolerance at Stuyvesant



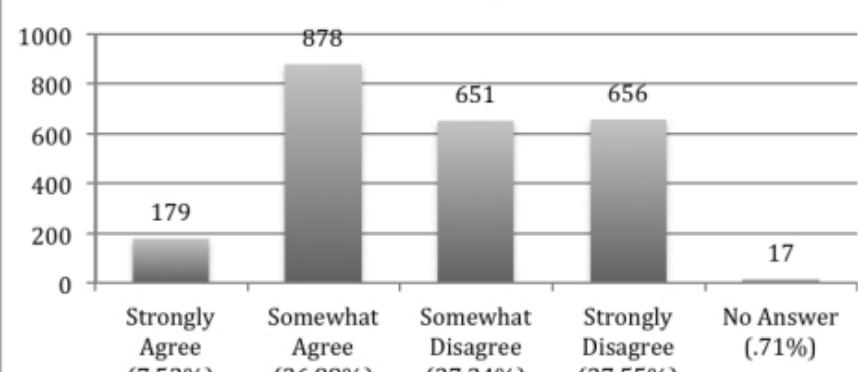
I have stereotyped people at school based on their race.



My parents encourage me to be tolerant of other races.

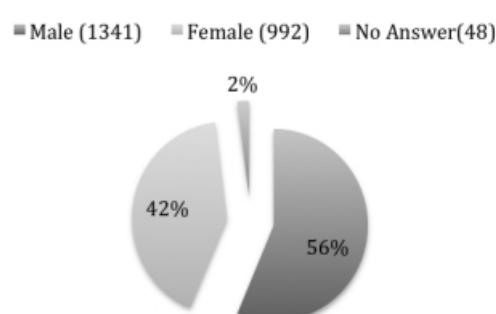


People stereotype me at school based on my race.

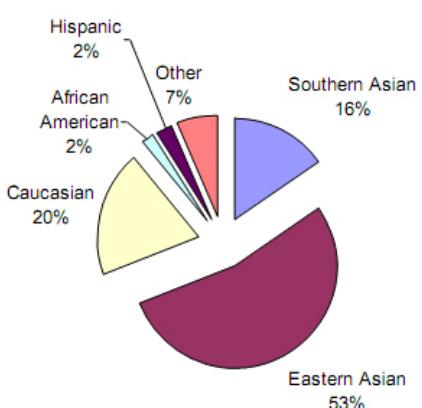


Total Number of Students surveyed:
2,381

Gender of the Surveyed

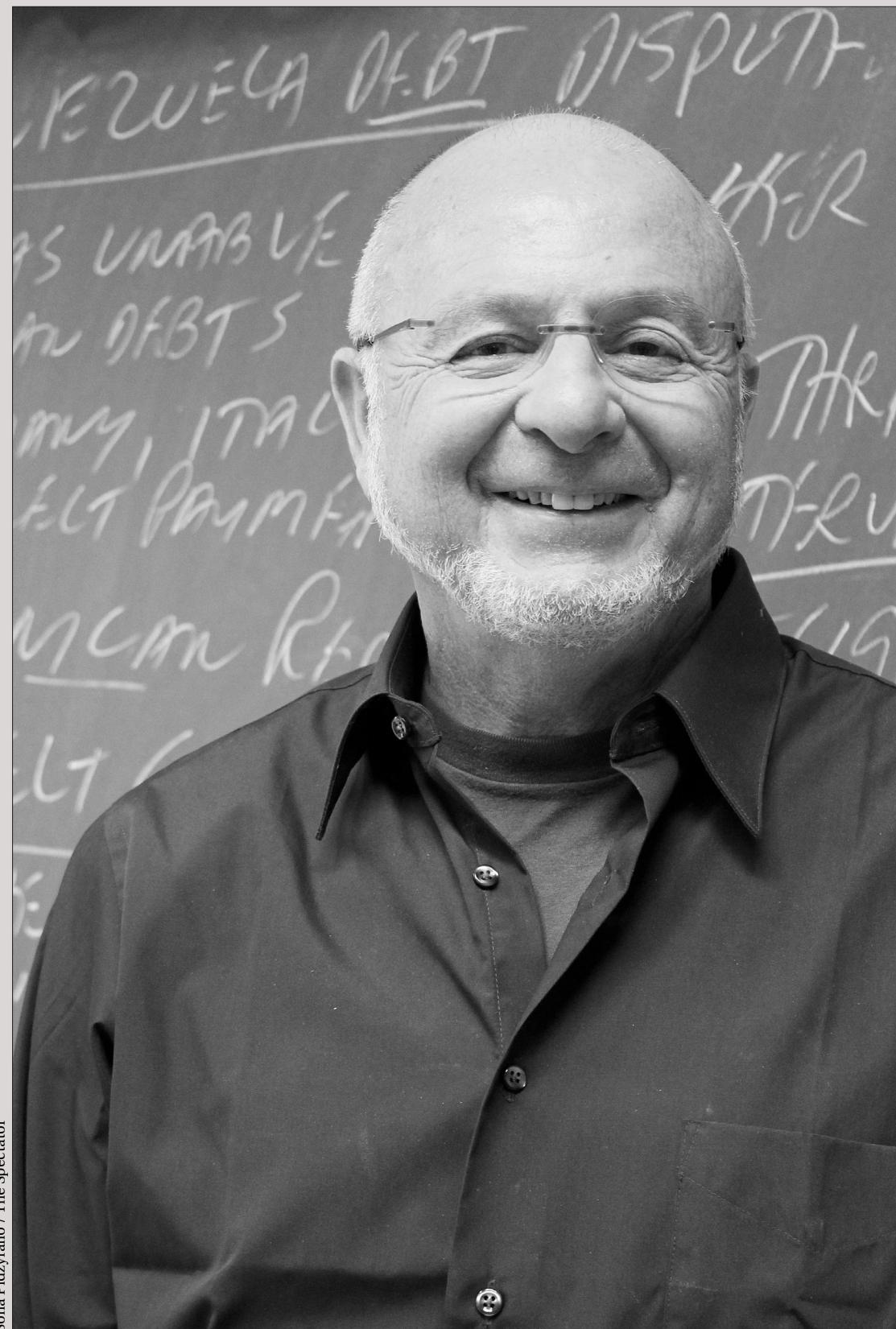


Race of Survey Takers



Features

The History of Dr. Stern



Sofia Pidzyralo / The Spectator

Social studies teacher Dr. Reuben Stern has been teaching at Stuyvesant for 21 years.

By LIBBY DVIR

Listen to just five minutes of one of his classes, peppered with personal anecdotes and humorous asides, and it's obvious that Dr. Reuben Stern is an expert on more than just U.S. history. As an immigrant to America and a world traveler, Dr. Stern, one of the longest employed teachers in the school, has an exciting past that is a history in and of itself.

Dr. Stern was born in the British Mandate of Palestine, modern day Israel, to German parents who fled their home country to escape the Nazis. He lived in Israel until age eight, speaking only German and Hebrew. After his father's death, his mother decided to move with him to New York to escape the fighting in Palestine, just prior to Israel's independence, and to find greater opportunities for her son.

They arrived at Ellis Island in March of 1948. "It was frightening. I never wanted to come," said Dr. Stern, recalling how he disembarked in shorts, inappropriate attire for the New York winter. "I wasn't used

to the cold weather," he said. Though he was hesitant at first, the wonders of the country gradually won him over. While at Ellis Island, he saw snow on the ground for the first time. And later on, when he visited relatives, he rode an elevator, which he had never done before. "I loved the elevator so much that I remained in it for several hours," he said. Eventually, he said, he "became an American."

Dr. Stern and his mother settled in Far Rockaway in Queens, where he enrolled in the third grade in a local public school. The transition was difficult, as it took him three months to become fluent in English. They later moved to Washington Heights, where Dr. Stern attended P.S. 115 and later George Washington High School.

Showing talent in mathematics and the sciences, Dr. Stern decided to enroll in City College for engineering, but ended up switching to the liberal arts because "it was more interesting," he said. He started studying for a Bachelor's Degree in History, but quit school

in his sophomore year in favor of going abroad. In an act the Jews refer to as "aliyah," he immigrated to Israel. "I went thinking I would never return. But that didn't really work out," he said. He stayed at different kibbutzim, Israeli communal villages, for six months, but had difficulty adapting. "I was too American. It was a whole new life," he said.

Upon his return, Dr. Stern reenrolled in college, only to leave again in the middle of his senior year to join the Peace Corps. He trained for the Ivory Coast in Africa, but never went. It was the Peace Corps' year of inception, and Dr. Stern was an outspoken critic of the way it was run at the time. "It was a mutual separation," he said. He returned to City College and finished his senior year, earning a Bachelor's Degree in History.

Dr. Stern entered the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to study for a Master's Degree in European History, but left before its completion, switching back to City College, where he finished the degree. "I missed the energy of New York.

[Amherst] is a small hick town compared to New York," he said. Then, he started a Doctorate in History at New York University, but never completed it because he got involved in another field: health education.

Meanwhile, Dr. Stern got married to his wife, a teacher at the time. Her time off in the summer appealed to Dr. Stern, an ardent traveler, and he thought he would try being a teacher, like her. "I was willing to try anything," he said. Consequently, he quit his job working as an investigator in the New York City Department of Welfare and, in September of 1967, he began teaching.

He started off working in Richmond Hill High School, teaching general science for three years. Subsequently, he taught a variety of different social studies courses in Bushwick High School. At the time, the school received a grant to train a teacher in sex education and have the teacher train a group of students to manage a room where other students can walk in to learn about sex and receive informative videos, condoms, or simply information. His students nominated him for the position. "The kids felt comfortable with me," he said. He accepted the nomination and began taking special training classes at schools such as Hunter and NYU. In the process, he earned a Master's Degree and Doctorate in Health Education, with a major in Sex Education.

After teaching sex education, Dr. Stern participated in Holocaust studies. This subject interested him because of his family history; most of his relatives were killed in World War II. After giving workshops to teachers, in which he taught how to approach the genocide in the classroom, working with organizations such as the Anti Defamation League, and becoming involved in the network of teachers and professors working to educate the public in Holocaust studies, Dr. Stern was invited to Albany to take part in the committee of teachers putting together a syllabus for genocide studies for New York State. In 1988, he was recognized for his work and was awarded the Louis E. Yavner Teaching Award, a prestigious award given annually by the New York Board of Regents to a New York State resident for distinguished contributions related to the Holocaust and human rights teaching. "I'm very proud of that award," Dr. Stern said.

Subsequently, Dr. Stern taught social studies at Franklin K. Lane High School, where Assistant Principal Organization Randi Damesek's father was principal. Though he said he "enjoyed being a teacher under him," in 1990, he transferred to Stuyvesant in order to teach in a more challenging environment. He has taught Global History, Advanced Placement European History, and Government, and currently teaches regular and Advanced Placement U.S. History. He also served as a dean, a job he enjoyed because he "got to meet many students who were

not in my AP class," Dr. Stern said.

Outside of his career, Dr. Stern enjoys traveling. During the summers of his college years, he went backpacking around Europe. He continued to do so with his wife after their marriage, and later with his children once they were old enough. Every couple of years, Dr. Stern visits his family in Israel. "I'm always emotional about going to Israel," Dr. Stern said. Some of his favorite trips were to China, which, he said, was "something different from most of my travels," and Vietnam, which, he said, "was really something to see after being active in the antiwar movement. The people in Vietnam are amazing." He also fondly recalled his trip to the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War, which "was quiet an experience," and to Paris, the capital of France, and Petra, an ancient city constructed by the Nabataeans in Jordan.

Dr. Stern is also an avid reader. He reads fiction and nonfiction, bestsellers, and historical novels. "Whatever seems to be current," he said. The latest book he's read and enjoyed is *To the End of the Land*, by David Grossman, an eminent Israeli author.

But most importantly, Dr. Stern loves spending time with family. He has been married to his wife for what will be forty-six years in May, and together they have one son and one daughter and three grandchildren aged six, eight, and nine.

Of his forty-four years spent teaching, twenty-one have been at Stuyvesant. "Whatever I teach, I usually enjoy," Stern said. He acknowledges that his teaching career spans an exceptionally long time, and he attributes it to his students. "It's the interaction with the students that keeps me going," he said.

Many of his students reciprocated his sentiment. "Dr. Stern is one of those rare teachers whose mentoring extends far beyond the classroom. His engaging teaching style coupled with his disarming smile and unique style truly make him one of a kind," junior Gil Spivack said.

"Funny, dedicated, and outstanding, Dr. Stern not only understands his students' needs inside of class, but also outside of class. He gives a reasonable amount of work and devotes entirely to his students that they will do well on the AP," junior Jennifer Huang said.

Dr. Stern says he wants his students "to think and question everything. I try to give all points of view to every topic. I try not to be subjective. I also try to teach the class as a flowing story, from beginning to end. I'd like [the students] to be anxious for the following day's lesson, and have them say 'What's the next chapter?'" Dr. Stern said.

But the question students may want answered is not only what the next chapter in American history is, but also the next one in the already rich history of Dr. Stern.

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Hidden in Plain Sight: Facing Racism at Stuyvesant

In recent weeks, drama and scandal have shaken the Stuyvesant community in the wake of an amateur rap video containing racial slurs and statements of bigotry and violence. As the scandal has escalated, so has the criticism of the entire Stuyvesant population. Our school is being accused of fostering racist behavior and discriminating against minority students. While many of us have attempted to deny this charge, race undoubtedly influences our environment. The question is how much it does so, and whether our school suffers from this societal malaise.

A unique racial breakdown is one of the most obvious characteristics of this institution. Students from various demographics all over the city attend Stuyvesant, because of its reputation as a successful specialized high school. In recent years, the majority of these pupils have been Asian. In 2011, 72 percent of students accepted to Stuyvesant were Asian, 24 percent were Caucasian, and less than five percent were black or Hispanic. Within these categories, there are several sub-classifications of race, ethnicity, and country of origin, not to mention the students whose self-identification crosses these distinctions.

Stuyvesant is not a hotbed of racial hatred, where minority students are discriminated against or treated as second-class citizens. The scandal has taken one reality about race relations at Stuyvesant and distorted it in order to exploit a story. However, the self-segregation amid our multicultural environment produces a Stuyvesant mindset largely influenced by racial differences.

In a school of over three thousand students, different social trends are bound to arise and abate, and race undoubtedly plays a part in the formation of these "cliques" at Stuyvesant. Indeed, it is more common than not for individuals of the same race to be part of the same social circle.

Beginning on the first day of school, students flock toward other students similar to them-

selves, people they can feel more comfortable around. These similarities often pertain to ethnic origin as well as to shared interests and middle-school background. On a small scale, looking "clique to clique," the latter factors play a larger part in the formation of these groups. Individuals who belong to the same extracurricular activities are bound to befriend each other. In addition, students who live close to each other are more likely to become friends, since they can see each other frequently and often end up commuting together. However, on a larger scale, it becomes apparent that the divisions are also racially influenced. To the outside observer, Stuyvesant is explicitly separated according to racial background. And while it is common to see cross-over between groups, there are generally clear racial divides. This self-segregation, while not resulting in direct discrimination, has wide-reaching effects on the racial attitudes of all students attending the school.

At Stuyvesant, your race can be used to label you and stereotyping can be found in many forms. Members of the same race even stereotype themselves, though they are proud of their origins. For example, one of the most common stereotypes at Stuyvesant is that Asian students are book smart pupils who excel in math and science. While oftentimes stereotypes have a degree of validity to them and declaring any grade below a 90 to be an "Asian fail" can be considered a harmless joke, it is from this kind of profiling that a mindset arises at Stuyvesant that may be more racist than students may want to take credit for. This manifests in many ways. Instead of describing someone as "this sophomore" or "this girl from my English class," one will often say, "this Asian sophomore" or "this brown girl from my English class." Even if the student body is not filled with students spewing racial slurs or practicing discrimination, most individuals at Stuyvesant classify their peers based

on race, often forming opinions based on stereotypes projected by their peers or the media.

While many people claim that race-based statements hold no weight, we must admit that this sort of profiling can lead to a limited understanding of other groups, and each other. As is evident from the recent scandal, the line between what might be considered acceptable and what is offensive is blurry.

Many would claim that any racist aspects of the school result from the nature of society, and that we are no worse than the rest of the city. However, the truth is that we are sometimes so blinded by the desire to defend Stuyvesant's reputation that we fail to recognize or examine the issue at hand. Simply because the problem exists elsewhere does not mean that it should be accepted and not actively resisted.

Denying the existence of racism in order to ward off the headline-hungry media is not the approach to take in light of the recent events. In fact, it's an insult to our reputation as the "brightest" students in the city. We all need a wake-up call: prejudiced behavior and stereotypes exist at Stuyvesant, and they affect students' actions every day.

Solving or eradicating racism is not going to happen easily or quickly. It is embedded in our society and often in those of our parents' native cultures. However, this does not prevent all of us from reforming how we think about and act toward other races or social groups. The fact that it exists everywhere means it exists here and we are not innocent. If, every day, all students make a conscious effort to improve their mindsets, progress will be made, even in the face of unconscious actions of stereotyping or self-segregation. Students should ask themselves how race affects them and work to be aware of these effects. Only through self-awareness can future scandal be avoided, and a less skin-deep mindset in our uniquely diverse environment be achieved.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

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of the
Student
Body"

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OP-ART



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The Spectator will now accept unsolicited Op-Ed pieces written by outside students, faculty, and alumni. These columns, if selected, will be published in The Spectator's Opinions section. Recommended length is 700 words. Articles should address school related topics or items of student interest. Columns can be e-mailed to specreaderopinions@gmail.com.

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

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

FOR THE RECORD

- Harry Poppick was uncredited for the photo of senior Joseph Park in "Someday This Generation Will Rule The World."
- In Issue 10, in "With GrayMatter, Students Fund Student Matters," Graymatter Founders Shah Ullah and Jeremy Meyers are seniors in high school.
- In "Juniors (Almost) Bring the Whole Stage Down," tech directors Abe Levitan and Noah Kagan were not credited for building the set.

Opinions

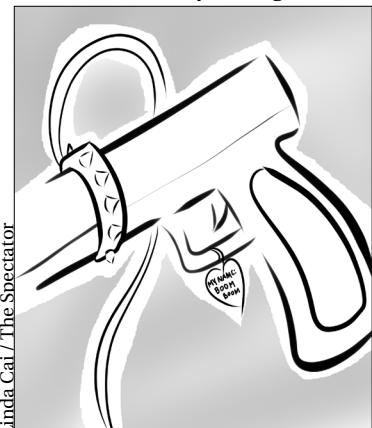
Don't Stick to Your Guns



Leany Zhao / The Spectator

**By NEETA D'SOUZA
and DANIEL SOLOMON**

A rogue gunman runs into a town-hall meeting in a supermarket parking lot and begins firing his semiautomatic Glock on the crowd. It sounds like a scene out of a twisted video game, but it was a situation that became all too real on January 8, 2011, at an event held by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, in Tucson, Arizona. Jared Loughner, the shooter, took the lives of six people that day and maimed thirteen others, including Giffords, who took a bullet to the head and barely clung to life.



Linda Cai / The Spectator

What makes this tragedy so heart-breaking is that it could have been entirely prevented. For years, Congress has refused to enact common-sense gun-safety laws, failing to regulate high-powered firearms and combat-grade ammunition and allowing deranged men like Loughner to turn deadly. Indeed, the gunman was able to squeeze off 31 shots before he had to reload. However, some are finally trying to take action. Carolyn McCarthy, a Democratic representative from Long Island, took the first step forward, introducing new legislation that would allow only 11 bullets in a gun at a single time.

Unfortunately, others are attempting to take giant leaps backward, advancing bills that would loosen curbs on gun ownership. In Texas, one such proposal would stop colleges from prohibiting guns on campuses. Another would allow guns in public libraries. These bills may sound ridiculous, but they are backed by one of the largest organizations in the United States, the National Rifle Association (NRA).

The NRA is an advocacy group that is backed by some of our nation's most powerful Republicans. It ascribes to a radical interpretation of the Second Amendment: everyone should be able to own a gun, of any kind, with any bullets, and be able to carry it anywhere. When confronted with situations like the Tucson tragedy, its members state that universal gun ownership would allow us to defend ourselves more effectively. The logic behind this statement is incredibly flawed, as more guns means more violence, not less; this legislation would only produce a self per-

petuating cycle of brutality. Regardless, the NRA is one of the most politically powerful organizations in our nation, and its opponents usually suffer major defeats in elections. When such an organization backs the bill to allow guns in colleges, we realize that the odds of this bill winning passage are very high, which is pretty frightening.

This legislation would be extremely detrimental to college life; allowing young adults to bring guns onto their campuses is unsafe, and it defies



Mostafa Elmabdoly / The Spectator

a spike in campus crime and provide students who are under major pressure with a very feasible method of suicide. Having guns on campus is also a major distraction, and students won't be able to focus on their schoolwork or social life when they have to worry about the stressed person sitting next to them in class who could potentially open fire at any time.

Allowing firearms on campus would also greatly affect the way that college students, and society as a whole, view the use of guns and violence in general. When we allow people to carry guns, we imply that it's a good idea to use violence to solve problems. These students will apply the principles that they learn in colleges for the rest of their lives, and they are the ones who will be leading our governments, businesses, and philanthropic funds in the future. This irrational and aggressive mindset, which will be fueled by this bill, will change our future for the worse.

The horror that occurred in January should have taught our government a lesson, but instead, some are trying to

pass a bill that will only make things worse. The idea that students should be allowed to carry guns on college campuses is outrageous and should be fought aggressively, along

This irrational and aggressive mindset will change our future for the worse.

with the perverse philosophy that underpins it and the organizations that marshal support for it. Otherwise, we may soon be faced with a repeat of Tucson, and no one wants that.

DIARY OF A MAD SENIOR: We're Not Robots. I Pinky Swear.



Harry Poppick / The Spectator

By SHILPA AGRAWAL

Dear World,

Newsflash: We're just high school students.

Sincerely,

Stuyvesant High School

The message I have displayed above, modeled after the increasingly popular, brainless website, www.dearblank-pleaseblank.com (yes, we Stuy students visit websites other than Wolfram Alpha), conveys a simple but important message. In light of recent events involving the racially abusive video, created by four Stuyvesant students and spreading virally on YouTube, yet another Murdoch-ian news corpora-

the diary of a mad senior

tion has taken the liberty to publicize the event and emphasize that the tape was made by Stuyvesant students, exacerbating the effects of the already potent video. Though Fox's news report hardly compares to the libelous publications about senior crush lists (known in the media as "Tap Day") in 2010, its effects still plague the Stuyvesant community.

It seems that because of a standardized test that gauged our abilities to form grammatically correct paragraphs and properly reduce fractions, we are held to higher standards (perhaps reasonably so), but more disturbing is that it is taken for granted that we will compromise basic social skills and teenage behavior to perform as successful students. Yet, other than the occasional Guidance

Counselor 101 homeroom-sessions, our school does little to enforce any sense of morals, and we are left to (if only to quote the assignment sheet of my most recent English assignment) "dementedly strut like birds," fending for ourselves and competing in this large school.

Four years ago, just around this time, when high school results came out, I was reluctant to accept admission to Stuyvesant, and I recall drawing a picture of the typical Stuyvesant student for my father in hopes that it would arouse sympathy for me and let him reconsider my high school decision. I drew a girl with thick-rimmed glasses, an oversized backpack, and the pigtails I used to wear in second grade. "SEE, PAPA? IS THIS WHO YOU WANT ME TO BECOME?" A quick walk down any Stuyvesant hall will prove this impression—and, judging from the Open House, the impression held by many prospective students and their parents—to be false. Stuyvesant is rich in its academic excellence, but also in its caliber of students—we don't just crank out results on Standardized tests, we also have personalities. Of course, this can swing both ways—it can have good effects and bad effects—but it gives our school the diverse character people seem to doubt we have.

Of course, it goes without saying that we have kids who

mess up: kids who sometimes act without realizing the repercussions; kids who go far beyond the line of playful teen-

Stuyvesant is rich in its academic excellence but also in its caliber of students – we don't just crank out results on Standardized tests, we also have personalities.

age-disrespect. Yes, Manhattan tabloids, breaking news: academics can also be harmful. You publicize it all you want. It is important to recognize

that the views of this minority of students—accused of being racist and unthinkably disrespectful—do not represent the views of the larger Stuyvesant community. That being said, there are other students in the student body who act and will continue to act like this, but here's a note to prospective parents who are doubtful of their child's companionship at Stuyvesant: it is as easy to find as it is to avoid students who will go above and beyond when messing up. Stuyvesant is so large: with over 3,200 students, everyone is bound to find his own little niche.

Some kids are stellar at math. Some can do back flips. Some can run a 4:23 mile. Some can write award-winning poetry. Some can slide down the banisters on the escalator with no hands. And some make mistakes that exhibit signs of racism—let's face it, we're teenagers. I am proud to say that these are just the grains of sand that make up who we are as the Stuyvesant student body. In no way do I condone what happened with the video on Facebook, but it is important not to blow the situation out of proportion (say, staging a gathering outside of Stuyvesant to hold up picket signs about how racist we are). We're all just kids and we all make mistakes, but we learn from them and move on.

Opinions

The Solomon Column: What Am I?



By DANIEL SOLOMON

The urge to categorize things is inherent to human nature; it sets us apart from lesser beings and allows us to make sense of the world. By instinct, we sort stuff into separate piles: papers, pencils, pens--other people. Each day, we judge individuals based on everything from the important to the inane. We throw around all-encompassing labels loaded with bias and fraught with unspoken implication, poisoning any reasoned and rational discussion. If you need evidence, look no farther than our school, where our insistence on a liberal-conservative dichotomy obscures meaningful nuance.

Many of us have experienced this to a certain extent; I have dealt with it in the extreme. I arrived at Stuyvesant with what I considered a fairly "liberal" viewpoint; on social issues, I was firmly on the left; on economic matters, I was practically a Marxist. But then, Ayn Rand's novels found their way into my hands, and so began my freshman flirtation

with unfettered capitalism. This, along with my ardent Zionism and harsh criticism of the Chinese government, earned me a reputation in Global Studies as a rock-ribbed Republican - a mistaken impression, but one that I did not care enough to correct.

Then there was sophomore year AP World History, when I championed European colonialism and defended the deposed despots of the Continent, enjoying my role as devil's advocate, as sincere in my assertions as I was sarcastic. Of course, my peers viewed me as an imperialist and a skeptic of democracy. Despite all the fakery, my perspective had started to shift, Rand slowly lost control of my mind, my hard-line support for Israel was complicated by the more hardline stance of Avi Lieberman, and my attitudes on social issues moved further to the left.

It seemed that as September 2010 dawned, I was returning home to that Jewish old-time religion: the unique combination of progressivism, labor politics, qualified endorse-

ment of Israeli policies, and love of the passionate debate that characterizes our tribe, a fondness that never truly wavered. However, I still had a few maverick streaks. The personal values that I held - and continue to hold - were far more conservative than were my social and economic values. My positions on foreign policy left me more closely aligned with war hawks than with doves. My distaste for affirmative action was at odds with countless platforms of the Democratic Party.

Indeed, I defied categorization, to the frustration and confusion of everyone around me. After I demanded wel-

Discard your labels, explore, challenge your own assumptions, check your premises, and you may be shocked to find yourself on the road not taken; it might even make all the difference.

fare reform and increased domestic spending in the same breath, my exasperated history teacher exclaimed, "I don't understand you!" If you asked me about unions, you would walk away muttering "socialist," if you questioned me on the Middle East, you would think I was an avid talk-radio listener. Eventually, I resolved to discover a coherent philosophy to which I really was an adherent, embarking on a journey that stretches into the present.

It's now March and I've yet to work through these conflicts, failing at my repeated attempts to label my own brand of politics. First I tried out "neo-conservative," but decided it was too right-leaning. Then, I was a "TR Republican," until Teddy turned out to be less of a trustbuster than I had previously thought. After, I called myself an "LBJ Democrat," inevitably shedding that classification because of my disagreement with Johnson over the Vietnam War.

But finally, the Eureka moment hit me: I don't truly know what I am - none of us does at this age. We have some idea of where we are going as the fork in the road approaches, veering either to the left or right, but those ultimate choices - liberalism or conservatism, and the miles of trailblazing past - those lie ahead, in the uncharted terrain of adulthood, to be shaped by experience and fate. You have to find your own way, and don't trust anyone who tells you otherwise. Discard your labels, explore, challenge your own assumptions, check your premises, and you may be shocked to find yourself on the road not taken; it might even make all the difference.

We have some idea where we are going as the fork in the road approaches, veering either to the left or right, but those ultimate choices, liberalism or conservatism and the miles of trailblazing past, those lie ahead, in the uncharted terrain of adulthood, to be shaped by experience and fate.

The Best and the Brightest



By ADAM SCHORIN

Stuyvesant is in the news again—and I'm not talking about the Science Olympiad.

Last year, it was arson. Next, smoke from the alcove hit the tabloids. And now this. Our "specialized high school" has been under heavy scrutiny thanks to several juniors who posted a racist and misogynistic rap video on Facebook in late February, which eventually found its way to YouTube.

Within hours, thousands of people had seen the clip and responded to its verbally abusive content. Tweeting, posting, and online commenting publicized the video in a way that traditional media alone never could. After a week, the rap video had garnered over 35,000 on-

line views and the statements in the tape were eternalized online. Fox News, CBS, and others honed in on the story, thrilled to report the most recent escapades of New York City Schools' "best and brightest."

Reporters and demonstrators have been gathering in clusters outside the Stuyvesant building, asking students to comment on the school's supposed bigotry. News teams are thrusting cameras in the faces of Department of Education administrators, and Principal Stanley Teitel has been persistently harangued by concerned parents that his beard is wearing thin. The parade of negative publicity eventually forced Teitel to send out a letter criticizing cyber-bullying and offering leadership training from the Anti-Defamation League, but it was too little and too late.

The video has prompted many observers to question Stuyvesant's admissions policy; less than two percent of the student population is black, which equates to roughly 50 students out of about 3288. At least five black parents, including the mother of the girl who was targeted in the video, have spoken to the press about the racism their children have encountered within the school. You do the math. At least 10 percent of the African-American students at Stuy feel they have been discriminated against, and possibly more

students feel the same way, according to a recent survey.

This is not the first time the school's admissions policy has been accused of discrimination. In the early 1970s, Mayor John Lindsay argued that the entrance exam was biased against

We know that racism is wrong, but do we know how to fix it?

Black and Hispanic students, and tried to start an affirmative action program. However, parents and faculty protested the change, and the process was instead enshrined into law by the Hecht-Calandra Act of 1972.

The fact that this kind of racism still exists in New York City, the heart of America's melting pot, is outrageous and disturbing. The year is 2011, our president is black, yet bigotry clearly subsists in our supposedly tolerant and intellectual community. To quote professional rapper Kanye West, this is an "abomination of Obama's nation."

a joke doesn't hold up when confronted with incidents of underlying prejudice and flagrant stupidity. We have yet to take the necessary steps to begin to solve this problem.

The DOE needs to suspend the students in the video for the maximum 90 days, because a simple "slap on the wrist," as the Black Students' League President called it, is not enough. Teitel needs to organize a press conference to denounce this sort of behavior, and the "rapers" need to publicly apologize to the girl they targeted, the BSL, the administration, and the school as a whole. Only by openly condemning the content of the video do we stand a chance at ridding Stuyvesant of this kind of bigotry. Otherwise, we will only sink further into a sea of bad publicity and undeterred racism.



Arts and Entertainment

A Voice That Carries Across the Atlantic



Julia Kim / The Spectator

Senior Sang-A Bae will soon be releasing her first album.

By TONG NIU

Totoro's first appearance was subtle as the silent, furry, gray- and white-bellied creature—mildly resembling a cross between a raccoon and a large owl—nibbled on a human foot in this year's Senior SING! performance. It stood wordlessly to the side as a monster family shared its meal of lunch ladies and gym teachers. So imagine the audience's surprise when the quiet, shuffling Totoro burst into a solo that revealed the powerhouse voice of senior Sang-A Bae.

Bae astounded audiences with her rendition of "Summertime," by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward. Her solo was strong and rich, carrying out

each note with a smooth, honed flow. She hit the high notes with grace and the low ones with an astonishing vibrato that shook the whole room. As anyone in the audience could see, Bae is, without a doubt, gifted.

Her musical journey started as a little girl in Korea, where she grew up surrounded by talent on her father's side of the family. Her great uncle was a famous composer and her father had longed to be a famous musician until he graduated high school. He later decided to attend college to be an electrician.

Bae got her first taste of music through piano lessons when she was five. "I lived near a marketplace district in Korea, and would often hear the sound of students

practicing in the piano school located in the heart of the marketplace as I went shopping for groceries with my grandmother. After many attempts, my grandmother finally conceded and allowed me to take lessons," Bae said in an e-mail interview.

Bae's burgeoning musical career came to a halt, however, at age six, when her family moved to America. Her parents objected to her musical pursuits because they wanted her to focus on her academic studies. "My father discouraged me because he'd tried to become a famous musician before and knew how hard it was to make a breakthrough in the music industry," she said.

They discouraged her from auditioning for school musicals and refused to let her continue piano lessons. When she auditioned for SM Entertainment—a prestigious Korean entertainment agency—it was done in secret and only revealed to her parents when she had passed the preliminary rounds. Bae's parents were furious and refused to let her go further with the auditions. Choosing a high school was also a conflict; Bae had set her sights on Frank Sinatra for its focus arts and music, and was accepted. Her parents, however, insisted that she attend Stuyvesant, even though math and science are not her strong suits.

Instead of giving up on music, Bae explored different genres, starting with classical pieces in her father's record collection, like Mozart's "Agnus Dei" and "Queen of the Night." "I began

to hum along to the old opera records my dad would play around my house. Soon enough, I was pouncing around my home belting incoherent gibberish I believed to be Latin or Italian," she wrote. With no money for a piano or proper lessons, Bae turned to vocal music. She dabbled in sev-

eral genres to find the ones she liked the best: jazz and R&B. Inspired by the pure, strong voices of Nikki Yanofsky, Angela Aki (a Japanese singer), Insoon Aki (a Korean singer), and Akaya (a Japanese singer), Bae's singing shares a similar rich and flowing feel that has great power.

Over time, Bae's parents have become more accepting and proud of her talent. "Now they love [my passion for music]. They even gave out copies of my demo CD to all their friends and acquaintances, as well as my family in Korea."

However, despite her obvious talent, Bae does not want to be a professional musician in the future. "My dream is to become a great English teacher," Bae said. "I don't plan on making music a career because I want it to remain something I really enjoy, instead of it becoming something I will grow tired and weary [of]."

Bae had a difficult journey when it came to pursuing her musical passions. She faced several obstacles in the way of doing what she loves. Nevertheless, from opera as a little girl to jazz and R&B at age 12, music has definitely been a driving force in her life. "Learning to believe in one's own abilities and capabilities is such an important thing," Bae said. "Singing has taught me how to believe in myself quite well."

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Now, Bae performs mainly in Stuyvesant and her church. She has been an active member of her church's worship team—a music team that performs for other congregants—for five years. In

Racism In Ya Ear: Perpetuating Prejudice



Lindy Chiu / The Spectator

By JAMES KOGAN

Enter Gangsta rap.

Easily one of the most controversial subgenres of hip hop, this style of music is notable for its predominantly harsh lyrical themes; the brutally honest depictions of the inner-city youth's lifestyles, complete with drug dealings, shootings, rape, and gang violence.

Pioneered in the mid-80's by rapper Ice T with tracks such as "Body Rock/Killers," the musical style gained popularity in the early 90's with groups such as N.W.A., of which Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, and Ice Cube were founding members. Songs like N.W.A.'s trademark track "F—k tha Police" portrayed the harsh reality that African American teens were facing all over the U.S.; provoked by brutal injustices perpetrated by the police against black youth, Ice Cube exclaims, "when I'm finished, it's going to be a bloodbath of cops dying in L.A."

Gangsta rap epitomizes a dark period in American history. Unfortunately, a glance back

at the prejudices of the last 40 years supports this. Yet, comparing commercially successful rap to rap from 20 years ago reveals a semisweet truth; little by little, we are moving along. Lyrical themes have evolved into boastful tales of superficiality and tangible possessions, a glittering homage to the glamour and riches that so many artists aspire to acquire. While these musicians are certainly not Mother Theresa, it is still a step away from old violent habits.

However, some rappers still claim to be propagators of an important oral tradition: "Me, I'm just an author, so what I do is I write what goes on in the ghetto. And I'm not a liar, so if what I tell you goes on in my album, then that's what goes on in the streets of Harlem. Now, I'm like a reporter," said rapper Cam'ron during an appearance on The O'Reilly Factor in 2003. The incredible commercial success of rappers like Cam'ron and others have made rap a hugely lucrative undertaking and a music genre that appeals to a vast fan base

spread all over the world with a dense concentration of fans in the United States.

Recently, Stuyvesant High School itself was drawn into the media's spotlight after a racially inflammatory video was posted on Facebook by some of our students. The video depicted the students performing a freestyle rap with charged lyrics directed at African-Americans and others. Initially sent to a single person, the video clearly was not something that was meant to go viral—instead, it was a curt and biting affront towards another student in the form of a rap song. This leads us to consider, why this medium? Why rap?

The answer seems to be the free portrayal of negativity and ill feelings. In response to questions about the music's subject matter, some rap artists, similarly to Cam'ron, stand by the idea that they are reporters. With candor and clarity, they communicate true life to their

fortunate facts of urban living. Others, notably Ice T, in defense of his song "Cop Killer"—which provoked negative reactions from the PMRC and press for targeting then-LAPD chief Daryl Gates—explained that they, as rappers, musicians, and lyricists, take on the role of characters whose views they may not necessarily align with or endorse. In both cases, it is important to respect the creative liberties of the artist; as musicians, they are vindicated by the freedom of speech, if ever so slightly, in the eyes of critics.

Nonetheless, the fact that rap music exercises an incredible amount of influence on its listeners, especially the youths to whom the music most relates, is irrefutable. While there is merit in the artistic expression of the rappers, a problem is agitated when these musicians fail to recognize that the messages conveyed in their music can be literally interpreted by their listeners and used as justification for activities that can be both harmful and illegal. Similarly, it can serve as a vehicle for the hateful messages that are purported in raps like the diss rap aimed at one of our students.

While the Stuyvesant video is a problem on a smaller scale, the bigger picture is equally troubling. The widespread popularity of rap music has ingrained the genre's messages into the fibers of society. The very ideas and lyrical themes that the genre is founded on have slowly become stale and commonplace, shock value completely depleted—and now, even as the lyrics continue to get more violent, we turn an inadvertent blind eye.

By creating a duly volatile atmosphere, this phenomenon is a barricade to our attempts to progress further from the ig-

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that which
abhors us.**

listeners—a life that, at times, may entail bitter struggles and hardships along with other un-

norant and discriminatory ways of the past. These artists pull candid stories from the hard-

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ships and experiences of their lives, but degrade their efforts of positively influencing their fans by not handling the messages they transmit to their listeners responsibly. Instead of being inspirational or even merely cathartic, their work espouses glorified vengeance and ill-fated practices. Yes, this is what sells their music and is seemingly condoned by their record companies and the general public, but in the long run, it is numbing society to the same discrimination and social injustices that motivated, angered, and drove forth the artists of the forbearing Gangsta rap movement of the 90's. It has been 20 years and we've been moving in circles, fueling that which abhors us.

Arts and Entertainment

Fish Out Of Holy Water



Lucy Wei / The Spectator

By JOSHUA BOGATIN

Clean cut and well shaven, Elder Price (Andrew Rannells) is the perfect Mormon to be sent out into the world to preach the holy word. On the other end of the stage, a stout and bubbly man enters sheepishly. As he waits for his assignment, the Mormon leader cheerfully announces, "Elder Price, your partner is Elder Cunningham, and your mission's destination is... Uganda." The music stops flat, as Price's dreams of going to visit Disney World are replaced with visions of poverty. Without the slightest hint of disappointment, Cunningham

(Josh Gad) joins Price before the young, inexperienced duo set off on their unexpected venture.

So begins "The Book Of Mormon," a new farcical musical about an odd pair of Mormons sent to "save" a poverty-struck Ugandan village. Cunningham, a black sheep of the Mormon community, who has never read the Book of Mormon, is a compulsive liar, desperate for affection, hindering Price's quest to spread Mormonism. As the duo begins to convert the Ugandans, Cunningham spins his own tall tales involving pop-culture figures like Darth Vader and Frodo, in order to keep the Ugandans' attention.

Elder Price's problems escalate as the two begin to attract the attention of the local warlord, who threatens to mutilate them as a consequence of their attempted proselytization.

Written by "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, as well as the creator of the hilarious Broadway musical "Avenue Q," Robert Lopez, the play showcases the same blend of raunchy comedy and social satire present in "South Park." The tone is light and cheerful throughout, even as the play deals with serious subject matters such as rape and religion. It also manages to poke fun at several acclaimed movies

in pop-culture unrelated to Mormonism, such as "The Lord Of The Rings" and "The Lion King."

In one musical number, Cunningham and Price have their bags stolen and are taught to deal with their troubles through chanting an African saying similar to "Hakuna Matata." As the number progresses, the Mormons become more involved in the dance, contributing their own uncanny moves to the fray. Price finally asks one of the Africans what the saying means only to learn that it ends with "God" and begins with a four-letter obscenity. The musical number wittily plays on the familiar tropes of the Broadway musical while satirizing them, giving the performance much of its charm.

Clashing with Price's devotion and competence, Cunningham is a man-child with innocent intentions. He idolizes Price, though it is clear that the affection is not reciprocal, leading to a very awkward relationship. Their relationship is best portrayed in the scene of their first meeting, when Price sings "we can do anything, just you and me, but mostly me," while Cunningham loyally sings along. Gad fits his character perfectly, his unwavering smile and hearty laugh periodically turning the audience's attention from Price's troubles. On the other hand, Rannells is constantly in a state of panic, his shaken expressions always counteracting Cunningham's charm.

The set is designed very well and transports the audience to many colorful places, as seen in Price's dream, which begins in Orlando and ends as a nightmare taken straight from Price's memory of home, complete with

prancing Starbucks cups in the background. The performance utilizes sight gags superbly, as seen when the Mormons first arrive in Uganda. A man appears, dragging a grotesque dead donkey across the stage, cementing the fact that the team is as far from their picturesque Mormon home as possible.

The tone is light and cheerful throughout, even as it deals with serious subject matters such as rape and religion

At first glance, the play may appear to be opposed to religion, but before the curtains close, the message is clear: Religion plays a pivotal role in preserving society. Cunningham scares off the tyrant with his fabricated religion and gives the Ugandans liberty and the audacity to hope. Though "The Book Of Mormon" will undoubtedly offend some people who feel strongly about religion, those who can set aside their own beliefs in the name of entertainment are sure to be educated and entertained by its merits.

Jason Koo: Super Kool

By BENJAMIN KOATZ

A travel suitcase opens its mouth to the fainting sky, unleashing a whirlwind of densely typed papers to a waning sun. The sun hovers above a sandy gray beach, holding five small words on the cover, "man on extremely small island," the title of Jason Koo's new, De Novo Poetry Prize winning book of verse.

Koo uses his control over the English language to create chillingly beautiful imagery, though the phrases themselves might seem incoherent to some.

The pages past the cover offer a more vivacious landscape; Koo's impressive 88 page collection of poems combines his mastery of meter and spacing with his views on subjects ranging from tuna-fish sandwiches to love. Broken up into four sections and 26 poems, "man

on extremely small island" is a semi-autobiographical work; Koo takes elements from his personal life and meshes them with fictional characters and scenery to create a dreamy, flowing universe within the borders set by its covers.

Though it has been subject to great critical acclaim, Koo's work is not exclusively meant for the scholarly reader. Even as American poetry becomes more of an esoteric art form, Koo has successfully walked the line, effectively presenting everyday occurrences with skill and finesse. Although many of Koo's most gripping passages seem to ramble, his words are juxtaposed not to make sense, but to please aesthetically; in "Target," the second piece of the novel, he ends a poem about unrequited love with "and the problem is you've fallen out of love/ with the world. You've come to hear/ An underlying 'Goddamnit!' in everything, and never notice the trees/ tossing their heads in the wind like conductors." Though the book consists of poems which can stand by themselves, one can see a clear trend towards maturity even though the poems deal with widely disparate subjects. Koo uses his control over the English language to create chillingly beautiful images, even if the phrases themselves seem incoherent. The varying interpretations of his work are largely determined by the readers' methods of dissecting the language.

Much like his words, Koo's poems are filled with contradiction and contrast; the focus

of his poetry ranges from profanity to artificial intelligence, from limousine gatherings to romantic rejection. However, to say that "man on extremely small island" has no overarching theme would be doing it an injustice. The book, with its many twists, digressions, and subplots, follows Koo's search for maturity and truth. Koo seamlessly interweaves anecdotes about his family life, his Korean background, and his friends. He returns to the theme of his heritage in the final piece, in which he explores his trip to Cooperstown, NY with his father Bon Chul, and delves into his lost childhood. In this closing poem, he details his strained relationship with his father, touching on ephemeral qualities of and the importance of family. "I start to wonder if it's too late for father and son," is a far cry from the expletive-filled passages of the first half of

The basis for the poems jump from profanity to artificial intelligence, eclectic limousines, and myriads of anecdotes.



the book.

The way Koo presents his words to the reader is nearly as important as the poetry itself; what he lacks in rhyme, he makes up for in rhythm. With clear breaks in structure—varying from labyrinthine line spacing to clear cut, left-adjusted paragraphs, the poet skillfully chooses where to split his lines to achieve the most poignant effect. He isolates words like "anger" into lines of their own to end poems about beauty and love. He divides whole sentences, leaving a dangling comma at the edge of a stanza to build up the reader's anticipation. This technique, combined with his usage of quotes from prominent poets including Shakespeare, Kafka, and Neruda, starts off sections of the book

and transforms banal language into artistic genius.

Heralded as one of the greatest modern Asian writers by the Asian American Writers' Workshop, Jason Koo has mastered the art of penning easy-to-read poetry. With surprises at every turn, thought provoking quotes sporadically dashed into blank spaces and empty pages, and deep, introspective messages lined in his expansive lexicon, Koo successfully molds what is slowly becoming a complex form of art into an accessible medium for expression. A glance at the back cover reveals a silhouette of what can only be the author walking, shoulders hunched, into the same muted sky previously mentioned, very simply imprinting himself upon his intricate opus.

Arts and Entertainment

Tightening the Purse Strings: The Rise of the Independent Film

By THOMAS DUDA
and MOLLIE FORMAN

The gowns. The glitz. The glamour of old Hollywood melding with the new. Many people say that the Academy Awards represent nothing more than the opinions of elitists. Still, on Sunday, February 27, millions of people anxiously watched the telecast of the 83rd Annual Academy Awards, waiting for the night's final and most important award: The Award for Best Picture. Director Steven Spielberg walked on stage, and finally came the moment of truth, as he announced: "The Oscar for Best Picture goes to... The King's Speech!" And the crowd went wild.

"The King's Speech," which won four Oscars, including the award for Best Picture, at this year's ceremony, is an independently produced film—one of many present at the Academy Awards these days. Though an independent, or indie, film is simply defined as one that is not affiliated with a major production studio, the word has become synonymous with achieving the greatest aspects of a blockbuster with a considerably smaller budget. In recent times, indie films have evolved from an underground movement revered only by movie geeks to a genuine power in awards season. More and more of these productions have gained a strong following without the support of major Hollywood studios, such as Paramount or Twentieth Century Fox.

Ever since the beginning of the Golden Age of Hollywood in the 1930s, the goal of major producers was to make money, but over time the moneymaking strategies have changed. In the 1930s, films that gained the recognition of the Academy were all controlled by major Hollywood studios, and indies were barely on the cultural radar. However, because the majority of people writing movies were playwrights and novelists who had great control over their material, they produced the greatest number of great films in history.

With the huge influx of films today, producers with the financial pressures of a studio resting on their backs must do all they can to attract immense audiences and make a

profit. The globalization of the American movie market has greatly increased this pressure. Today, producers expect to earn a large percentage of their profit—often around 60 percent—from foreign markets. This leads to a dumbing down of ideas so the largest possible audience across cultural lines can understand the presented motivations and themes.

Unfortunately for those who go to the movies for more than spectacle, this means that the vast majority of Hollywood blockbusters contain simplified themes, two-dimensional characters, and an onslaught of special effects that do little to contribute to the message of the film. The old guarantee that the majority of released films are of quality is no more, and the monopoly that producers hold over screenwriters in big studios limits creative potential.

Indies have evolved into the main force behind keeping alive old Hollywood traditions of quality acting, strong themes, and constantly pushing the envelope. Often with budgets more than a third smaller than the budgets of major films, indie filmmakers do not have the resources to pour into multi-million dollar special effects. Without the crutch of flashy technology, they are forced to focus on more unaffected methods, such as clear storylines and well-developed characters, to attract viewers and tell a story.

Because investments are in

When we look back on Oscar winners, we want them to represent the films of their generations.

the tens of millions dollars or less, as opposed hundreds of millions, the fallout is not as



Lisa Lee / The Spectator

bad if indie films do not turn a profit. This allows the writers and directors to take creative risks without worrying about appealing to sensitive demographics. This year's "Blue Valentine" drew controversy for brutal emotional content and a semi-explicit sex scene, which garnered the dreaded NC-17 rating, although this was later appealed. This kind of material only appeals to a very small section of the population, but its creators were willing to take the gamble, both because they believed in their art and because they only answered to themselves. In the end, they did not need to worry, as they earned nine times their budget of 1 million dollars.

It is impossible to state that all big studio productions are shallow and money-grubbing: masterpieces such as "The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Brokeback Mountain" attest to that. But stories similar to that of "Brokeback Mountain"—which lost

the 2005 Best Picture Oscar to the independent film "Crash"—prove that the power of the indies is irrevocable.

Last year, "The Hurt Locker,"

over "Avatar," the highest grossing movie of all time. In the most recent Oscars ceremony, "The King's Speech" and "The Fighter," both independent films, took home seven of the major awards. In winning Best Picture, "The King's Speech" became the 19th independently produced Best Picture winner of the last 30 years, and continued a now four-year streak.

There is no way to doubt the appeal of blockbusters—the most common type bring with them the promise of big stars, big explosions, and all the effects money can buy. But, of the 30 highest grossing movies of all time, only two have won the Academy Award for Best Picture, and very few of these are remembered for long beyond the lights coming back on. When we look back on Oscar winners, we want them to represent the films of their generations; in our time, the only way to achieve that may be by tightening the purse strings.

Of the 30 highest grossing movies of all time, only two have won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

an independently produced film that garnered a modest 17 million dollars domestically, the lowest amount ever grossed by a Best Picture winner, won

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Cartoons

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Mindy Lam / The Spectator

"Ace Any Test With Charlie Sheen!"

BY NIKI CHEN



Niki Chen / The Spectator

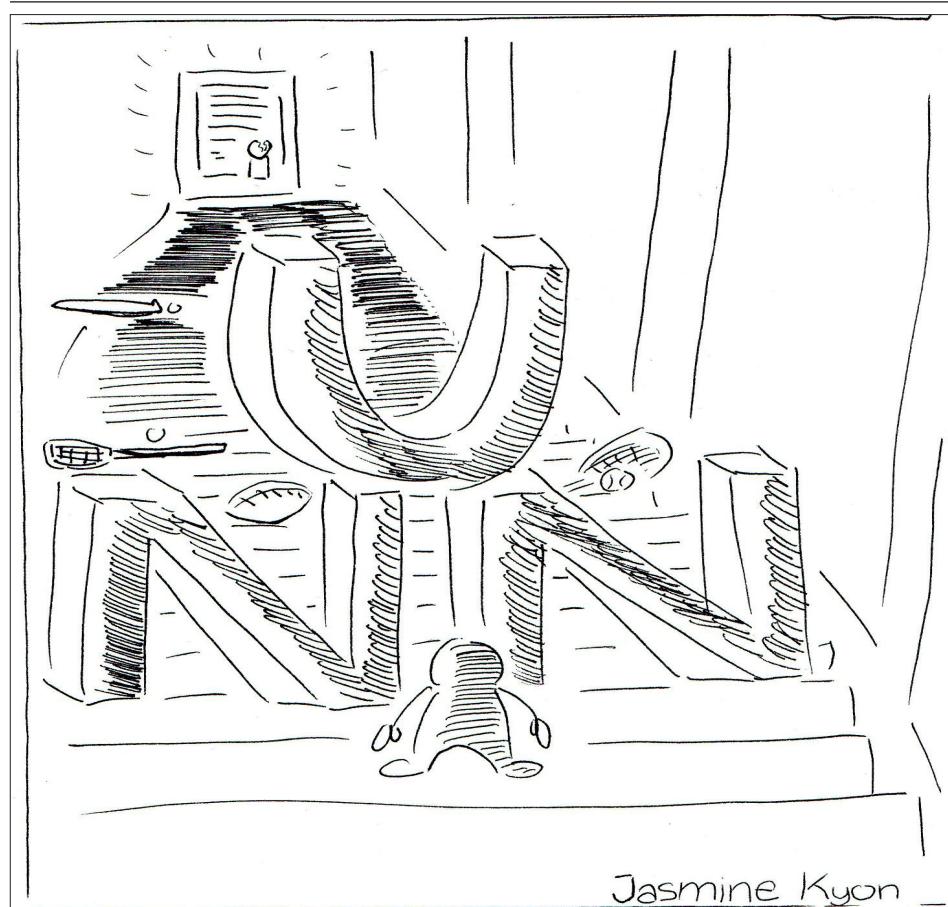
Growing UP

Sai Dokku



Sai Dokku / The Spectator

OP-ARTS



Jasmine Kyon



Michelle Guo / The Spectator

Humor

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

Buying and Selling Group Revealed to be Drug Front

By WILSON STAMM

Police arrested 25 female students at Stuyvesant High School on drug trafficking charges, on Monday, March 14th. The girls were members of the Facebook group "BUYING + SELLING for girls @ STUY," which purported to be a market place in which Stuyvesant students could buy and sell used clothing and other accessories. The group has now been revealed as a disguise for what may be the largest high school drug ring in America, allocated for dealing a range of illicit substances, including, but not limited to, cannabis, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, methamphetamine, morphine, and heroin.

The "Stuy-High Cartel," as it is now being called, was founded in November 2010 by a Stuyvesant Senior known to her clients only as "Crazy-Eyes Killa." Killa began by dealing only small-time drugs. "I quickly had the idea that I could market my 'wares' over the Internet after seeing a Facebook dedicated to selling garish and expensive Nike sneakers," Killa said.

She founded her own Facebook group and set up an elaborate system of code words in which different articles of clothing corresponded to different narcotics. "Cable-knit Sweaters corresponded to baggies of crack-cocaine, and jeans to PCP," said Drug Enforcement Agency Investigator Luciano

Battaglia.

Potential buyers would arrange to meet up around Stuyvesant, where they would inconspicuously be handed the drugs ordered on-line, wrapped in an article of clothing. Because of the well-concealed nature of the deals, the cartel was able to operate undetected for months, even under the ever-watchful eyes of vigilant school security officers.

The popularity of the group grew to such a height that it began to attract unwitting students looking to purchase actual clothing. "I was trying to buy a new saffron romper," junior and victim Julian Michaels said. "So I put down a bid on the Facebook group. I should have expected that something was amiss when I was told to meet the seller in the Hudson Stairway."

When he arrived at the location, Michaels claimed that he handed his cash to a hooded figure. "I was so excited for my new romper. But when I was handed a bag of meth instead, I was shocked" Michaels said. He credits this incident as the beginning of his long battle with methamphetamine addiction.

After Killa's graduation in 2010, control of the group was handed over to a sophomore who requested that she be referred to only by her pseudonym, "Phat Killa Q." She controlled the Facebook group as had been done in the past, until



Urban Outfitters clothing is a cheap alternative to traditional means of transporting drugs.

Eli Rosenberg / The Spectator

her ring was taken down by a sting operation.

SWAT officers broke down the door of the Stuyvesant High School P.E. closet, last Monday. "Phat Killa was found with six 3 lb. bricks of cocaine wrapped in a [criminally hipster] Urban Outfitter's dress that she was about to sell to a classmate," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Q refused to cooperate with officers and was charged with resisting arrest, possession of narcotics with intent to sell, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Officers later recovered trace amounts of crack cocaine, marijuana, horse tranquilizers, one Colt revolver, and over \$7,000 of low quality Urban Outfitters clothing inside

Q's home.

"I'm glad that the officers were able to clear this whole thing up and return Stuyvesant back to the drug free environment we've enjoyed since we busted the alcove," Teitel said. "Now if only we could get the fashion police in here to deal with all of that horrible clothing."

SING! Afterparty Censored by Administration

By JAMES FRIER
and ELI ROSENBERG
with additional reporting by
ABIE SIDELL
and J. LESLIE STEELE

In a departure from the laissez-faire policy of previous years, the Stuyvesant Administration has taken steps to make the SING! afterparty, an annual celebration commemorating the end of SING!, a more "family friendly" event.

With students paying up to \$30 a ticket, the afterparty is the biggest event of the social season, surpassed in importance only by J-Prom. Although the party has traditionally been considered out of the school's jurisdiction, the Stuyvesant administration decided to intervene, following accusations that the party was "grimy," "inappropriate," and, at some points, even "fun."

Having taken issue with any form of "deviant behavior" or "provocative elements" (including but not limited to strobe lights and poorly remixed rap songs), the administration has cracked down on the event with full force. "I was told that I would be banned from all extra-curricular activities if I continued to spit my ridiculous game," junior Ben Koatz said. "All I wanna do is smang some hos. Is that really such a crime?"

"All I wanna do is smang some hos. Is that really such a crime?"
—Ben Koatz,
junior

lating the festivities was the institution of a strict, no-alcohol

administration allowed liquids, as long as they were contained in a bottle clearly not intended for alcohol. "I didn't even know they made brown carbonated Gatorade," Bouncer and Dean Vincent Miller said.

The school's main concern was about student participation in inappropriate touching. To deal with this issue, which had been an endemic problem at previous afterparties, Miller had all of the lights turned off for the entirety of the party. "Turning off the lights was as much a remedial measure as it was a preventative one," said Miller. "Preventative in that, if students can't see who they're about to kiss, they won't kiss them. And remedial in that if they do end up kissing, at least nobody else will be able to see the bad example they're setting."

However, such measures proved to be in vain. Many students "hooked up" with upwards of nine peers, many of whom were defenseless underclassmen. "I got with 11 freshmen," senior Matteo Battistini said. "There may have been one or two eighth graders in there too, but whatever."

"Students were clearly disregarding the valuable information they acquired in health class," Health Education teacher Barbara Garber said.

Other concerns were raised over bathroom overcrowding,

"There were at least 37 people in the bathroom, which was no bigger than a typical stall in a Stuyvesant bathroom," Miller said.

"I still don't understand why that many people would all need to use the bathroom at

"I haven't seen this much degeneracy since my days in the military"
—Daniel Tillman,
Dean

Reports showed that at exactly 11:23 PM, smoke began to issue from under the bathroom door. Initial analysis stated that the source of the smoke was most likely a campfire built by the students for warmth. "That was one good campfire dude. I'm like mad toasty right now, man," junior Brian Walsh said.

After conferring with his staff, Principal Teitel decided to evacuate the premises. "It was getting a little out of hand," Teitel said. "Even our most experienced deans were unable to void that many lunches."

"It was scary out there," Dean Daniel Tillman said. "I haven't seen that much degeneracy since my days in the military."

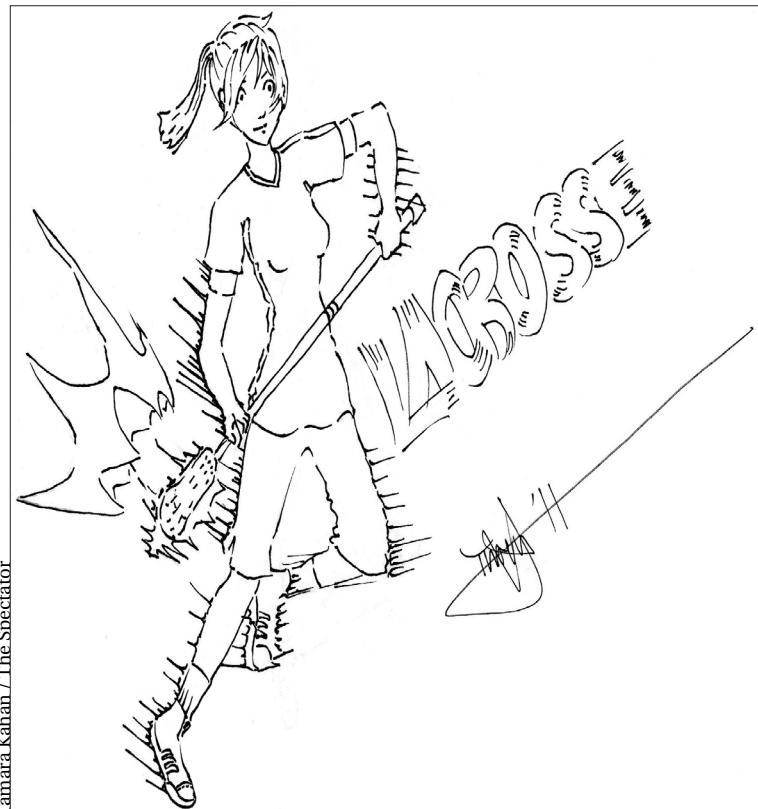
As students were leaving the party, the administration made the questionable decision to eliminate the coat check. "We were under strict budget guidelines, and the coat check is a privilege, not a necessity," Miller said. Bags and coats were left to aggregate in a pile that students have described as "more disorganized and less efficient than the programming office."

After students recovered their belongings, they were promptly ejected from the venue and forced back into the cold. "It's a shame the party had to end that way," Garber said, while giggling. "I was just starting to have fun."

The first step in regul-

policy, which was supposed to be enforced by the confiscation of any type of outside beverage, regardless of the potential alcohol content. However, worries arose about dehydration, so the

the same time," junior Emma Handte said.

Sports**Girls' Lacrosse****With New Coach, Huskies Look to Climb Out of Division Cellar**

Tamara Kahan / The Spectator

By KATIE MULLANEY

After finishing disappointingly in fourth place, for the past two seasons, the girls' lacrosse team, the Huskies, is looking to improve on its 3-9 record this season. Though the team members are facing a tough schedule, a new coach, and unfamiliar

strategies, they are entering the season more experienced and better prepared than ever before.

The team's new coach, Lindsay Buhr, joined the team with a vast knowledge of the sport. She played lacrosse growing up and continued to pursue it through high school and college. This is her first head coaching job at

the varsity level in high school, and she said she is "excited to meet and interact with the girls, [and] most of all, have fun."

The Huskies are thrilled to have a new leader primed to spark a turnaround. "She has a lot of experience and she can definitely help us improve," junior and co-captain Suzy Kim said.

Despite their lack of success in the past, the Huskies are persistent in making this season a successful one. Since Public Schools Athletics League (PSAL) rules state that there can be no coach-led practices until the start of the spring season, March 1, senior co-captain Rebecca Kim and junior co-captains Nabilah Khatun and Suzy Kim took matters into their own hands.

The captains held off-season practices through the newly created Club Lax. These practices were organized to help new players on the team learn the basics of lacrosse and to help returning players prepare for the start of the season.

"Because of Club Lax, all of the girls know how to catch and throw and are on the same level by the start of the season," Kim said. "Now we don't have to start from scratch every season, which was a really big setback for us last season."

Club Lax has also improved team cohesion. "Because we've been playing together

for a while now, the fact that we know each other and are all dedicated is really great. I think we will have great coordina-

tions hope to use more plays.

A new obstacle that the Huskies will have to face is a policy instituted by the PSAL this year that states that if a team has three cards in a game, it will have to finish the game a player short. This rule was introduced in order to reduce the number of head checks and increase safety in girls' lacrosse, since players do not wear helmets.

The new rule will alter the way Buhr teaches checking. "As a coach, I will make an effort to make sure my players aren't making dangerous checks that will result in a yellow card," she said.

In addition to safe and legal checking, Buhr wants to emphasize stickwork, in general. She believes it is an "an important aspect of the game" in which the Huskies "can improve greatly," she said. She plans to drill cradling, passing, and running with the stick during practices.

Based on previous seasons, the captains also want to work on conditioning and endurance. "Lacrosse involves a lot of running and being physically fit, and one of our main goals is to improve on that," Khatun said.

With a new coach and a great deal of dedication, the Huskies hope to make their mark as a competitive team this season and in many more to come.

"Because of Club Lax, all of the girls know how to catch and throw and are on the same level by the start of the season."

—Rebecca Kim, senior and co-captain.

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Girls' Tennis**Lobsters Look to Win Fifth Consecutive Division Title**

continued from page 20

captains, seniors Emily Quint-Hoover and Samantha Unger, will miss all the matches until further notice. They may still run practices for the Lobsters, but are ineligible to compete in the near future.

The two have been suspended by Assistant Principal of Physical Education Larry Barth in accordance with the newly implemented lateness policy and will miss at least the first few matches until their punctuality—in regard to arriving to school on time—improves. Quint-Hoover and Unger declined to comment.

"My team's roster has no seniors and no captains due to lateness," coach Jeffrey Menaker said. "It's unfortunate for everyone that they will miss a certain portion of their team's games, but, it is more unfortunate that this could have been easily avoided."

Though some girls were upset that the suspensions were handed out without a warning of when the number of late days was approaching an unacceptable level, the Lobsters are confident that they can overcome this early test.

"The team will definitely miss the captains' presence but this just means that other players will have to step up to meet the challenge, and I'm confident that we can do that," Lu said.

Though the Lobsters lost four seniors to graduation going into this upcoming season, many talented new underclassmen have joined their ranks. Rookies to look out for include freshmen Aleksandra Stanisavljevic and Victoria Chung along with sophomore Helen Nie, who tried out for the first time this fall. "We have a strong lineup," sophomore Dina Levy-Lambert said. "The whole team hopes we are going to get further into the City Championships." Lambert went 11-0 last year in division play and split time between first and second singles. Sophomores Irina Titova and Natalie Kozlova also made significant contributions at singles last season. Kozlova was the most improved player last year. Junior Sofia Pidzirailo entered the season leading the team in PSAL match experience and won on the Lobsters.

Menaker has high hopes for "this very deep and talented team." He expects the Lobsters to defeat Leon Goldstein High School to win the PSAL title and to "dethrone 13 time defending Mayor's Cup Champion, St. Francis Prep."

His expectations for this season are not a surprise to the Lobsters, who hold themselves to a high standard. "We are going to win our division title again," Lambert said.

However, the team knows that winning is not easy. "There are a couple of hurdles to achieving these goals and that begins

"In addition to doing well in matches, we always strive to push each other at practice to improve in the long term."

—Connie Lu, Junior

with getting our best lineup on the court for important league matches," Menaker said.

With the handful of new and experienced players this season, the Lobsters are poised for yet another run deep in the playoffs. "If our seniors can get themselves back on the roster by April and if our freshmen parents could sign a couple consent forms, we'll have just enough time to practice as the team of destiny," Menaker said.

Sports

Boys' Handball

Dragons Look to Extend Undefeated Streak Under New Coach

By KEVIN MOY

The Dragons come into the season looking to continue their active streak of 46 consecutive regular-season wins, dating back to 2007. However, with their new coach, they are hoping for a deeper run in the playoffs this year, which could lead them to the City Championship qualification that has eluded them for years.

The Dragons' road to the City Championships began with tryouts, held on Thursday, March 3 and Monday, March 7 in the sixth floor gym. These tryouts were attended by dozens of hopefuls from each grade, seeking to win one of the eight spots vacated by graduating players. Furthermore, the tryouts allowed their new coach, Francisco Rivera, to get a better feel for the position, as former coach Robert Sandler could not lead the Dragons this year due to personal issues.

Rivera said he was excited at the prospect of leading the team closer and closer to the championship. "My hopes are to take a group here at Stuyvesant High School that has shown quite a bit of proficiency in playing handball and actually try and help them in what we call the playoff hump," Rivera said. "They run through the season and go undefeated, but when the playoffs come and everything intensifies, there seems to be something that keeps them at bay."

This will be Rivera's first time coaching any handball team. However, he led the junior varsity football team to an undefeated season this year and plans to apply the same type of leadership to handball. He plans to put a new emphasis on conditioning in preparation for the handball season. These new exercises include form running, multiple sets of pushups and curl ups, and running stairs. "Conditioning is very important and is not seen as important in handball as in football. Hopefully they'll understand that one goes with each other and [conditioning] is not to

be taken lightly," Rivera said.

While football and handball are two completely different sports, Rivera notes that some things are universal. "One thing I hope to instill is the work ethic that some of the JV football players had. They were prepared for the season months before it started."

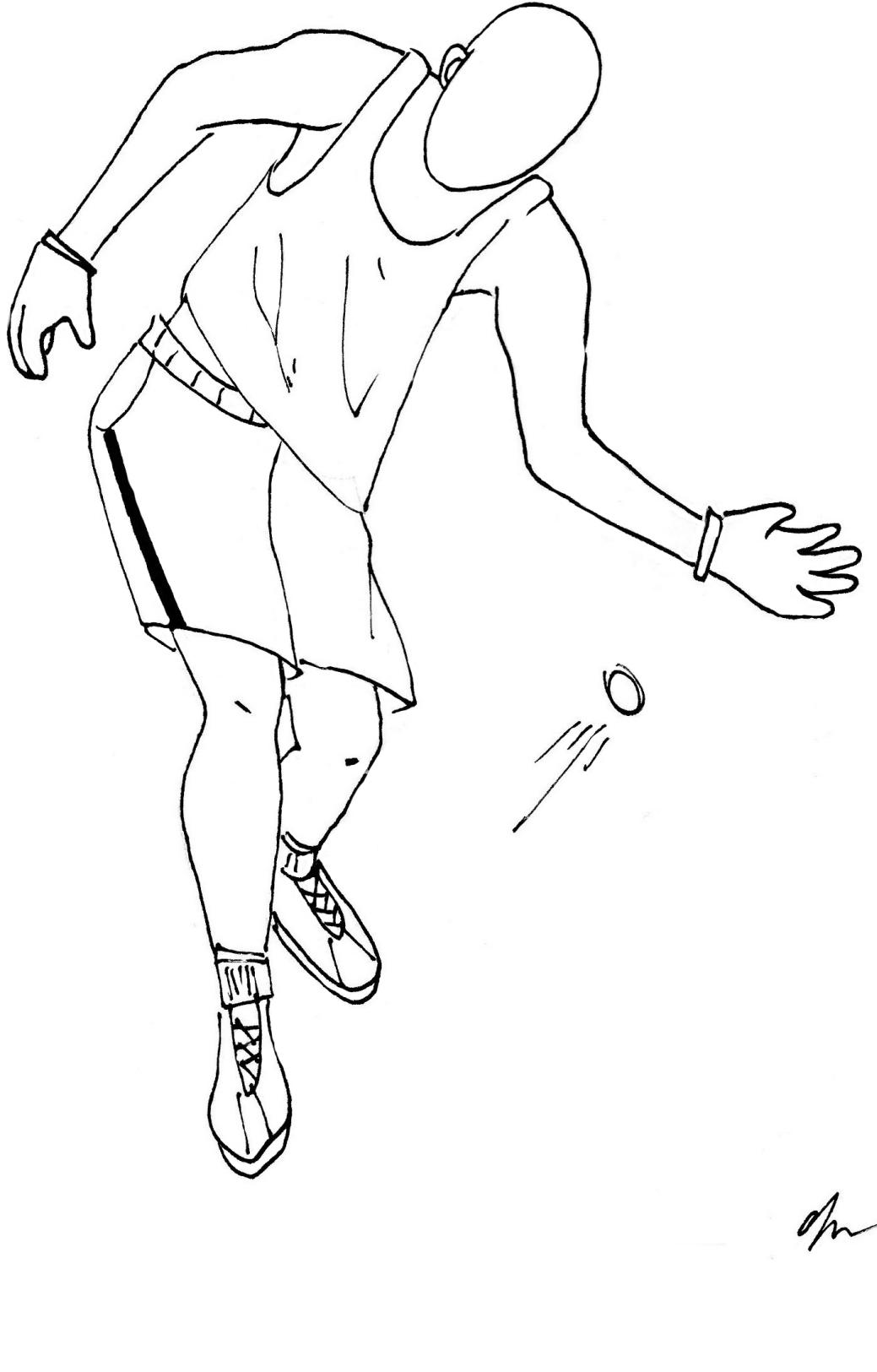
The Dragons will be led this year by seniors Jacques Cai and Ricky Guan, as well as junior Eric Han, who need to get the most out of their relatively young team, since more than a third of their team graduated last year. "There is a bit of responsibility involved, but I feel like I have a great group of guys behind as well. They are going to make my job easier," Guan said.

The three captains also have great chemistry, as they have successfully worked together for the past two seasons. "They are very helpful, very committed, and very loyal to each other," Rivera said. "It's very rare [to] get students that go out of their way to try and help the overall situation. When you don't have an assistant, the best assistants are your players."

Even after just two tryout sessions, sophomore Cody Tong, along with the rest of the team, has already noticed that Rivera is very approachable. "He really listens to our opinions and where we want to go with our season," Tong said.

"Rivera seems like a very laid back guy who knows how to get down to business and organize the team when necessary," Han said. "He's been taking into account all the ideas of the team members and has been doing an exceptional job."

Most importantly, the players and Rivera are not concerned about personal statistics, but are focused on achieving the goal to go deeper in the playoffs. "We have to work hard. We have a good group of guys coming back, and we have to take it step by step to reach the championship," Guan said.



Christine Lee / The Spectator

Boys' Swimming

Pirates Get their Buried Treasure, Defend City Championships

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Bologna's experience in coaching championship teams proved to be helpful in the long run. "We practiced five days a week," Bologna said. "I gave the team information about diet, exercise, sleep, but I [also] emphasized the importance of time management, that school comes first."

Going into the championship, Stuyvesant was the heavy favorite. The team had not been beaten during the regular season in the seven years under Bologna. In addition, the Pirates were riding the momentum from two post-season victories, against Fort Hamilton High School and Bronx High School of Science.

However, the team faced tougher competition from the Engineers than it had from any other team they had competed against. Brooklyn Tech was also undefeated coming into the championship meet and had a team full of experienced seniors. "Brooklyn Tech had some fast people, but we were faster, and I never doubted that we would win," sophomore David Jiang said. "As far as I know, I have never

had such a fast team. I've never had to make so many changes to my top ten," Bologna said.

The Pirates expected a close meet and came out of the gate prepared. "The beginning of the meet was pretty intense,"

kind of solemn, but, as a team, we were ready to do our best."

Bologna said that the large margin of victory against Brooklyn Tech could be attributed to the fact that "a lot of swimmers stepped up and were able to get us points in events that I wasn't counting on, during the most important part of our season. This helped make the discrepancy between us and Brooklyn Tech at finals such a large one."

The team was led this year by the two captains, seniors Stefan Garcia and Ng. Garcia has been on the team since his freshman year, while Ng joined the team his sophomore year. "The captains led by example, achieved their goals, and they will be sorely missed next year. They're very talented swimmers," Bologna said.

The two captains combined for 17 first-place finishes, and 34 top-three finishes.

"The season was bittersweet for me," Ng said. "I was really proud of the team as a whole. We'd been working really hard all season, a lot of us dropped times, but also knowing that it was my last chance to swim with the team made it bittersweet, and I cherish

**"As far as I know,
I have never had
such a fast team."
—Peter Bologna,
coach**

Ng said. "We knew we were going to have a tough time, but everyone was ready to swim. We were nervous, so it was

our city championship as sort of a last moment with the team."

The season was not without complications however. The Pirates lost sophomore Edmund

losses, the team performed well.

"We broke the record for the 200-yard medley, the 400-yard freestyle relay and we hold four records PSAL-wise," Ng said. Additionally, junior En Wei Hu Van Wright broke the record for the 100-yard butterfly, and junior Noam Altman-Kurosaki broke the school record for both the six and eleven dive events.

The Pirates will retain most of their swimmers for next season. Only four of them are graduating this year, and Bologna still hopes for some new freshmen to fill the vacated spots.

Regardless, the Pirates will continue to be a tightly knit team. "Some of my favorite moments were just spending time with the team. We had a lot of fun, and we loved to talk and joke with each other. We really felt like a family during the meets, or even just in practice," Garcia said.

**"We really felt like
a family during
the meets, or even
just in practice."
—Stefan Garcia,
and co-captain**

Zhan and senior Konrad Wojnar to injuries. Despite these

Sports

Newly Implemented Lateness Policy Results in Ineligibility for Athletes

continued from page 20

also inconsistency in the severity of the consequences. Athletes in winter sports were deemed ineligible for the remainder of the season following the third marking period report card, while athletes participating in spring sports will only miss preseason exhibition games.

With 44 latenesses in the first semester, Barnes was forced to miss the Borough, City, and Eastern State Championships, since he was ineligible until he received his next report card, after the season had ended.

"He was clearly in the wrong. He was absent an inordinate amount of times," boys' track coach Mark Mendes said. "Should he have been suspended? Absolutely. Was keeping him out of Boroughs and individuals at the City Championship enough? I think so. But to destroy the season for the other kids is ridiculous."

The suspension hurt the relay team, of which Barnes was an integral member, and caused the team to just miss qualifying for the Penn Relays, a prestigious event in which only the best student runners in the world participate. Runners from other countries have come frequently to participate in the relays. One of Penn Relay's most acclaimed participants was Olympic gold med-

alist Usain Bolt, who represented his home country of Jamaica.

Despite efforts by Mendes and Barnes to limit the punishment to individual events in an attempt to save the season for the other kids on the relay team, Barnes was still declared ineligible for the remainder of the season. "One kid on the team makes an error, the entire team loses, not just the one person," Miller said.

Furthermore, Barnes' grade in his first period class rose for the third marking period, despite the issue of lateness. Mendes tried to argue for "no harm, no foul," but Barth refused to change the disciplinary action.

"It's not only hurting me, it's also hurting my teammates," Barnes said. "I don't want to say it was unfair, but I think it was poorly handled."

Another notable suspension handed out during the winter season was of junior and basketball player Roy Vlcek.

Vlcek missed the Runnin' Rebels' lone playoff game, which the team lost by just one point. Though the suspension was eventually irrelevant because Vlcek would have missed the game regardless due to pneumonia, he still had issues with the new policy.

"If we were given a warning, it would have worked out better for everyone, satisfying Mr. Barth with athlete tardiness and giving athletes the opportu-

nity to participate," Vlcek said. Vlcek was also a proponent of placing a number on the absences that would be subject to a suspension. "There should have definitely been varying offenses with a numerical value corresponding to each offense. All of these suspensions so far have been at his own discretion," he said.

Winter teams were not warned ahead of time that their athletes were in danger of being suspended, but athletes on spring teams are wary of potential consequences. Those spring season players who have now exceeded the lateness limit have been suspended for pre-season games rather than post-season matches. They have ample time to prove that lateness is no longer an issue, and are likely to return to their team before the middle, or even beginning, of the new season.

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"Fall sports people have gotten a warning that winter athletes have been penalized already. Winter sports got no warning," Mendes said. However, he added that "to be benched for exhibition games [played in the cold] is almost a gift rather than a punishment."

Several players and coaches have also taken issue with the fact that there is a double standard set on student athletes because other extracurricular groups do not enforce lateness policies.

"The one issue I have is consistency. Athletes are being punished for lateness, yet kids involved in SING!, Debate, and Model UN aren't," boys' varsity basketball coach Phil Fisher said.

"I didn't get kicked off of SING! because of my lateness, but I got kicked off the team," Barnes said. "I'd rather be competing on my team rather than in SING!. The team is more important. It can affect my college scouting opportunities, so there is a lot more riding on teams."

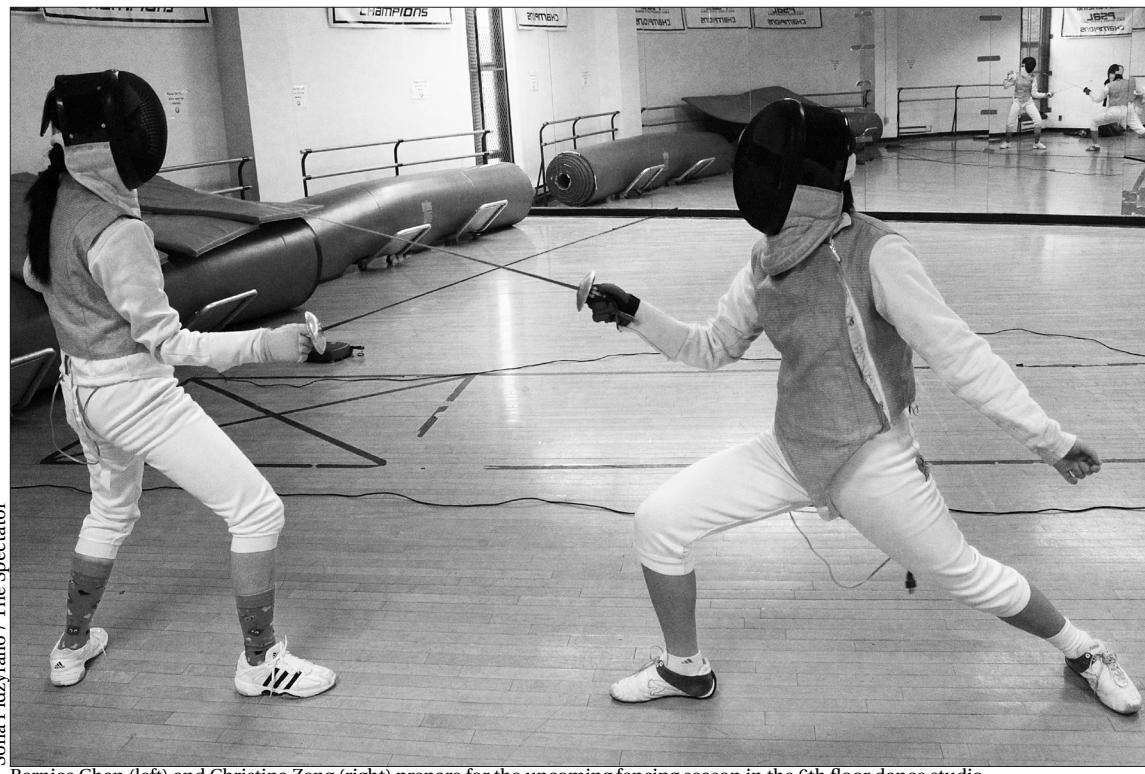
A meeting was previously scheduled for coaches to give their opinions and voice their concerns on the new policy. Due to Barth's absence that day, the meeting was postponed to a future date.

However, there seems to be a consensus among coaches that the policy is necessary to control student lateness, with small issues arising about the consistency of penalization.

"That's always the case when something new comes in all of a sudden. There is going to be a time for the public to acclimate to the new regulation," said Principal Stanley Teitel, who approved the policy. "Going forward everyone will have their fair warning. Now they know that there is a lateness policy in place."

Girls' Fencing

Girls' Fencing Looks to Rebound After First Early Exit in Five Years



Bernice Chan (left) and Christina Zeng (right) prepare for the upcoming fencing season in the 6th floor dance studio.

Sofia Pidzryallo / The Spectator

By QUINN HOOD

Stuyvesant's girls' fencing team, formerly known as the Untouchables, are currently nameless and enter the season for the first time in four years without a City Championship title to defend. The former three-time defending champions were unable to achieve a four-peat, losing to Townsend Harris High School in the first round of the playoffs last year.

There were many circumstances surrounding the lack-luster performance of the team last year. Lack of commitment and dedication coupled with the injury of captain Kimberly Bain, combined to produce the first imperfect regular sea-

son record in recent memory at 8-2. The team also lost many of its best fencers to graduation coming into season. "We definitely didn't finish as well as we hoped we would," senior and co-captain Katherine Chen said. "We need to be more focused."

Senior and co-captain Sarah Alkilany made it a point of emphasis for the team to institute new policies this year to tighten up what girls can get away with and make sure the team is not slacking off. "We are going to be more stringent with our policies," Alkilany said.

One such change forced returning players to try out for a spot on the team, rather than ensuring a spot, as they had in the past, in hopes that return-

ing players will have to train and stay in shape throughout the pre-season. There is "a lot of muscle we need to gain," said Chen.

This season will also be slightly different from past seasons, as a new division of fencing has been introduced. "This year there is a monkey wrench thrown in by us," said coach Joel Winston. "The fencing has divided into two weapons. We now have a whole new division called epee".

Instead of just the traditional foil division, which was composed of six fencers, the competitions will now be split into two divisions. Foil and epee will have three fencers in each division. This new development further stresses the importance of dedication and prepa-

ration, as the team will "have to re-teach a lot of kids a new style of fencing," Alkilany said.

"Epee is more like conventional sword-fighting. The object is whoever touches first gets the point," Winston said. "Foil requires knowledge of what is called right of way...it is a little more complicated and involves a little more strategy."

The team has increased the number of preseason conditioning drills and practices, since SING! forced the practices to be pushed back. Furthermore, the first match will be on Wednesday, March 23, a week earlier than usual. As a consequence of these two obstacles, two weeks of practice will be lost.

However, the team insists on continuing its conditioning before succumbing to the time constraints and turning directly to practices and drills. "I believe in conditioning first and

then practicing," Winston said. Two promising additions to

"I believe in conditioning first and then practicing."
—Joel Winston, coach.

"We definitely didn't finish as well as we hoped we would."
—Katherine Chen, senior and co-captain.

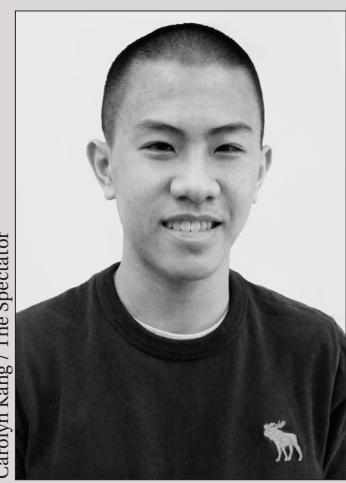
this year's team are two incoming freshmen, Julia Mendelsohn and Rebecca Stanford, who join the team with prior fencing experience. Such experience is necessary for the team to compete with rivals Hunter High School and Bronx Science, who are much more experienced.

"Lots of my friends who fence at other schools have been fencing for a decade, [others for] five years," Alkilany said.

With new policies expected to resolve last year's issue of dedication, as well as the return of all but three fencers from last season, the team is looking forward to a successful season that will hopefully begin yet another streak of championships.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

The Triple Crown of Sports



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

By MATTHEW MOY

As a child, I was one of the millions who idolized athletes and dreamed of playing sports professionally. However, I never participated in organized sports in my youth, and failed to make my middle school basketball or softball teams, so the dream of one day playing under the bright lights appeared to be very short-lived.

When I first came to Stuyvesant, athletics were the least of my concerns. I saw Stuyvesant as a purely academic environment. However, that all changed when I became aware of the vast athletic opportunities offered at Stuyvesant, particularly the 37 different sports teams.

I knew that I would have no problem finding the right one for me, reviving my childhood fantasy once again. I was sure I was going to participate in Stuyvesant athletics, but little did I know that I would become part of the exclusive fraternity of athletes: that of the three-sport athletes.

A three-sport athlete is simply a person who participates in a different sport in each of the fall, winter, and spring sports seasons. Why would anyone want to subject himself to the mental and physical grinds of competition throughout the entire school year?

First off, there are so many sports you can play, that for

some athletes, it's impossible to decide on just one. During my freshman year, I unsuccessfully tried out for the fencing team in the fall. In the winter, I joined the wrestling team because I had prior experience in mixed martial arts. I joined the lacrosse team in the spring because the sport looked exciting. During the fall of my sophomore year, I joined the cross-country team because I had been running on my own during the summer and needed to maintain my weight for the wrestling season. I run cross-country in the fall, wrestle in the winter, and play lacrosse in the spring. Though the grueling, non-stop grind is a challenge, I truly cherish my time spent on the teams, and they are well worth the many days of soreness.

Like many other high school students, I faced pressure to participate in as many extracurricular activities as possible. At the same time, I had to balance my schoolwork, all in an attempt to make their college application as appealing as possible. Yet, I did not feel comfortable in, and was uninterested in being part of, the popular Speech and Debate Team or Key Club.

That's where sports teams came in. Many colleges are interested in talented student athletes who would represent the school both academically and athletically. Nothing shows a successful student's dedication more than the title of three-sport athlete.

Some athletes choose to play additional sports in order to stay in shape for their main sport. Many of my track teammates joined the team to increase their endurance and speed for sports such as football.

Others just love the feeling of competition, and don't want to be excluded from it during the offseason. These athletes participate in sports that are far more dissimilar, such as football and lacrosse or basketball and baseball. I joined cross-country

to build both my cardiovascular and mental strength.

As a three-sport athlete, I have to cope with several problems. Getting home after 6:30 p.m., and often as late as 8:00 p.m., is pretty much the norm. Thus, there is always a trade-off between hours of sleep and time spent on schoolwork. Usually, I will listen to my body and spend less time on work or studying in order to go to sleep earlier. For nearly the entire school year, I have limited my time spent with friends other than my teammates, and my participation in clubs. Furthermore, being a three-sport athlete often takes away from my time spent with my family over the weekends and vacations, as practices, competitions, and camps take up most of my free time.

Some coaches are opposed to their athletes participating in other sports because seasons may overlap due to playoff scheduling, or may interfere with practices prior to the official start of the season. I was unable to attend sport-specific off-season workouts that many of my teammates participated in. During the first two weeks of November, my wrestling team started holding practices, but I could not attend since I was preparing for the cross country City Championships. Many of my teammates felt neglected.

Three-sport athletes in high school are a dying breed, but I embrace the opportunity to be one. I know that I will probably never become one of the top athletes in the PSAL or make an NCAA team in any individual sport. However, I am willing to give up these potential opportunities later in life, and I would just like to enjoy my years at Stuyvesant, and experience all that it has to offer. That's not to say I wouldn't like to be successful at sports, but I'll take the diversity and camaraderie of being on three teams over specializing in a sport that I likely won't be pursuing later on in life.

Boys' Swimming

Pirates Get Their Buried Treasure, Defend City Championships

Courtesy of George Wu
Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team, the Pirates, won the Public School Athletics League (PSAL) City Championships.

By GABRIEL SUNSHINE

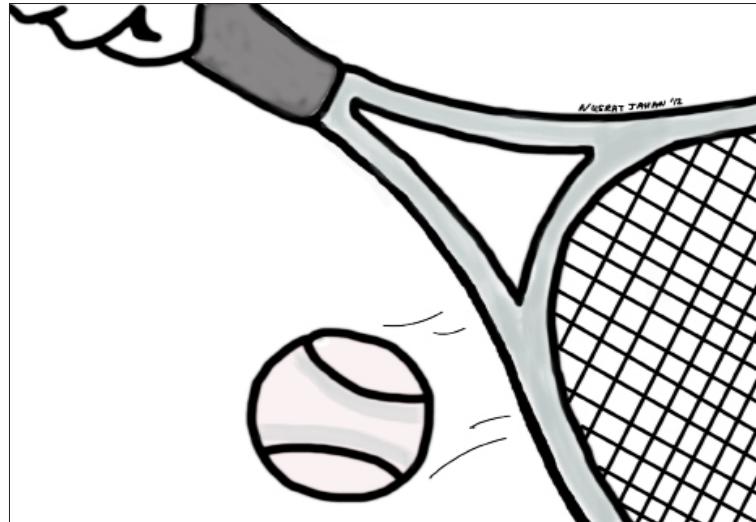
Still bitter from a 2008 loss against Brooklyn Technical High School in the Public School Athletics League (PSAL) City Championships, the Pirates, Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team, prevailed this time around.

The Pirates successfully defended last year's City Championships, putting the icing on yet another perfect season. They dominated the meet, outscoring the Brooklyn Tech Engineers, 62-39, on Thursday, February 17. The win was the culmination of an incredible season in which

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Girls' Tennis

Lobsters Look to Win Fifth Consecutive Division Title

Nusrat Jahan / The Spectator
By MAGGIE YEUNG

For the Lobsters, Stuyvesant's girls' tennis team, anything less than a first place finish in the Manhattan/Bronx division would be a failure. The team has won the division in the past four seasons while compiling a 42-2 regular season record.

Despite their regular season success, the Lobsters still cannot get over the hump in the playoffs. For the past three years, the team's championship bids were ended by the Benjamin N. Cardozo High School Lady Judges, who went on to win the City Championship. Last sea-

son's loss to the Lady Judges in the semifinals has been especially motivating for the Lobsters.

"The girls' tennis team has always been a contender for the PSAL title, and this year is no different," said junior Connie Lu said, noting that the girls have tried to stay true to their proven workouts. "In addition to doing well in matches, we always strive to push each other at practice to improve in the long term," Lu said.

However, duplicating past success will prove to be more difficult than expected this year, as the Lobsters' two co-

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Newly Implemented Lateness Policy Results in Ineligibility for Athletes

By PHILLIP GODZIN and KRIS LULAJ

A new school policy, implemented at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, penalizing student athletes for excessive lateness to their first period class has made a significant mark on Stuyvesant's sports teams.

Every athlete on a Public School Athletics League (PSAL) team signed a contract in September agreeing to several regulations compiled by Assistant Principal Health and Physical Education Larry Barth. The contract consisted of already existent PSAL rules as well as policies implemented by several coaches in past years.

One regulation states that "student athletes must be on time for all classes and cannot cut classes." The contract concludes, "Failure to comply with any established rule [...] stated above will be grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal from the team."

"One thing that jumped out at me as I was checking eligibility was lateness," said Barth, who reviewed every athlete's third marking period report card last term and first marking period report card this term.

At this point, the new policy has affected both winter and spring teams, including boys' track, baseball, basketball and lacrosse, as well as girls' softball and tennis.

"Some of the latenesses are getting out of hand," girls' softball coach Vincent Miller said. "The term 'student athlete' is very important. You are a student before you are an athlete. In order to participate in extracurricular activities, you

have to be a good student."

Many coaches and teams had already established policies that disciplined athletes for lateness to school as well as to practice.

"That's my policy for both the baseball and football team. I coached the football team for 22 years," boys' varsity baseball assistant coach Matt Hahn said. "We've taken care of our business before this policy. I've had kids be late, and I tell them, 'You're late. Don't bother showing up anymore. Straighten yourself out.' They started showing up on time."

Several athletes have argued that a clear number of latenesses should be established. Many were unaware that they had surpassed an acceptable amount, because the policy has not been enumerated. "They give you a heads-up if you're failing a class, or have too many cuts. But there was no clear definition of this rule," said senior and boys' track captain Billy Barnes, who was dropped from winter track, and is suspended from participation in the spring, due to excessive lateness. "All we did was sign a contract that said not to be late. It didn't set any parameters you had to follow," Barnes said.

On the other hand, some say a fixed number would fail to make students consistently punctual. "If you set a number, like 20, [students will] take 19. It has to be handled on a case by case basis," Hahn said.

Though athletic suspensions have generally been levied for ten or more latenesses, there is

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