



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"*

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Senior Sues City Over Cheating Allegations

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NEW YORK

Application of
STUDENT DOE, a minor,
Petitioner,
By Petitioner's parents, JANE DOE and JOHN DOE,
For a Judgment Pursuant to CPLR Article 78
-against-

DENNIS M. WALCOTT AS
CHANCELLOR OF THE NEW YORK
CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, and
JIE ZHANG AS PRINCIPAL OF
STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL.

Respondents.

VERIFIED PETITION

Index No. 12103962

Name of Assigned Judge

FILED
OCT 05 2012
COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE
NEW YORK

Petitioner alleges:

1. Petitioner is a student attending Stuyvesant High School ("Stuyvesant" or the "School") in the City, County, and State of New York, and is under the age of eighteen years.
2. Due to the fact that public disclosure of Petitioner's name or disclosure of the names of Petitioner's parents ("Parents") would cause the type of harm that Petitioner seeks to remedy, the true names of Petitioner and Parents are not identified in this Petition.
3. Prior to filing this Petition, Petitioner's counsel advised Respondent's Counsel, New York City Law Department, that this Petition would be forthcoming and further advised Respondent's Counsel of Petitioner's true identity.

Official case filed by Student Doe against Stuyvesant HS and the DOE.
COURTESY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, COUNTY OF NEW YORK.

By SCOTT MA
and DAVID MASCIO

In a lawsuit filed with the Manhattan Supreme Court on October 4, 2012, a Stuyvesant senior allegedly involved in the June cheating scandal sued Jie Zhang, Interim Acting Principal at Stuyvesant High School, and Dennis Walcott, chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (DOE) for hurting her chances of being accepted into college.

The senior, who filed the lawsuit under the alias of "Student Doe," argues that she did not cheat on the Regents examinations, and as a result should not have had her English, US History and Physics Regents scores cancelled by the DOE.

According to the suit, on June 13, 2012, the day of the Physics Regents, then-junior Nayeem Ahsan sent text messages containing exam answers to Student Doe's cellphone. Student Doe alleges that she had turned her phone off during the exam in the presence of

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Senior Taken Into Police Custody for Drug Possession

By LINDSAY BU
and RISHAM DILLON

A Stuyvesant senior was taken to police custody on Friday, October 12, for the possession and use of illegal drugs on school premises. The incident occurred at approximately 9:30 in the morning, ten minutes into third period.

Administrators are believed to have caught the student smoking marijuana in a student bathroom. Members of the administration—which included one of the three deans, believed to have been Physical Education teacher Vincent Miller, in addition to two Stuyvesant Assistant Principals, including AP of Student Affairs and Parent Engagement Brian Moran, and one security guard—then found probable cause to search the student's locker, where they are said to have discovered additional illegal drugs. The Stuyvesant administrative staff has declined to comment on the incident.

Sources state that the student was not present during the search of his locker by authorities. The student was handcuffed by school security guards and taken to the second floor entrance, where he was then transferred to police custody, according to several witnesses. He is believed to have been taken to the city's First Precinct,

located close to Stuyvesant. The student, however, claims that there was never an official arrest. "The school security cuffed me but I was not arrested. My locker was unlawfully searched, but there was nothing to be found there," he said in an e-mail interview during his suspension period. The New York City Police refused to verify or release information surrounding the case because of the student's underage status.

The student is speculated to have been charged with criminal possession of marijuana in the fifth degree, under which a person is accused of possessing the drug in a public place, having between 25 and 100 grams of it.

The administration has implemented a week-long suspension for the student, which began on Tuesday, October 16th.

The news has reopened discussions regarding drug use within the school, a long-standing concern among administrations and parents.

"Drug-use at Stuyvesant is an interesting paradox—the students who use drugs often do well academically and rarely stick out from the rest of the student body," senior Shreya Kalva said. "The students who use drugs at Stuyvesant actively seek them out," senior Norine Chan said, "The drugs don't seek them."

SHSAT Deemed Racist By NAACP

By STANCA IACOB
and DORIT REIN

On Thursday September 27, 2012, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund filed a complaint with the US Department of Education stating that the admissions exam for the eight Specialized High Schools in New York City discriminates against black and Latino students.

The NAACP accused the city of barring Black and Latino students from the specialized high schools, including Stuyvesant High School, where only one percent of students is black. "Black and Latino students don't see opportunity at places like Stuyvesant because of the admissions process," said NAACP attorney Rachel Kleinman in a New York Times article. "It's not fair and it's bad policy."

The Association believes the grueling exam is unfair to Black and Latino students because they are denied admission "at rates far higher than other racial groups." Nearly 31 percent of white students and 35 percent of Asian students who take the test are offered seats at the top schools, compared with just five percent of Black students and 6.7 percent of Latinos.

For years, Black and Latino students have struggled to gain admission to the city's top institutions. At Stuyvesant,

just 1.2 percent of the student body is black, although Black students account for 28 percent of overall enrollment in city schools. Hispanics make up 2.4 percent of Stuyvesant.

The NAACP doesn't specify how the test discriminates against Blacks and Latinos, but Kleinman said those students might lack tutoring and other resources. Department of Education (DOE) officials pushed back against the NAACP's complaint, arguing the test is color-blind.

Stuyvesant SPARK Coordinator Angel Colon does not believe that the test itself is the reason for the Black and Latino minorities in these schools. "The information is just not reaching certain communities in time," Colon said. "For the majority of people, this is not an exam that you can pass solely on your god-given intelligence. You need to prepare, and in some black and Latino communities, there just isn't enough time."

The New York City Department of Education created the New York Specialized High School Institute (SHSI), a free program run by the Department for middle school students with high test scores on city-wide tests and solid report card grades. The program's original intent was to expand the population of African American and Hispanic students in the science high schools by offering them test-

taking tips and extra lessons; however, students of any racial or ethnic background can apply for admission to the Institute. As of 2006, 3,781 students are enrolled at 17 locations. Students spend 16 months, starting in the summer after sixth grade, preparing for the test.

This is not the first time that the specialized high schools were deemed "racist" in terms of the students they accept. During the 1960s, a time when the ideal of equality and opportunity gave way to demands for equality of results, there were many protests that demanded "community control" over schools, including the specialized high schools. In 1971 the superintendent of Community School Board Three on Manhattan's West Side, Alfredo Mathew, charged that the admissions test at the Bronx High School of Science was "culturally biased" and worked to "screen out" black and Puerto Rican students. Mathew's board demanded that the schools chancellor abolish the admissions test and admit students solely on the basis of recommendations; it threatened a lawsuit if he didn't. As a result, in 1972, the New York State Legislature passed the Hecht-Calandra Act.

The Hecht-Calandra Act protects the entrance examination as the only factor taken into

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Cheating Ring Suspensions Held

By ALVIN WEI
and BRIAN WEI

Four months after Stuyvesant's cheating ring was exposed late last year, concrete disciplinary actions were taken against the students who were involved in the scandal. At the start of the school year, 92 students and their parents attended individual conferences with Interim-Acting Principal Jie Zhang, where 21 students were able to convince the administration that they did not cheat in the Regents examinations.

Of the 71 students who would be considered for suspension, 12 were given Superintendent's Suspensions, while the rest received Principal's Suspensions.

Based on these conferences and the evidence presented against each student, Zhang recommended punishments to the Department of Education (DOE). Following her recommendations, the DOE issued final decisions

that established disciplinary actions against each student charged with an infraction.

"Generally, if there is an issue, it is investigated by the school. If there is an infraction, the school takes the appropriate steps and disciplinary measures including parent conferences and principal's and superintendent's suspension," Assistant Principal of Student Affairs and Parent Engagement Brian Moran said of the administration's handling of the suspension process.

The students' roles and actions during the cheating scandal determined the type of suspension they received. Students who replied to the text of then Stuyvesant junior and leader of the cheating ring Nayeem Ahsan faced Superintendent's Suspensions, while the students who used the texted answer or received

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Features

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Behind Red Eyes: An Inside Look at Stuyvesant's Drug Culture

Features editor Arielle Gerber examines the drug culture at Stuyvesant.



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Staff Editorial

Four Methods

In light of last year's scandal our board of editors examined how four methods of grading could affect Stuyvesant's academic environment moving forward.



News

Newsbeat

- The Yale Invitational Tournament for speech and debate was held on September 22 and 23. Junior Tahia Islam and senior Nancy Ko reached quarterfinals in the dramatic interpretation category, while junior Juliette Hainline reached the semifinals in the humorous interpretation category. Seniors Annarose Jacob and Max Liebeskind moved on to the semifinals in Congressional Debate, senior Samantha Hom and junior Sweny Venderbush made it to triple octafinals in Lincoln Douglas Debate, and sophomores Jonathan Evans and Jako Urda made it to double octafinals in Public Forum.
- Chemistry teacher Dr. Steven O'Malley has been honored by the New York section of the American Chemical Society as its 2012 Teacher of the Year.
- Social studies teacher Eric Wisotsky's economics students are working on the Toys by Teens project, in which they must design and launch a new toy. The students are working with Ms. Pam Chmiel of the Teen Entrepreneur Boot Camp and with the toy designer Howard Wexler, creator of Connect Four.

Cheating Ring Suspensions Held

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the text but did not reply to it, faced Principal's Suspensions.

Under the DOE's Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures, students charged with Superintendent's Suspensions are suspended for six to 10 days—in this case, 10—while those who are given a Principal's Suspension face suspension for one to five days—in this case, five.

Students who received both Superintendent's and Principal's Suspension have been immediately reinstated into their classes, with the exception of Ahsan, who is reported to have transferred to Brooklyn Latin High School. Returning from their suspension periods, students receive assistance in meeting social and academic standards for the school community, including guidance interventions, parent outreach, individual counseling and guidance conferences.

The Principal's Suspensions were held in Lecture Hall A of the Murray Kahn Theater, where suspended students spent two hours per day with licensed supervisors. Most of the suspended students began their suspensions on the second day of school. From 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the students spent their time in silence, some reading or doing work.

Additionally, students were not allowed to take part in classes or afterschool activities during their suspensions, and were required to leave the school building directly after serving their mandated daily hours. Though they did not attend classes throughout their suspension periods, students were responsible for completing their teachers' class assignments. For the rest of the year, students will not be allowed to hold leadership positions in clubs, leave the building for lunch or participate in SING!.

The last of the suspended students completed their required hours on Wednesday, October 10, and are currently attending their classes. Students who received Superintendent's Suspensions will have the infraction placed on their permanent student records while those who faced Principal's Suspensions will not. Upon graduation, however, the students' suspensions will not remain on their records. "Superintendent's suspensions will be expunged from their records after graduation," Interim-Acting Principal Jie Zhang said.

"Suspension is not an effective punishment," said a student given a Principal's Suspension, who requested anonymity. "If a student is doing badly in school, why make it harder for them to do better in class?"

Administration Discusses Revising Testing Policy

By RISHAM DILLON

In an attempt to reduce student stress, the administration's cabinet, which consists of the assistant principals and the principal, is currently proposing and discussing revisions to the existing testing policy. The revision, if put into effect, will restrict the administration of tests the day after certain religious holidays.

Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang states that the discussions are a result of realizations that the current testing policy, though efficient, can be improved. Under the current testing policy, each department is assigned a certain day on which teachers may administer tests to students. It is highly suggested by the administration that teachers administer tests only on the department-specific testing days. Therefore, during short weeks some subjects cannot administer tests and must wait for the next week. Furthermore, with the current testing policy, teachers are allowed to administer tests directly following religious holidays.

Zhang first suggested that teachers reschedule tests following Yom Kippur, a Jewish holiday in which the observant fast and pray, the week of September 24th, in respect and understanding of students observing. She believed that if teachers followed this suggestion, students who observed the holiday would not be as stressed.

Though Zhang intended this to be a suggestion, some teachers believed that it was a mandated change. "My health teacher said that she had to give the test on Friday because of a religious holiday. She knew that some of us were facing many tests on Friday [as a result of this administrative suggestion] but she stated that it was a department mandate," junior Andrew Fan said.

Some students expressed discontent over the sudden announcement that their tests would be rescheduled, but approve of rescheduling tests for religious purposes as long as they are informed well beforehand. "If such a policy is to be implemented, I could definitely adjust to it. I hope that the administration will not continue to suddenly introduce testing schedule changes as they did during the Yom Kippur holiday and will rather inform us ahead of time of such changes," junior Paula Carcamo said.

When questioned whether the administration will mandate no testing following religious holidays, Zhang stated that it is currently undecided. "There is no new policy as of yet. What happened last week [Friday, September 28th] was a one-day suggestion that I made," Zhang said.

Zhang understands that this policy does have some downfalls, including the possibility that some students might face a number of tests in one day. Therefore, one proposal the cabinet is discussing involves changing individual testing schedules to address religious holidays celebrated by a minority of students. This proposal will respect these students' religious practices as well as ensure that other students do not have many tests on one day. "If we have a small student population that is

effected by certain religious holidays, we are discussing the possibility of accommodating their individual needs and adjusting their specific testing schedules so that both these students and the greater Stuyvesant community may benefit," Zhang said.

Some students believe that the administration should implement a testing policy that respects students who celebrate religious holidays in which they have little time to focus on schoolwork.

"There are certain students who must celebrate religious holidays and I think we should all understand and respect these students beliefs," sophomore Owen Smith said.

Other students, however, do not agree that such a policy should be implemented, stating that teachers generally give a good amount of notice before a test and that implementing such a policy may produce

"There are certain students who must celebrate religious holidays and I think we should all understand and respect these students beliefs."
—Owen Smith, sophomore

New Blood Drive Policies Instituted

By AIMEE LI
and GABE ROSEN

Stuyvesant's biannual blood drives, events that have steadily risen in attendance over the years, will experience policy changes during the 2012-2013 school year.

Held in January and March each year, the blood drives are sponsored by the New York Blood Center, a non-profit, community-based blood collection and distribution organization that contributes by sending doctors, nurses, and the necessary machinery to Stuyvesant High School. Last year, each blood drive reaped in over 170 student donors and 180 total pints of blood. Despite the turnouts, however, complications were introduced during last year's second blood drive on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, raising concerns over the need for stricter policies.

During the blood drive, a 17-year-old student who did not receive the proper consent from her parents fainted due to the donation of excessive blood. The unnamed student misleadingly said she weighed more than she actually did during the medical examination. After her donation, she fainted and split her head on a bench on the first floor. Though no charges have been made against the school, the incident has caused the administration to require notarized volunteer forms and parental consent for all volunteers. (Previously, only donors 16 years of age were required to obtain parental consent via a signature in order to donate.) Many of the donors of the previous blood

"Because we will have less donors, [the blood drive] may run much smoother, and we may be able to better schedule the remaining donors and be able to expedite the process."

—Noah Hellerman,
senior and
blood drive
coordinator

drives were walk-in donors who signed for their papers on the spot. With the new notarization policy, however, these donors will not be able to donate.

The new policies were first advocated by Assistant Principal of Organization Randi Damesek. However, the final policies were discussed and determined by the two blood drive coordinators, Marium Sarder and Noah Hellerman, and Coordinator of Student Affairs Lisa Weinwurm.

A notary stamp is a certification that the person signing the document is whom he or she claims to be. The new notarization policy will ensure that all forms submitted are legitimate and can ensure that all volunteers, not just 16-year olds, have the explicit consent of their guardians. In order to notarize the forms at Stuyvesant, a donor can visit Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm or Coordinator of Student Affairs Ms. Lisa Weinwurm. Other public institutions that provide notarization include banks, some post offices, and pharmacies.

These changes in the donation process has caused senior and blood drive coordinator Marium Sarder unease. "Getting students to notarize their permission slips is going to cause a steep drop in the number of donors," Sarder said.

However, her co-coordinator, senior Noah Hellerman, looks toward the more positive implications of the new policies. "Because we will have less donors, [the blood drive] may run much smoother, and we may be able to better schedule the remaining donors and be able to expedite the process."

scheduling conflicts. "Students are usually told well beforehand of upcoming tests and they can study beforehand. Although we have to respect religious beliefs, we must also take into consideration that such a policy, if implemented, might interfere with the educational schedules of teachers and students," Fan said.

Many teachers stated that though they understand the administration's proposal, the administration should gear the policy to ensure that it doesn't greatly conflict with their teaching schedules.

"If we are to implement such a policy, we must make sure that tests don't get pushed over to other weeks. If this occurs, it may end up affecting the teacher's schedule greatly," Assistant Principal of Physical Education Larry Barth said.

Though the cabinet is still considering the revisions, students have expressed appreciation of the administration's ongoing discussions of policies that attempt to ease student stress.

"I celebrate [religious and cultural holidays] and if such a policy were to be implemented it would really help students who celebrate religious holidays out," junior Robert He said. "I think that the administration is taking a good initiative [by discussing this situation] to reduce student stress and I hope they continue to take such initiatives in the future."

The Environmental Club's TerraCycle Brigade



The Environmental Club collects recyclable items, such as candy wrappers and drink pouches, in bins found near the cafeteria exit.

Vivian Huang/The Spectator

By LINDSAY BU

This September, Stuyvesant's Environmental Club began to take part in the Brigade programs of TerraCycle, an organization that engages consumers in the collection of recycled packaging and products. With each collected item, TerraCycle offers points that can later be redeemed for charitable monetary compensation.

Founded in 2001 by Tom Szaky, then a 20-year-old Princeton University freshman, TerraCycle began with the production of organic fertilizer by packing liquid worm fecal matter in old soda bottles. Since then, the company has grown into one of the world's fastest-growing green corporations. According to the organization's official website, "with more than 20 million people collecting waste in over 20 countries, TerraCycle has diverted billions of units of waste and used them to create over 1,500 different products available at major retailers ranging from Walmart to Whole Foods Market."

TerraCycle's Brigade programs offer any organization or company the opportunity to make use of their waste stream.

Aimed at eliminating the idea of waste, each Brigade program involves the collection of a specific commodity—whether it is bottles, writing utensils, or electronics—previously regarded to be non-recyclable or difficult-to-recycle. Once an organization has selected a specific "Brigade" and has begun to collect waste, TerraCycle offers free shipping of the waste to the TerraCycle facility as well as points for each item collected. TerraCycle points can be redeemed for charitable gifts or a payment of \$0.01 per point to a non-profit organization or school of one's choice.

President of the Environmental Club senior Geyanne Lui first became aware of the importance of recycling when she took AP Environmental Science in 2011. "I noticed that a lot of people didn't care about recycling—people threw all types of garbage in trash cans labeled specifically for cans and bottles or paper only," Lui said. "I thought that it was important for there to be a program to show Stuyvesant students how easy it is to recycle as well as how significant it is."

Looking for a way to bring a more organized recycling system to the school, Lui and the members of the Environmental Club consulted their faculty ad-

visor and biology teacher Marissa Maggio for advice. Maggio had already been aware of TerraCycle, first becoming familiar with the organization through one of the students taking her online Environmental Biology course. In fact, last year, she introduced the Brigade program to her Stuyvesant freshman biology classes and offered extra credit to those that took part in bringing recyclable products from home for TerraCycle. After her students cumulatively raised approximately \$150, Maggio thought that the Stuyvesant student body as a whole would be able to raise significantly more money.

contribute to, the club decided on the Chip Bag Brigade due to the sale of chips from the cafeteria vending machines, the Electronics Brigade, and the Flip-Flop Brigade for the summer season that just passed.

"Many schools in the city have similar recycling programs," said senior and Environmental Club member Kenneth Zheng. "The elementary school across from Stuyvesant, P.S. 89, is going to have their own TerraCycle program, and we are planning on collaborating with them to ship more recyclable waste together. We are also starting a mentoring program in which members of the Environmental Club volunteer during lunch periods to go over to P.S. 89 to teach the elementary students about recycling."

However, before the club branches out to help other schools with their environmental cause, its members have been working to establish a structured system of recycling within Stuyvesant. Bins labeled for specific items have been placed in the cafeteria, and during lunch periods, certain club members help to engage other students in Stuyvesant's TerraCycle Brigades and promote the conservation of resources. Moreover, the Environmental Club has created a recycling drive to collect cell phones, graphing calculators, ink cartridges, keyboards, cameras, and flip-flops.

The Environmental Club has decided to donate the money that is earned from the TerraCycle points to the Sierra Club, an organization that strives to successfully transition into a clean, green energy economy that better serves people and nature. The club members look to raise approximately \$5,000 by the end of the school year.

Lui ultimately hopes that Stuyvesant's TerraCycle Brigades will have both short and long term effects. "For starters, as we are collecting more waste to send out, we are raising more money for our charity that we are going

to donate to. But, in the end, I hope that Stuyvesant students will become more accustomed to recycling in school, will not litter the streets, and value the environment more."

—Geyanne Lui, senior and President of the Environmental Club

"Our [TerraCycle Brigades] can be another instance of how we excel—not just to benefit ourselves, but the environment as a larger whole."

—Marissa Maggio, Biology teacher and Environmental Club faculty advisor

With Maggio's guidance, the members of the Environmental Club decided that TerraCycle would be a great organization to become involved in. In choosing Brigades they believed Stuyvesant students would most efficiently and conveniently

SU Proposes Creating Honor Code and Panel

By REBECCA CHANG and JAMIE WU

As part of Stuyvesant's ongoing efforts to combat academic dishonesty, the Student Union (SU) has proposed implementing an Honor Code and an accompanying panel of students and faculty to judge future cases of cheating. Though still in the early stages of discussion, the idea has been brought up in numerous School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and faculty conferences.

The details have yet to be finalized, but the SU has proposed that the Honor Code will involve students signing a declaration at the end of every exam asserting that they have not committed any act of academic dishonesty during the exam. Such a policy may even extend to include homework as well. If a student is discovered to have violated the code by a teacher or another student, a report can be submitted to the aforementioned Honor Code Panel to be reviewed. Both the student in question and the accuser may testify and submit acquired evidence. If the student is found to be guilty, then he or she still has the right to appeal to the principal, who will most

likely be the panel's supervisor should the proposal go through.

Although similar to the ethics committees found in many universities throughout America, the Stuyvesant Honor Code Panel will be composed of an equal number of students, teachers, and administrators. "In our case, having an Honor Code [Panel] in which the different groups of Stuyvesant work together to ensure academic honesty would be a good stepping stone for a possible revision to the code in the future that might give students more responsibility," SU President Adam Lieber said in an e-mail interview.

There is no definite answer as to if and when this project will be approved. Nevertheless, Lieber is currently focused on gaining support from within the school. Though he is trying to move as quickly as possible, he is aware that the process will take time. "I do hope that it happens soon, because it'd be a good way to get our recent past behind us and start focusing on the future," Lieber said.

A potential problem that arises from this proposal is the legal implications of having students judge other students, an issue that will have to be

"I really hope that the students are more educated with the value of academic honesty and over the long-run it becomes a value that students respect and implement for the rest of their lives."

—Interim-Acting Principal Jie Zhang

checked with the legal office of the Department of Education (DOE). As a solution, history teacher and SU advisor Matthew Polazzo suggested that both the accused and accuser submitting the report be made anonymous. Their testimonies can be submitted to the panel in written form with their names expunged, thus protecting their identities. Though aware that the proposal's fate is still uncertain, Polazzo hopes that the honor code and panel will help to instill a sense of honor within Stuyvesant and protect students from the competitive college application process.

"I'm no expert on this issue. I just feel like in general my belief at Stuy and with educational policies overall is that we can't be afraid to boldly experiment. Of course, the nature of an experiment is you don't know whether it's going to be successful or not. Nonetheless, it's certainly worth a try," Polazzo said.

Some students, however, are not so confident. Sophomore Justin Kim believes that even if implemented to tests and homework assignments, the Honor Code does not guarantee that the number of instances of cheating will decrease. "Hav-

ing just a written declaration that 'I'm not going to cheat' is not going to do anything other than make people annoyed at whoever is planning this change. Typically you don't see change arising from just a passage of anti-cheating," Kim said.

Junior Yuriy Slashchev, however, thinks that the proposed changes will benefit the overall school environment. "While it may divide the trust between students and teachers more, I think that it will placate those who want an increased crackdown on cheating and ultimately be better than a stricter standard," Slashchev said. "I don't see this as something that would affect my life but something that prevents something worse from affecting my life."

Though she has not yet given a definite response to the proposal, Interim-Acting Principal Jie Zhang is firmly committed to instilling a sense of academic honesty within Stuyvesant. "I really hope that the students are more educated with the value of academic honesty and over the long-run it becomes a value that students respect and implement for the rest of their lives," Zhang said.

News

ARISTA Nixes Walk-In Tutoring

By LINDSAY BU
and ANDREW WALLACE

ARISTA's new Executive Council started the new year by re-evaluating and subsequently overhauling the organization's traditional tutoring efforts. Due to difficulties arising from pairing tutors with students in need of help ARISTA Tutoring has become disorganized in recent years. The council determined that the Walk-In Tutoring program was particularly ineffective, and replaced it with a new Peer Tutoring system managed online. The Stuyvesant Walk-In Tutoring system, which was implemented in previous years by ARISTA, offered students in need of help with particular subjects the opportunity to find peer tutors during free periods behind the Murray Kahn Theater.

When the Walk-In Tutoring system was in effect, ARISTA members signed up to tutor during a lunch or free period for the duration of a week. In principle, during periods four to eight, five ARISTA members were to station themselves behind the theater for students who wanted help with their schoolwork. However, according to ARISTA President Miranda Li, there were more problems than benefits with this system. While ARISTA members were

easily able to fulfill their tutoring credits and Stuyvesant students had the option of going to Walk-In Tutoring if they needed last-minute help, an increasing number of tutors were signing in for their shift but not staying to help out the entire time. "It was a way for members to get credits without doing much, and we wanted to change that," Li said.

Furthermore, due to lack of outreach and its obscure location, many students did not take advantage of the Walk-In Tutoring program. "From what I saw last year, occasionally one or two students would come in for tutoring, but that was it," ARISTA Tutoring Vice President Keo Chau said. With the lack of tutors that stayed through the entirety of the period and the lack of students who utilized the program, ARISTA's Executive Council decided to end Walk-In-Tutoring and start over.

Under their new Peer Tutoring system, students can now sign up on the new ARISTA website to request a tutor for their desired subject areas. Afterwards, ARISTA members can see the subject and time availability information, that the students filled out online, when they log in to the website. Members then email the ARISTA tutoring committee to be paired up. According to

Chau, the tutoring committee receives approximately five tutor requests every day.

"The online tutor pairing system is a major improvement from last year's Walk-In Tutoring," sophomore Caroline Kim said. "Recently, I sent

"It was a way for members to get credits without doing much, and we wanted to change that,"
—Miranda Li,
ARISTA President

in a request for a math tutor and was promptly assigned one within the hour. This type of efficiency really allows me to place confidence not only in the tutors I will work with, but also in ARISTA as a whole."

While the new website and

tutor-tutee pairing system is an improvement from the previous Walk-In Tutoring system, there still exist minor issues and areas for improvement. "Last year, the process of assigning tutors was rather complicated due to the use of spreadsheets instead of an efficient website like the one we are currently using," junior and ARISTA Tutoring Committee member Katherine Oh said. "However, because many of the ARISTA members are enthusiastic about tutoring peers, multiple tutors will often sign up for the same tutee and it has become very difficult to choose the best tutor for a particular student."

Additionally, ARISTA members have had trouble attaining the required amount of tutoring credits under the new system. Previously, many members were not actually tutoring anybody, but they were able to satisfy their requirement because so many Walk-In-Tutoring spots were available each week. Now that the Executive Council has eliminated the program and tightened regulations, members must actually spend time tutoring students in order to satisfy the requirement. "We can see that many [ARISTA members] are more willing to do peer tutoring as a result of the elimination of

Walk-In Tutoring," senior and ARISTA Tutoring Committee member Chrystal Lee said.

Although the previous Walk-In Tutoring system during the school day is now gone, there are many other alternatives for students to receive help along in addition to the Peer Tutoring system. Afterschool Walk-In Tutoring is available on Mondays through Thursdays, from 3:40 pm to 4:40 pm. Tutors will be selected based on their grades and the rigor of their classes, which will help ensure that students in search of a tutor will find a well-qualified and capable one. AIS Tutoring is also available after school, and study sheets for various subjects have been submitted and posted on ARISTA's official website.

Despite concerns about the new tutoring system, Li believes the Executive Council has established a good foundation to work off of for the future. "What we have done so far is to change what hasn't been working: we have revamped the tutoring program and increased the number of events," Li said. "Now that our system for the upcoming year is basically set up, we will look to expanding ARISTA, not only for our year, but for many years to come."

SHSAT Deemed Racist By NAACP

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consideration when it comes to admission to the specialized high schools. It also states that the SHSAT cannot simply be changed. The act calls for a uniform math and science

legislation. The DOE's website states that students are admitted to specialized high schools based on how their SHSAT score ranks among the other test takers' scores; the order in which they ranked the eight specialized high schools they would like to attend; and the seats available in each school.

The lack of black and Latino students in the student body has been a well-discussed topic at Stuyvesant for some time now. Stuyvesant has an outreach program where Colon and Parent-Coordinator Harvey Blumm visit junior high schools in Black and Latino communities in an effort to inform Junior High School students of the SHSAT, while still allowing them enough time to prepare for the exam. "Harvey and I have been doing this for a long time now. We want them to be aware, and spread the news in their communities," Colon said. "It's a matter of information." Last month, Stuyvesant hosted an Open House designed to inform minority students about the life at Stuyvesant. In years' past Stuyvesant has held diversity days where professional panels discussed solutions to the racial disparity at the school.

This year, Stuyvesant alumnus and Republican candidate for mayor Tom Allon ('80) expressed his dissent over the specialized admissions process. In an editorial published in the Daily News on Sunday, August 12, he outlined specific changes that he would make to the exam. He endorsed admitting every middle school valedictorian to Stuyvesant and to adding a written component to the SHSAT.

As to whether the quality of Stuyvesant and the other specialized high schools will change if the admissions process is altered, no one is sure. Junior Frances Shapiro said, "I think

that the SHSAT is a fair test that truly admits students to specialized high schools who can handle the challenging curricula."

In an essay posted on his website in response to the NAACP's claim, English teacher Dr. David Mandler wrote "If the

"I think that the SHSAT is a fair test that truly admits students to specialized high schools who can handle the challenging curriculums."
—Frances Shapiro, junior

test itself were really designed to screen out black and Latino students, no black and Latino students should be able to score well enough to gain admission into the specialized high schools at all. Clearly, while too few in numbers, black and Latino students do get into specialized high schools [...] so, it is not the test itself, per se, that is racially discriminatory." Dr. Mandler declined further comment.

Senior Sues City Over Cheating Allegations

continued from page 1

a witness and that she did not see Ahsan's message until after she left Stuyvesant. At that point, she sent a message to Ahsan in which she told him to stop sending her exam answers.

Student Doe originally received grades on these Regents exams, which were added to her official school transcript. When news about the scandal broke out in the media, Doe's father telephoned the school multiple times to learn about the investigation and punishments surrounding the incident, according to the official court petition. He was allegedly told "Nothing will happen between now and September," by then Principal Stanley Teitel.

Student Doe admitted receiving answers for the Physics regents, but not for the US History or English examinations. On Monday, July 9, however, Doe learned that DOE Chancellor Dennis Walcott had chosen to cancel all the Regents results for each student suspected of cheating, a decision that was later approved by Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang. Doe and her parents were overseas when this was announced and were therefore unable to protest. The cancellation included Regents exams other than physics that Student Doe insists she had not received answers for, and all grades were removed from her transcript.

Student Doe's lawyer, Michael Rakower, also pointed out that Doe's score on the Physics exam was "inconsistent with the stellar, and virtually identical, scores obtained by students who had received answers to the exam while they were taking the test."

The suit also claims that although Zhang's name is listed as the signatory of the Principal's Decision, DOE officials wrote the entire letter, and that Zhang never observed "a single article of evidence supporting the findings of fact identified in the Principal's Decision."

Student Doe was looking for an interim resolution to the case

Student Doe admitted receiving answers for the Physics regents, but not for the US History or English examinations.

by October 15, 2012, so that the cancelled Regents exams would not affect her early-decision college applications, but she now fears that the process will take several weeks. "Every college admissions officer in the country is aware of the scandal at Stuyvesant," Rakower told The Wall Street Journal.

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Manuel Mendez denied Doe's request on Tuesday, October 9, but further legal action may be pending. Rakower and the DOE have both refused to comment until the second part of the case is finalized. The student is not able to retake the examinations until January 2013.

"Black and Latino students don't see opportunity at places like Stuyvesant because of the admissions process."
—NAACP attorney Rachel Kleinman

exam for admission into these schools. This act was intended to preserve the Specialized High Schools' status as special schools that accept students solely based on their scores on the entrance examination.

The U.S. Department of Education will review the complaint and, if needed, work with the city to change policies — a process that will require new state

Features

Grading the Grade System

**By TERESA CHEN
and MAISHA KAMAL**

With their heads bent, hiding something in their laps, students are rapidly punching buttons—but it's not a cell phone they're using—it's a calculator. At Stuyvesant, many students are plagued with the belief that numbers define the future that lies ahead of them, constantly crunching the numbers to assess their GPA down to the hundredth of a point. At a school where admission is solely based on an exam grade on the Specialized High School Admissions Exam, one can expect that from the minute a new student walks into the school, academic class grades dominate his or her life. Number grades are given out twice a semester, and a basic E, S, N, U grade is distributed for the first marking period of each semester. Although this approach is what Stuyvesant has implemented for more than 40 years, it is not the only grading system out there, and many believe it might not be the best way to go. The recent cheating scandal involving 71 juniors last June has brought the flaws of grading policies into the spotlight. In response to this, the use of letter grades has been considered, which may eliminate many of the problems associated with the current system.

Numerical grades at Stuyvesant are separated into distinct categories. Grades go up by intervals of five up to 85. Grades

then ascend from 85 to 88 and then increase consecutively from 90 to 100. Contrary to this, letter grades range from an F to an A+, covering a variety of numerical grades. The New York City Department of Education has set specific guidelines to follow in the case that a school should select to use letter grades as its policy; each letter grade has an assigned value. An "A+", for example, is the equivalent of a 98. A "B-", on the other hand, is an 83 when converted. Letter grades thus cover a broader range of numbers, and provide a method of grading that is less specific than numeric grading.

Because of these simpler standards, letter grades can decrease the anxiety students experience over their GPA. Grades are based on a unified system, and can be seen as an effort to reduce the degree of competitiveness associated with number grades. "Letter grades are great because they evoke less of a negative connotation versus number grades. For example, a B looks better than a 83 on paper," sophomore Emily Lee said.

"Letter grades can provide more self-esteem and confidence to students who maybe feel inferior to those a point higher than them," sophomore Wei Hou Wu said. In addition to these points, some students see letter grades as a better method because they reduce the pressure students feel in a rather competitive environment and place the focus of school back

to learning instead of trying to inch a grade up half a point. Lee said, "Letter grades take off some of the stress we feel; we don't need to push as hard to increase our grades. If we feel comfortable within the letter we're in, it feels like a safe zone of sorts."

Still, opponents of this view find that reduced pressure is not always beneficial to a student. "Letter grades make it even harder for a student to move up a grade—the range is too huge to see progress," sophomore Iris Zhao said. In other cases, letter grades can be viewed as inaccurate measures of effort and performance in school. "If I had to choose, I guess the number grades are a little less annoying because they actually reflect the exact grade or average you received on a year's course of work," said Olivia Deng, a junior from Trinity High School, one of the premier private schools in the nation. Trinity, along with many other private and Catholic schools, opt to use letter grading systems for their students because their small student bodies (about 110 students per grade) allow letter grades to be a clear enough indication of individuality. On the other hand, with a school like Stuyvesant that has 800 students competing for admission to a limited amount of colleges, it can be difficult to stand out academically. Deng highlighted a potential problem with using the letter grades system within a larger student body. "In Trin-

ity, giving out more general grades isn't a big deal, but when hundreds of students are competing for the same spots, a decimal difference can make a huge impact regarding college acceptances," Deng said.

Although a student's transcript average is a major component of his or her acceptance into college, a school's grading system does not play a large role for many colleges and universities. In terms of admission, most college counselors consider which type of grading a school utilizes as an unnecessary factor for determining a student's worth. "We have no preference if schools use letter or number grades. The size of the class has nothing to do with it either," said Elizabeth Morris, an admissions officer from NYU. Admission tends to be more or less holistic, stemming from extra-curriculars, academics, and personality as a whole. Ivy League schools, such as Princeton, Harvard, and Yale emphasize these qualities in their applicants.

For example, according to Mark Dunn, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions at Yale University Office of Undergraduate Admissions, "Yale does not have any preference for number grades versus letter grades. Our evaluation process involves a holistic analysis of each applicant's academic accomplishments in the specific context of his or her high school. Yale looks for students who have consistently taken

a broad range of challenging courses and done well, regardless of the grading systems their schools employ."

Still, some colleges would prefer numbers in regards to Stuyvesant. Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions at Duke University, said, "As a rule, we prefer number grades over letter grades, independent of the size of the student body or other factors. We find number grades allow us to make some useful distinctions among even smart, accomplished students. Anything that provides more information rather than less is of interest to us as we evaluate the many pieces of information we use in making admissions decisions." In that sense, number grading can be considered more organized and easier to compare when dealing with large bodies of students.

Letter grades may not represent the ideal utopia of grading systems, but many say it's a step in the right direction for Stuyvesant. Both types of grading have their setbacks and obstacles, and it appears that the student body may not be able to reach a consensus about the way grading at Stuyvesant could satisfy everyone's views and opinions. For now, all that can be hoped for is that our current grading system is formally evaluated, in order to make Stuyvesant a better place to learn and prevent anything like our recent scandal from occurring ever again.

Ranking Upwards

**By STANLEY CHAN
and EMMA LOH**

Six times during the school year, always to mixed emotions, is report card day. We receive a sheet of paper that holds our class averages, teachers' comments, and overall GPA—a culmination of a marking period of dedication and struggle. In such a competitive environment, grades are incredibly important to most students, who always look for ways to do better in their classes. Class-wide GPA ranking, a common attribute at many other high schools, could provide a different analysis of their academic profile, but at uncertain cost to community.

Colleges want the best students, but are often unable to judge the rigor of courses in lesser-known schools. Class rank attempts to bridge the gap by allowing a relative comparison within schools. However, Stuyvesant's admission criterion, the SHSAT, is designed such that incoming students are among the best in the city. In fact, Stuyvesant is popu-

larly considered the flagship public high school in NYC. In turn, colleges have a rough idea of the number madness at Stuyvesant. Since most colleges already have a rough conversion of Stuyvesant GPA's to academic potential, ranking can be seen as superfluous. "It doesn't benefit anyone but colleges, US News, and other such publications," sophomore Daniel Charnis said. "Ranking gives them one more variable to work with. Students have no net benefit."

The implications hold that class rank in Stuyvesant would have only a nominal effect on college applications. "A large student body indicates that virtually every GPA is already represented. Ranking would merely be an extension of a student's grade point average," senior Mallory Miller said. "Moreover, ranking would underscore the minute differences in averages. Students may think: Every 0.1 more on my average brings me three ranks higher. This mindset could easily lead to more cheating."

"It creates unfair pressure,

especially on poor students, to do better when they're already trying their best," sophomore Iris Zhao said.

On the other hand, some students wouldn't be opposed to more pressure. In "Don't Take My Stress Away," an article by Jack Cahn in The Spectator, Cahn writes, "I came to Stuyvesant to be sleep deprived, I came here to be pressured, I came here so that I would have enough work to keep me up throughout the night." If rankings were to inspire additional pressure, some students would thrive in the revamped environment. He continues, "It is a shame that the school attempts to weaken the workload, competition, and pressure, the very aspects of Stuyvesant that are key contributors to our success as students and people."

English teacher Emilio Nieves ranks his students on a classroom level, though he is against large-scale class rank. Nieves labeled class rank as "pressure without purpose," but explained that it "is acceptable on a classroom basis because it has no effect on the school

transcript," he said. "It is a by-product of the classroom grade point average. I use ranking for convenience and organization. Students can understand their performance relative to the class's. It also eliminates any confusion when they get their report cards."

Sophomore Derek Tsui made a similar argument, but unlike Nieves, Tsui is in favor of large-scale class rank. "Ranking should be implemented for students to see the specific level of improvement they need to aim for. The system should be student's choice to maintain privacy," he said. "A class rank system could also discourage cheating. People would likely be more focused on individual academic pursuits, and so, more reluctant to help others, especially those with a higher rank [...]

Most importantly, however, the students must understand that ranking or numbers do not define identity."

Furthermore, class rank does not have to be competitive on a large scale. Instead, it can serve to commemorate academic achievement. Brook-

lyn Technical High School is a Specialized High School, with a student body comparable to Stuyvesant's. Brooklyn Tech ranks and publishes the top ten seniors with the highest grade point averages. Subsequently, most of the grade is excluded and is unaffected by this list. "I wasn't aware that [Brooklyn Tech] had any kind of ranking. It probably only matters to those ten kids," Tech sophomore Rachel Gray said.

Class rank would likely instigate additional pressure to students in an already stressful environment. It could inspire students to achieve their full academic potential, or serve as a reminder that they will never be number one. Perhaps class rank would have a minuscule effect due to its similarity to GPA, though it is certain that if class rank were introduced, the majority of students and faculty would be opposed to it. In any case, our report card would hold one more item: a direct comparison between our peers and ourselves.

89.34

Mean GPA for sophomores

89.95

Mean GPA for juniors

89.96

Mean GPA for seniors

Features

New Clubs at Stuyvesant



Members of StuyCycle discuss their favorite places to ride around the city.

**By HUWON KIM
and SCOTT MA**

With a new year comes new classes, new faces, and above all, new clubs. This year is no exception. From cycling to sign language, this year's addition to Stuyvesant's growing list of extracurricular activities is sure to motivate students to stay even later after school, doing the things they love.

Association of Audiophiles

When today's artists record music, their work is generally far from a cappella. With the advent of computers and sound-editing software, technology has become commonplace in music, whether it be AutoTune, layering, or background effects. Practically every music file has been through some form of audio editing to better the quality of not only the music, but the file as well. The Association of Audiophiles plans to teach members just how that happens.

Sophomore Norman Kontarovich, vice president of the club, defines audiophiles as those who "enjoy learning about the technicality behind digital music" and like "applying their knowledge of software and hardware to the digital world." Likewise, members of the club will learn not only how music is edited, but also how to edit the music themselves.

Every week, the Association holds a meeting at which members discuss a topic about music, such as hardware, software, files, or simply music itself. Programs that will be taught at meetings include audio-altering software such as Audacity and Foobar2000. Different genres of digital music will also be discussed, including alternative rock and techno.

There are also plans to possibly create remixes of songs and make them available to the Stuyvesant community.

Sophomore Imtiaz Uddin, president of the Association, doesn't think of the weekly meetings as lessons. "I find it to be more about an educational experience, where people can just come and sit down and relax and talk about these sort of things that they love, like music," he said. "It will introduce [members] to new ideas I think are great to know about."

Kontarovich added that the aim of the club was "to spread the information about digital music and get more people to appreciate it."

The intersection of music and technology is a complicated one, but the Association of Audiophiles is intent on, as Kontarovich puts it, "creating a

community of digital music enthusiasts."

Fanfiction Club

In any story, the author ultimately chooses the fate of his characters. Whether they live, die, or struggle, the writer commands it all. J. K. Rowling can make Snape kill Dumbledore, and there is nothing the reader can do about it.

Or is there?

Enter fanfiction, a type of fiction based on the characters and stories of another published author. Not only has it thrived within the writing community, but it is becoming more and more popular as well. It challenges the reader to use his or her imagination. What if Dumbledore survived the Battle of Hogwarts? What happens next?

At this point, aspiring authors can decide the characters' fates. Stuyvesant's Fanfiction Club offers a medium for such writers in Stuyvesant to share and critique such stories with fellow members. Meetings are held weekly, and members are free to attend whenever they like for help with their writing.

During the first two meetings, members will be introduced to one another and be taught the basics of writing fanfiction. Afterward, however, meetings will consist of writers reading, writing, and possibly sharing their work.

Furthermore, every two weeks, a writing challenge will be held by the executive members of the club in which the best writing submission is chosen. Its writer will also be given some sort of prize.

Meetings will take place in a relaxed atmosphere, and weekly attendance will not be strictly mandatory for all members. "This is more of a fun-oriented club," sophomore and vice president Justin Moy said. "We're not exactly strict. People can show up and leave when they want."

Near the end of the year, a large collaboration project with all members of the group is planned, at which members will co-write a story together.

Sophomore Harrison Chiu, a member of the newly-formed club, hopes to be able to share fanfiction he occasionally writes with the club. "It would be nice to have some constructive criticism," he said.

Stuyvesant Martial Arts Club (SMAC)

We've all seen the movies. Lone fighter goes against impossible odds to defeat an incredible enemy of great power. Bruce Lee. Chuck Norris. Ip

Man. A blur of kicks, a flurry of punches, and a once-powerful enemy lies helplessly at their feet. They're the people we look up to in a sense of amazement and wonder, people who are, to us, godlike.

While the Stuyvesant Martial Arts Club (SMAC) can't guarantee that you'll be able to count to infinity or swim on land by the time you're through, it does teach anyone who wishes to learn mixed martial arts. "Our goal is to give [students] a chance to learn martial arts and how to defend themselves," sophomore Aden Lui said. "A lot of people have interest in martial arts, but they never had the time, money, or what they needed to pursue it."

SMAC, which has meetings once a week, coaches members a variety of fighting styles such as taekwondo, judo, and

"A person needs confidence and willpower to do any kind of strenuous activity. You have to prepare yourself in order to engage."
—Hyunsu Kim, junior and SMAC co-president

kendo, among others. Aden Lui, sophomore Hudson Lui, and junior Hyunsu Kim, the three co-presidents of the club, plan to teach members at meetings. Techniques taught to members will start out simple, building on fundamentals of all martial arts, such as punching and kicking. "Eventually," Aden Lui said, "we'll turn a simple punch into a technique from maybe karate, ninjutsu, and maybe a mix of both." In addition to punching, techniques such as footwork, finding a center of gravity, parrying, and avoiding attacks will be taught as well.

Sheer force isn't the only thing that is to be taught at SMAC. Preparing for a fight mentally is just as important as preparing for it physically. Members will need to learn how



A martial arts club member practices a roundhouse kick.



Club President Zara Leventhal teaches the club how to sign family members.

to view themselves, and build confidence in their abilities. "A person needs confidence and willpower to do any kind of strenuous activity," Kim said.

"You have to prepare yourself in order to engage."

Although the club's main goal is self-defense, there are plans for possible martial arts choreography other than simple fighting, such as performing in SING! or Culture Fest. Martial arts tournaments may be possible in the future if the club expands and obtains permission from the school.

It might not be possible to ever compete with Norris, but after learning martial arts, you're one step closer to legendary.

StuyCycle

To students whose interest in urban bicycling ranges from "I would like to try that!" to "I need more friends to bike with me," StuyCycle, a new club created by sophomores and presidents Adam DeHovitz and Justin Strauss just might be the right fit.

StuyCycle aims to "satisfy anyone who enjoys riding their bike, whether you're a beginner, commuter, or a hardcore roadie," DeHovitz said in an e-mail interview. "Every Friday, we will ride along the Hudson River Greenway, one of New York City's most extensive dedicated bike paths. We will begin at Stuyvesant after 10th period, ride to the Little Red Lighthouse under the George Washington Bridge, and return to school." Through these rides, the presidents aim to build and improve skills and endurance while creating biking experiences as a group. As the club has partnered with the New York Cycle Club, Brickwell Cycling and Multisports, and Recycle a Bicycle, "members may occasionally join us on our rides to offer their expert advice," DeHovitz said.

While one might think that such a club would only involve physically riding a bicycle, StuyCycle strives to improve the cycling experience by also teaching its members topics such as bike maintenance, safety, and technique, especially when the cold weather hits. However, "if you don't mind the cold, you may choose to continue riding," DeHovitz said.

Furthermore, DeHovitz and Strauss intend to encourage club members to participate in bike tours around the city, such as the Transportation Alternatives-run Tour de Brooklyn, Tour de Bronx, Tour de Queens, Tour de Staten Island, and NYC Century, where they can employ

what they have learned from club meetings and the weekly group rides near Stuyvesant.

"We hope that by creating a community of bikers both new and experienced, every member can leave [with] feelings like they've learned something about cycling," DeHovitz said.

American Sign Language Club

It is unlikely that many Stuyvesant students are acquainted with a person who has lost their ability to hear. As a result, most are unfamiliar with the silent but extremely interactive culture of the deaf. Junior and president of the American Sign Language (ASL) Club, Zara Leventhal, is intent on changing that.

Having grown up in an area with a sizeable deaf community, Leventhal was exposed to the active use of sign language, and the said method of communication fascinated her. "I was looking forward to taking ASL at the high school I was going to go to if I hadn't moved to NYC, and when I got here I was disappointed that Stuyvesant doesn't have an ASL class," she said in an e-mail interview.

To make up for Stuyvesant's lack of ASL classes, Leventhal attended a three-week academic program on the language at Yale over the summer. It was "definitely the best decision [she] could've made," she said. Inspired by what the course at Yale offered her, she hopes to spread knowledge on deaf culture in Stuyvesant.

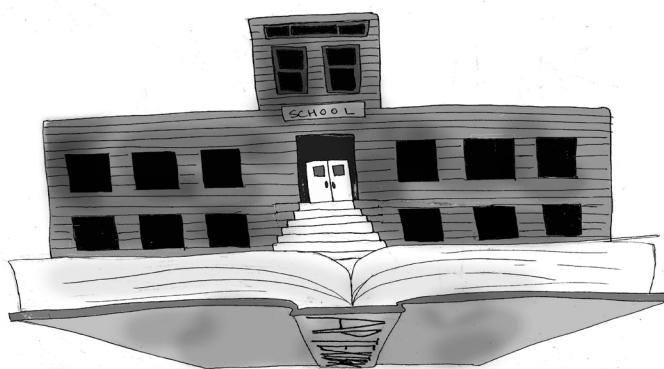
Leventhal explained to potential members at the club's interest meeting on Monday, October 1st, that she will help build a strong foundation in the usage of sign language by teaching vocabulary, commonly used phrases, and basic grammar. This will ultimately culminate into a more suggestion-based learning experience, where members contribute ideas on what to learn next.

In addition to her lessons, Leventhal plans on arranging a club trip to a school for the hearing-impaired later in the school year when the members become more comfortable with sign language. "By visiting a deaf school we will be right in the middle of a deaf community and we can learn a lot about their culture just from a tour," she said. "For most of us it will be just as foreign as if we visited a country that speaks the language we're studying at school."

"There can be no understanding of the deaf culture unless there is a deaf relation," Leventhal said.

Features

The Reality Behind Ranking High Schools



Christine Lee / The Spectator

By STANLEY CHAN

Whether or not it's fair, the U.S. News & World Report's "Best High Schools" list is viewed by citizens all over the nation. The magazine, which has built a reputation due to its comprehensive university ranking system, created a college readiness index (CRI) to rank the top 500 high schools in the nation. "The rankings, often taken at face-value, are very important to the general public," Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang, said. Due to the nature of these rankings, many were disappointed to see Stuyvesant rank as just the 66th best high school in the nation. However, a closer examination of the ranking techniques will reveal exactly how Stuyvesant fell so low.

The May 2012 rankings, which used data from the class of 2010, revealed twenty-six schools with CRI's of 100.0, implying that every student within each of those schools was college-ready by the magazine's standards.

According to U.S. News's Best High Schools Methodology, they "evaluated nearly 22,000" public high schools in 49 states and the

District of Columbia." Essentially, the rankings were determined after a three-step process:

- Step one: Determine whether each school's students were performing better than the average student in the state using high school proficiency tests.
- Step two: For schools that passed the first step, U.S. News determined whether the school's disadvantaged students, which include minorities and low income students, were performing better than the average for similar students in the state, again, using high school proficiency tests. Twenty-two percent of evaluated schools moved on to the final step.
- Step three: Finalist schools were judged on the CRI. This was calculated by Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) participation rate, weighted 25 percent, and quality-adjusted AP or IB participation rate, weighted 75 percent. The AP participation rate is the number of students who took at least one AP and quality-adjusted participation rate is the number of students who passed

(received a score of 3 or higher) at least one AP.

The U.S. News's technical appendix reports, "The purpose of the college readiness index is to avoid creating an incentive for high schools to improve their ranking by offering more AP and/or IB courses and exams, regardless of whether their students are prepared to succeed in them."

However, sophomore Wilbur Zhao said, "It doesn't stop the schools. If a student doesn't take any APs, the school will lose out on both participation in and passing at least one AP." To a certain extent, U.S. News creates incredible incentive for high schools to offer more AP classes. The median CRI in the U.S. News rankings was 16.3. If a school mandates its entire school body to take one AP, the school would have a 100 percent AP participation rate. The school would have 25.0 CRI off the bat, enough to place within the top ten percent of public high schools in the nation, based on U.S. News ranking methodology.

"APs are a legitimate measure of college readiness, but U.S. News's methodology is not comprehensive enough. Students need only a score of three on an AP to count toward quality-adjusted rates. There is no distinction between a three and five on an AP exam. There is little penalty for failed exams," said Zhang.

The School of Science and Engineering Magnet in Dallas, Texas is an exemplary case study of these points. Each test taker took an average of 12.6 AP exams over four years, yet the school had a 51 percent exam pass rate. Even after failing half the exams, the students had an average of over six AP exams passed, an exceptional quality-ad-

justed exam rate. As a result of their quantity over quality methodology U.S. News & World Report ranked the school third in the nation.

Newsweek's methodology is quite different from that of U.S. News's. It includes more factors: graduation rate, college matriculation rate, and AP/IB/ Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) tests taken per student, which each count for a quarter of the score. Other factors include the average SAT/ACT scores and average AP/IB/AICE scores, which are each 10 percent of the score and AP courses offered per student, which is five percent of the score.

Newsweek ranked the School of Science and Engineering Magnet first and fourth based on the 2010 and 2011 school years, respectively. In 2010, the school had 17.2 AP exams offered per graduate. In 2011, the methodology changed so that they compared "total AP tests taken per student" rather than "total AP tests taken per graduate." The school's average student took 3.8 AP exams per year, so by senior year, each student had taken at least 15 exams. However, the school's average AP scores were 2.6 and 2.5 for the two respective years. Furthermore, the school's average SAT scores were 1786 and 1742.

Newsweek also ranked The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky first in its 2012 list. The school had a high average SAT of 2010 and average AP score of 4.3. Despite its top ranking, the scores were no better than that of other high-performing schools. It was the school's 4.7 AP exams per student that set it apart from the rest. However, this stems from the fact that the school is composed of only juniors and seniors. Sophomores and first term

juniors apply for admission, with each grade composed of 128 students. These students have largely taken introductory courses already, so naturally, their students can take more AP classes, which is reflected in the statistics. This skews the AP/IB Tests per student in the school's favor – yet another scenario where ranking methodology benefits schools that push more AP classes on students.

In comparison, Stuyvesant also had an average AP score of 4.3 and an average SAT score of 2090. Though Stuyvesant did significantly better on these exams than many other schools, the school was ranked low by U.S. News because the average Stuyvesant student had taken only 0.8 AP's, which is mostly due to a lack of resources that restricts the number of students that can take an AP exam. Thus, it seems that these lists are made based on the quantity of challenging classes taken, as opposed to success in such challenging classes—the antithesis to the usual meaning of "college readiness."

The bottom line is that the number of AP exams taken is given unjustified weight, and the number of AP exams failed is given unjustified triviality. Some students have the ability to pass more AP exams and classes, but are never given the opportunity to do so, especially in such a populous school as ours. In other schools, students who do not really have the ability to take APs are forced into doing so anyway, which results in poor scores but high rankings. Ranking reports often have a difficult time drawing the line, but "Best High Schools" will continue to mislead the masses as long as there are numbers to be analyzed and publishers to be paid.

Behind Red Eyes: An Inside Look at Stuyvesant's Drug Culture



By ARIELLE GERBER

Due to the nature of this article and the stigmas associated with drug use, many of those interviewed have chosen to remain anonymous.

On a fair-weathered Friday afternoon, one is rarely able to walk across the Tribeca Bridge without passing the wall or the alcove and catching a whiff of the distinct smell of marijuana smoke.

This phenomenon is widely known, and Stuyvesant has developed an association in the minds of some concerned parents with drug use. In 2004, the New York Post published an investigative report on drug dealing at Stuyvesant, and to this day, review-oriented websites such as [insiderpages.com](#) are flooded with questions and complaints about the school's drug problem.

According to the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, marijuana is the most common illicit drug used among the general populace and among people aged 12 to 17, with usage at 6.9 and 7.4 percent, respectively. However, according to some students, the problem at Stuyvesant is not as widespread or as intense as the media makes it out to be.

"I've attended open houses and been hounded by parents about drugs here," senior and Big Sib James Kogan said. "Nobody hounds you to sell you drugs or make you smoke pot. That's ridiculous."

Though the Stuyvesant drug culture may be exaggerated, it is by no means non-existent. It often affects academic and social situations, even if it does not define them, according to one student. "Occasionally, there are people who would rather not be friends with me because they're uncomfortable with it," she said. "But I have a lot of friends who don't smoke, and I like to think that they don't think I'm a bad person."

However, this student did not dispute that marijuana use is common, and stressed that it is easy to acquire. "Right now, if you gave me 20 bucks and three minutes I could get some drugs," she said.

Other students agree that the social stigmas associated with marijuana use depend on the level of involvement of the user in question. A former occasional user said that she was "never a big enough user for it to become a problem with relationships or friendships, but I have seen it cause problems for other people."

Academically, marijuana use

would seem to be inhibitive: the National Institute on Drug Abuse links marijuana use to "adverse impact[s] on learning and concentration [that] can last for days or weeks after the acute effects of the drug wear off," according to the organization's website. However, some students feel that the mind-altering properties of the drug actually heighten interest in cultural and even academic pursuits.

"Pot opens my mind to different perspectives," one student said. "I more deeply enjoy music and literature and cinema and food [when under the influence]." The student confessed to coming to school "high" on occasion, but said that it "doesn't distract me. Instead it enhances my diligence in schoolwork."

Other students expressed less beneficial effects on school performance. One student who reported arriving to school under the influence about twice a week said that it "takes attention away from what I should be doing." According to the student, there are two main stages of intoxication that interfere in different ways with schoolwork: the climax of intoxication and the comedown period.

Advertisements, public service announcements, lessons, and lectures often cite peer pressure as the cause of teen drug use, but students disagree on how much pressure actually exists. One student began using in seventh grade, when a friend offered her a hit of marijuana, but said that she had wanted to try it before because it seemed fun to her and that she would have tried anyway. "No one has ever told me they felt pressured," she said.

However, other students report that pressure to use is present, but in more subtle form than public service announcements warning of the dangers of drug use depict. Another anonymous student avoided drug use until the start of sophomore year, when a friend of

fostered him marijuana and told him that it was worth trying. Yet before this event, he was aware of the pressure around him to partake.

"I realized that I was ostracizing myself, locking myself into the social role of 'the lookout,'" he said. "I was stuck watching while my friends got high, and it was awkward to have to be the responsible one."

Two years later, this student considers himself to be dependent on the drug. He once tried to quit during the summer between his sophomore and junior years because smoking was adversely affecting his lung health, but found himself returning to the drug after a few months.

"People say you don't get addicted to it," he said, "but it is addictive psychologically." The student said that he acknowledges the negative effects of marijuana, having experienced them firsthand, but that he has "no real urge to stop" at the moment.

The New York City Department of Education lists illegal possession of controlled substances as a Level 4 offence, invoking punishments ranging from a parent conference to expulsion for students age 17 and over. But many students report that school punishments tend toward the lighter end of the spectrum.

"Punishment is pretty fair," one student said. "People only get caught when they're being stupid, like smoking in school. Usually the administration just yells at them or calls their parents, but if it's intense, they might get a suspension."

Looking back on the two times he was caught with marijuana, one anonymous student acknowledged the lightness of the consequences. The first time he was caught was during summer school, and there were "no real repercussions," he said. Later, however, he narrowly avoided being caught with marijuana in his bag.

"It smelled [like marijuana] pretty strongly, and [a member of the administration] pulled me over to search it. But they never told me if there was a problem."

Punishments inflicted outside of school, however, can be more severe. According to the New York State Penal Code 221.05, unlawful possession of marijuana is a violation punishable by a fine of up to \$100 for a first offense and \$200 for subsequent offenses; according to Penal Code 221.10, possessing marijuana in public view or smoking marijuana in a public location is a Class B misdemeanor carrying a prison sentence of up to three months. However, this sentence can be avoided through taking the one "free pass" that low-level marijuana offenders are afforded: if one is caught with marijuana but is not caught for another year, the transgression is wiped from that person's record.

An offense committed in school that would otherwise lead to legal ramifications, if reported, is treated no differently than it would have been outside the school. On Friday, October 12, a student was found smoking marijuana in a school bathroom and was later taken into custody. According to Penal Code 240, city schools are defined as public places, moving any possession offense within a school into the category of Criminal Possession in the Fifth Degree, which is defined as the knowing, unlawful possession of marijuana in a public place, or in excess of 25 grams. The student declined to comment.

Punishment of drug offenses is notoriously inconsistent, but for users of the drug, the risk of discovery is nearly constant. While drug use is often treated lightly within the school, this event serves as a reminder that the ramifications of drug use can be severe. In the eyes of the law, it is still very much a crime.

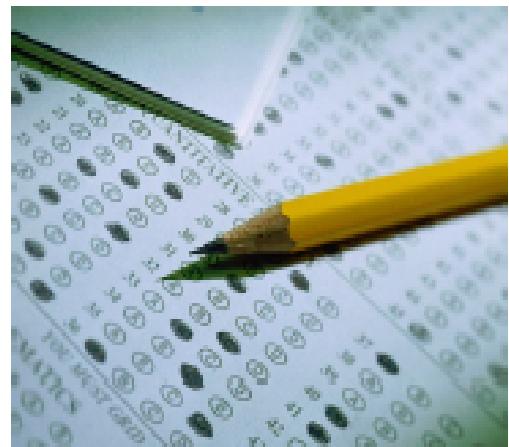
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By the Photo Department

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Regrading Stuy

The beginning of February is report card season at Stuyvesant. The first thing any Stuy student does after receiving their grades is whip out their graphing calculators and determine their GPA, a number that will become as revealing as their Social Security in the months to come. After homeroom, the halls are flooded with students waving around their term transcripts and eagerly comparing theirs to their classmates', enjoying internal triumphs over decimal differences.

We're competitive students driven by grades as a way to definitively affirm our academic standing. However, the recent cheating scandal, and subsequent articles in the wider media about the destructive cheating culture at Stuyvesant, indicate how the cutthroat nature here is destructive to many of the young minds that pass through our halls. The pressure-cooker that Stuyvesant can so easily become, with its emphasis on grades and success, is among the roots of our problems. The grading system is a huge factor in why cheating is so rampant, and it needs to be reformed.

As an Editorial Board, we discussed some possible new systems that could be implemented in place of our current system: number grades on a 1-100 score, with an overall average rounded to the nearest tenth. However, there are many proponents for the current system, so we've included it in our list of alternatives.

These aren't going to get put in place tomorrow - rather, they are proposals to bring to the table, to help start a dialogue. We've done our best to assess both the pros and cons of each system in an unbiased manner, so now it's up to you to decide for yourself which is best for our school.

Current System

Stuyvesant has long been producing generations of successful students and professionals – clearly, we're doing something right. The current grading system we use, which consists of number from one to 100 accurate to the nearest tenth, has shaped the rigorous culture that values accuracy and precision. That decimal grade provides clarity about rankings relative to our massive student body and relieves stress about where we stand, not so much in comparison to other students but in terms of our own progress. Those extra decimal places motivate—giving an extra push to students who are satisfied to see their grade slowly inch up, and feel rewarded for the progress made, no matter how tiny, during each marking period. Furthermore, the stimulus offered by the decimal assimilates the student into the college experience and the real world, where students will face situations of overwhelming pressure and stress with relative ease because of the diligence and responsibility that have arisen from our current system of grading.

However, the very same attributes that define this system's success can also act as a double edged sword, as some of us feel that our current grading methodology was a key factor in the cheating scandal that occurred last spring. The decimal places at the end of our grades induce a learning culture filled with pressure to be exceptional, imposed by ourselves but also by our peers, teachers, and parents. This pressure has introduced an inherent social hierarchy within the school based on grades; students just a tenth of a point below another are seen as intellectually inferior. This pressure and incentive within each student to make it to the top have caused the focus of school to shift from the sole purpose of learning to a fierce competition based on numbers. Thus, this system is alleged to have created the make-it-or-break-it, cutthroat society of Stuyvesant students, prompting those who can't seem to reach their set bar of excellence to resort to the unfortunate depths of the cheating culture in order to achieve that 97 average cutoff perceived to be necessary to gain admission to an Ivy League.

Decimal Points

Yes, there's no way to stop students from comparing GPAs—it happens everywhere from middle schools to graduate programs. And without the abolition of grades altogether, competition will continue to persist at Stuyvesant. But it isn't healthy to impose social hierarchy based on fractions of a point in a system that already strains students to the breaking point, especially when its only justifications are that it helps create a sense of motivation and gives us a taste of the cruel world that awaits us once we graduate. Sorry Stuyvesant, but we shouldn't be sorting ourselves by tenths and we definitely shouldn't derive pleasure from infinitesimally small numbers. Students are fully capable of determining their progress based on their own metrics for understanding—that should be the goal of education, not working furiously to eek out another 0.1 to beat out a student or two.

Rounding the transcript GPAs sent to colleges to the nearest integer would allow us to take advantage of the few beneficial effects of an accurate average, such as a running measure of improvement, while stunting the cutthroat attitude that has so negatively shaped our school. Unfortunately, use of such a system would come with a distinct pitfall: it could have the effect of inflating grades or erasing gains if the final transcript average ended with a number above or below .5. However, the advantages of allowing a degree of imprecision would foster a student population less driven by decimal points and instead motivated by personal growth, and this benefit would far outweigh the already insignificant numbers we carry after the decimal point. Indeed, we are aware both students and college admission boards have calculators capable of determining exactly where a student stands—to the nth decimal point we might add, but considering the latter is constantly distancing itself from a wholly numerical approach to decisions, and the former could use a break from an often dehumanizing high school experience, perhaps this is what is needed to help balance the friends-sleep-study triangle. After all, doesn't leveling averages encourage more focus on the things that make us well, more than things?

Letter Grades

Another option would be to revert to the traditional A through F grading scale used in many high schools and universities. The Department of Education details recommended numerical equivalents for letter grades on a 1-100 scale, which would be used to calculate a numerical average if necessary. However, the school would be ultimately responsible for determining numerical conversions. This would relieve some of the stress on students to attain a certain number rather than a general status in the class - rather than worrying about obtaining a 95 over a 94, students would instead strive for an A, and hopefully divert their energy toward absorbing and understanding as much material as possible rather than regurgitating what is necessary to get a certain number grade. Students would not be able to impose social hierarchies based on fractions of points or even points themselves. Rather, they would have a clear understanding of how they are doing, which colleges would be able to understand easily.

This system could prove even more problematic than the current one in terms of the academic and social hierarchies of Stuyvesant. Under the current system, the averages of students fall somewhere on a spectrum, with many gradients between extremes. This system would potentially separate students into categories (A students versus B students versus C students) with the potential for labeling and profiling based on the grade category of the student. Because of the reasonably large numerical ranges for each letter grade, grade mobility would be especially difficult, and after a certain point students would be effectively locked into their letter grade. Additionally, as teachers convert numerical test grades and rubric scores into letter grades, arbitrary lines in the sand between grade categories could be created as a result. And while using grade categories rather than strict numbers would alleviate the pressure on a student solidly within grade categories, it would unfairly separate students on the edges. For most students, small differences in grades would be rendered irrelevant, but for the students constantly on the cusp of an 80, a 90, or a 97, they would mean a whole world of difference.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

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of the
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The Spectator

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We are looking for issues published before 1995.

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A Note to Our Readers:

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.

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FOR THE RECORD

- In Issue 2, the masthead incorrectly stated Wilson Stamm, instead of Timmy Levin, as a Humor editor. Wilson Stamm is not involved with The Spectator in any way.

Adam Schorin would like to formally and expressly apologize to Mr. Zamansky's seventh-period Software Development class for a certain baked-goods debacle. He sincerely hopes this clears the air.

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Written Evaluations

What if the cause of the cheating were removed? What if students no longer received numerical grades? What if school became entirely about progress rather than a parochial system of assigning a symbol to indicate human being's intellectual worth? Instead of using grades, teachers would write a paragraph on each student, adding more information each term, so that by the end of the term, a student and his parents would have a snapshot of his performance. Something similar to this system is utilized quite successfully in St. Anne's High School, a small private school in Brooklyn. Obviously, adapting something like this to a school as large as Stuyvesant has its challenges, but the system has many benefits.

Teachers would talk about how the student acted in class. Did he participate? How conscientious was he on his homework? Did he demonstrate a strong understanding of the material? These broad categories that teachers currently assign numbers to would become a paragraph that highlighted a student's strengths and weaknesses. This would be a way to hold teachers responsible for getting to know their students, addressing one of the common complaints that our school in an impersonal one.

Tests would be different. Instead of having a number in a red circle at the top of the page, a teacher would highlight student's mistakes without an ultimate grade. Tests would serve their original purpose, to inform the teacher of the student's process. In their writing, teachers would discuss how students performed on tests – not in terms of numbers and points, but in terms of truly understanding the material. A student could try to work out his grade on the exam by calculating percentages, but he would find that it wouldn't matter since that number would have no impact on what came out in the paragraph.

By removing grades, students would learn for learning's sake, not just to get a good grade. Kids would push themselves to do better because they would know that they would learn more, not because they felt compelled to get a higher grade than their neighbor in math class. Instead of competing against each other, students would strive to do better in class. If they slacked off, it would be reflected in the paragraph. By instituting paragraphs, Stuyvesant would reinstall a passion in learning, something that seems to have diminished in this age of testing.

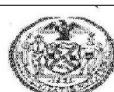
A total lack of grading may seem scary, especially when it comes to looking at colleges. With nothing but prose to recount four years of hard work, it's easy to say that Harvard may be skeptical when comparing an essay to a row of straight 98s from another school. However, students from St. Annes have been getting into phenomenal colleges on this system, and admissions officers dealing with Stuyvesant students need merely to be debriefed on the change of system and evaluate the written record without the metric of a GPA or individual grades. There are hundreds of different grading methods that schools from all over the country, and admissions personnel are well equipped to handle all of them and adapt to new ones, as well.

A change in the grading system may be exactly what Stuyvesant needs to fix our number-obsessed culture. However, simply presenting scores in a different way, while helping to level the playing field between students with similar numbers, does only a little to compensate for different teachers' grading styles – and this is a big problem, as well. Grading discrepancy is rampant. Departments don't hold their staff to standardized grading rubrics, and teachers grade similar topics in vastly different manners.

As an Editorial Board, we tried to be careful and detailed in putting these different techniques together. While the St. Anne-esque technique may be closer to a perfect system for some of our more holistically-minded students, there is a significant argument to be made for the current one, as well as the two more moderate ones in between. We don't know which system is best; we just know something has to change. Let the debate begin.

OP-ART

Page 1 of 1



NYC Department Of Education



Student Report Card

6/26/2012

2:28:48PM

Dbn/Yr/Term: 02M475 / 201 /

OFCL: [REDACTED]

Grade Level: [REDACTED]

Current Status: A

ID: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Daily Attendance					Total
	MP 1	MP 2	MP 3		
Absent					
Date					

MP Requested / # of MP: 3 / 3

Mid/Final MP: - / -

Counselor: [REDACTED]

New OFCL/School: [REDACTED]

STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL

Course Code	Section Id	Title	Teacher	MP 1					MP 2		MP 3		Final Grade	Exam Grade	Comments
				Grade Absence Performance Conduct											
DKFL3923	8	POETRY	DR. SEUSS	Q	0	90	0	98	0	99					HOW FAR YOU HAVE COME WITH WORDS SO FEW YOUR WRITING IS EXCELLENT BUT I MUST TELL YOU ADIEU
LS032SDKE93	320	GALACTIC STUDIES	SKYWALKER	X	3	88	5	70	14	65	56				THE FORCE IS NOT WITH THIS ONE
000000000001	00001	HOW TO BE AWESOME	BARNABUS STINTSON	B	0	99	0	99	0	100					YOUR GRADES ARE LEGENDARY... WAIT FOR IT!!! DARY!
203KD30KW	92	LEGAL STUDIES	E. WOODS	Q	2	93	1	94	0	93					IMPECCABLE TASTE IN SHOES. WHERE DO YOU SHOP?
EE93K20	54	AP MICROECONOMICS	BUSH	W	9	70	1	65	0	95	100				I MISUNDERESTIMATED YOU
SL382RUJE	931	KLINGON	WORF	K	E	DIL'A	LOP	SA	O	NGOP					HEUGHUMEH OAO JAVAJMVM THLINGN MAHIB SOLSI OOWAYJAK
AA929JF9	38	AP PSYCHOLOGY	FREUD	A	0	88	0	92	0	93					SEE ATTACHED PAGES FOR FULL ANALYSIS
KOE092KW	22	POLAR BEAR	GUMP	E	1	90	0	90	0	92					RUN [REDACTED] RUN!
SCIWE0398	18	SCIENCE!!!!!!	NYE	T	0	93	0	90	2	95					SCIENCE RULES!!!!
YIQL201	70	FISCAL MANAGEMENT	ROMNEY	Y	0	94	0	97	0	53					THINK OF IT THIS WAY: YOU'RE PART OF THE NUMBER THAT MATTERS

Cartoon

THE FIVE STAGES OF HALLOWEEN

1. GET DRESSED.



2. GET CANDY.



3. GOING HOUSES.



4. GETTING CHASED BY COPS.



5. THE BINGE.



Opinions

Mother Knows Best

Even if you're not a senior, no doubt you've heard someone grumbling about the college process. College, as any alum or representative will be quick to say, is all about independence and self-discovery, a time to begin thinking about life outside of your classroom and your childhood home. It's only logical that your parents want a say in the matter, but is it too much? Members of the class of 2013 weigh in.

Nancy Ko

In a piece performed by a graduated member of the Speech team, a Jewish mother ensures her audience, "My daughter will enter her profession of choice. Which is medicine." While a humorous nod to the parental pressures we face, this protagonist's sentiment becomes more relevant than ever for upperclassmen as we visit dozens of colleges, imagining how we might fit into each social and academic setting for the next four years.

Of course, we cannot avoid making this decision alone: our parents or guardians do have a financial choice to make, and might have an idea of how far—or close—from home they want their babies to be studying. But the college application itself—the secretly-520-word essay, the 30 minute Edvard Grieg music submission, the Lin-worthy athletic supplement, or whatever our gifted student body can humbly showcase—should be a reflection of who the applicant is, not who others want him to be.

Yet the media's often convoluted and contrived portrayals of the college application "process," combined with our parents' concern about our futures, can lead to some amusing, if at times exasperating, situations. When I was a freshman, my mother read articles in a Korean newspaper which explained the advantage of applying to college on an engineering or medicine track—especially if you are a female! Even this early in my high school career, she encouraged me to write a college application centered around being a woman in science. When I told her my true academic colors—Government and Jewish Studies—she was a bit baffled.

Although my mother has accepted my chosen path with pride, college admissions articles not written by admissions officers themselves continue to worry parents and students alike. Jaded by the increasing selectivity of some schools, parents and students have increasingly seen college admissions as a way to fit into boxes. They, and the media, prescribe "ways" to get into particular colleges: you can be a scholar-athlete and get recruited, you can be a "woman of science" and do valuable research, you can be a valedictorian and president of at least one semi-influential club or publication, you can be a genius.

But this model holds countless flaws. While the rising prominence of women in science is a commendable achievement, in the real world a pseudo-passionate female scientist who used science as a means to an end is unlikely to feel fulfilled. And the goal of college admissions is to find places that fit you, not a pre-determined version of you. It is so tempting to find a formula for admission to some colleges: without one, many parents feel lost about where to "guide" their children. But with a strong sense of identity, a student should not feel lost; the college application should become an opportunity for self-discovery.

The more we and our parents force college applications into a series of "if then" conditionals, the more stressful the college process gets. And that's because most of us don't fit into these "if then" cases. The objectification of the college process endangers the intellectual vitality in us all. Our parents' persistent stress and input is really a symptom of a perverted (inter)national vision of American college admissions. The public perception of the process needs some medicine of its own. Our parents are after our best interests, but it's time that admissions questions strayed away from "How does my child get in?" and instead, students can ask themselves "Will I be happy here?"

Lucy Woychuk-Mlinac

One of the biggest stressors that I've faced when applying to colleges is my parents. Their lack of knowledge when it comes to how exactly the college application process works, what colleges are looking for, and where I am in the process means that they attack with countless questions constantly. I've been told by my mother that if I don't start e-mailing the teachers I want to write my rec for me, no teacher will and I won't go to college. Upon hearing this, I tell her that she has told me this 4 times already this week, and she rebuts that if she didn't nag me, it would never be done. If she actually listened the other 4 times she told me to ask teachers for a rec, she'd know that I did, weeks ago. On top of that, she's chosen schools for me based on majors she believes I will follow, and that are close by. Between telling me that I spend too much time doing theater instead of focusing on schoolwork, and mentioning that most people who try to be a professional actor end up washing dishes, she has decided that I want to be a theater major. She has a list of schools for me such as Drew and Sarah Lawrence, which apparently have great theater programs. I don't believe in the past 3 years I have once mentioned that I will major in theater. Ever. That aside, I've told her repeatedly that I have no intention of staying in the area. The schools that I have decided upon all seem to not be good though. Apparently New Orleans is "too humid" for me to go to school there. No comment on the school, Tulane, no comment on the theater program (which is fantastic, if you were curious), just the comment that New Orleans is "too humid", her way of saying "too far away".

My biggest issue honestly is that if my mom actually listened to the answers I give her, like no, I don't want to major in theater, or that I'm not staying in the area, or that I have teachers for a rec, and I've had them for weeks now, she'd be less stressed too. She wouldn't go find colleges that I have no interest in, then get annoying that I don't seem to like any college. She would know that me "focusing too much on theater" led me to have a role of power in theater, something that colleges pay attention to. Her caring is not an issue, it's that she's worrying and caring too much on her ideas for college. If she stopped doing an alternate college process as I am, maybe we'd both be a little less stressed.

Neeta D'Souza

When I entered Stuyvesant, I knew my parents had expectations. Stuyvesant has always been a brand name school, as emphasized by the Spectator's Staff Editorial "This is Stuyvesant". Our research resources are so influential that those of us who, like myself, are more inclined to the humanities don't always seem to fit into the hierarchy of geniuses that Stuyvesant produces. Even though I have never showed an inclination for research, my parents have always cited my lack of drive towards creating an Intel project as a huge hole in my education, one that I would grow to regret as I started on a pre-professional path.

The college process has always been about looking into where I could receive the most intellectually stimulating environment, one where I could cultivate my strongest academic interests, as well as, perhaps, create a few new ones. I started short-listing schools last summer, and I, without considering names or rankings, simply put down those schools where I knew there was an emphasis on liberal arts and a very contemplative and academically rigorous environment.

When I showed my parents my shortlist, however, they immediately commented on my inability to create a list that reflected their interests in my education. They started adding schools, some of which I knew that I could not gain admission to, and some of which I wouldn't want to go to even if I did get in. Instead of looking at these schools from my perspective, they cited these schools' amazing research facilities and award winning faculty members as a reason for me to apply. A lot of the schools they added were well known, with the same sort of "brand name" status that Stuyvesant holds on the high school level.

After listening to all of their suggestions, I was stuck with a list of sixteen schools as I tried to balance my interests and please my parents. As those of us who are seniors know, our college advisors recommend applying to around ten schools, just so that we don't die of stress as we wade through our AP-ridden schedules, standardized testing, and applications. I had no idea how I was going to work with the supplements of these sixteen schools.

Thankfully, I was able to sit my parents down and explain to them why I was applying to the schools I was. I managed to narrow down the list, incorporating schools that I knew I liked and schools that I had come to appreciate through my parents' commentary. After talking to some of my friends, however, I realized that not all of us have parents who are easily willing to compromise.

For those of my peers who have experienced this complete takeover of their college process, down to the most basic questions of where to apply, I have only one thing to say to you: stand up for yourself! These next four years will be experienced by you, not your parents, and you are the only one who should be allowed to make the choices of what schools you are applying to.

As for parents who continue to take an overly solicitous role in the college process, I beg of you to listen to your children and work with their list of schools. Their perspective of their future should be the deciding factor of where they apply; if you don't take that into account, not only the college process, but also the next four years, will be a waste of your children's time and your money.

Jill Chow

In the fall, every high school senior's nightmare consists of a website, lots of documents and decisions. College applications take up a lot of time and most of the time is spent worrying and being frustrated. Everyone says to not leave things until the last minute but this is hard not because of procrastination, but more due to the constant indecisiveness regarding which essay to submit, which college to apply to or whether to do early decision or not.

In these times, it's not surprising that it is not only students who are stressed but parents are also very touchy. It is not surprising that these very same parents who helped their kids get into Stuyvesant are now once more involved in getting their kids into college. Naturally, parents think they know best and without meaning to, they impose their opinions on their children.

In some contrast to my peers, my parents left me alone to make choices of which colleges to make, provided that I had Harvard on the list. For many months, I looked up good liberal arts colleges on the East Coast and finally came up with what I thought was a substantial list. I showed my father and his first question was, "How many Ivies are on the list?"

Including my early decision choice, I had three. Suddenly the times when he told me it was "my choice" and "my decision" went out the window. He gave me an incredulous look and told me that my goal was to get into an Ivy League college. He told me limiting myself to three choices, was ridiculous, especially when one of them was Harvard. He demanded that I added two more at least.

Needless to say, my worries were no longer on an Ivy. I wanted to find a safety that I would not mind going to. This sudden change in mind did not fly well. In a fit of anger, I showed him the statistics that the school website has so helpfully provided and it was only after seeing my chances of getting into the schools that he told me four Ivies were fine, rather than the five he had wanted.

With that dilemma put away for the time being, my attention turned to my essay. I wrote three different copies, each about a different subject, and showed it to him. Immediately he rejected two and demanded that I used the one I was least comfortable with. He criticized my essays, not helping with the despair I already felt. I am currently still debating between two essays, one of which is the one he recommended. Now my time is consumed with the mad dash to find the "perfect" essay to represent me in the best light.

As the early decision deadline is nearing, the last thing I need would be pressure from my parents. I have already made the majority of my decisions, and even though I have let him push me over regarding certain colleges, I know that in the end, I would be the one going to college. When I submit all my essays and supplements, I know that my decision would ultimately reflect both what I want and my parent's dreams for me.

Parents may feel the need to control every aspect of the application, but this is the time for them to learn to let us learn to walk by ourselves. In the future, we will be making our own choices and college applications should be the beginning of many to come.

Opinions

Contraceptives Are Not a CATCH

By TIFFANY PHAN

According to a CNN Health article from last December entitled, "How many times a day do you think about sex?", a recent study sponsored by the Journal of Sex Research found that men think about sex on average 19 times a day while women think about it 10 times a day. While this discovery displaced the previous misconception that men thought about sex as much as every 7 seconds, the point is, everyone thinks about sex. No need to be embarrassed, come on, I know all of us have thought about it at least once or twice. (Or maybe a little more.) But thinking about sex is one thing; how many of you have actually had sex? (Note: This is not a rhetorical question). The answer I would expect is that plenty of us have, along with 38 percent of teenagers in New York City.

The Health Department has long distributed condoms to sexually active teens in public high schools nationwide, but New York City has recently launched the Connecting Adolescents to Comprehensive Healthcare (CATCH) program, which is meant to help prevent unplanned pregnancies among teens by providing girls with oral contraceptives and morning-after pills. Oral contraceptives were originally available only to schools with school-based health centers that were responsible for distribution; CATCH, however, directly distributes these contraceptives to schools even if they do not have such centers.

According to the NBC online news article, "Morning-After Pills Offered to NYC High School Stu-

dents" (published on September 25th, 2012), so far, the program has been implemented in 13 specific schools that "are in neighborhoods with high teen pregnancy rates or with limited resources for young people to get contraception."

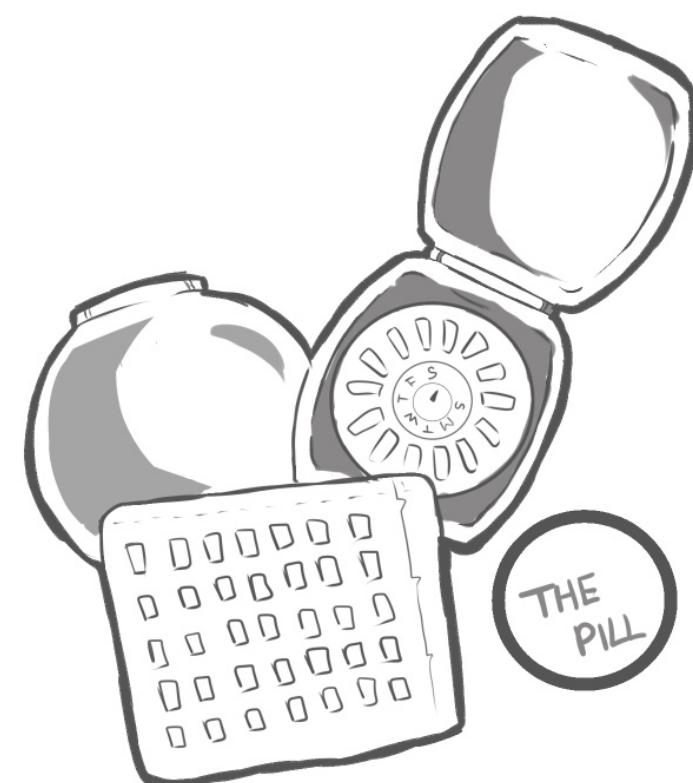
Sex is not a bad thing, and, frankly, more and more people are becoming sexually active at a younger age. Adequate protection should be offered to those who want to engage in sexual activity and I believe that the distribution of condoms is a good intermediate step in trying to prevent teen pregnancy—they semi-embrace the trend of underage sex by helping teens prevent unplanned pregnancies, but do not incentivize them to have sex by guaranteeing them complete liberty from the consequence of having a child. However, the introduction of oral contraceptives by the CATCH program in public high schools crosses a certain boundary. Condoms, as with any contraceptive, are close to (but not 100-percent) fool-proof. When you combine two different contraceptives together however, there becomes a thinner margin for error and the possibility of having an unplanned pregnancy is practically eliminated.

Though this may help teens who are already sexually active, with further reassurance against the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy, those who were previously on the fence about having sex may start reconsidering. Most teens want to have sex, but, in my opinion, those who resist the urge are held back mainly by two reasons: guilt from family, friends, or religion; and the possibility of getting pregnant.

Even though many may feel as though they are "ready" to have sex, they may end up not doing so because they feel uncomfortable lying to people who expect them to be virgins or because they are bogged down by the worry that the condoms they use can break or end up being defective. By offering teens more opportunities to obtain contraceptives and hence enabling them to use them in combination with one another to more effectively prevent unplanned pregnancies, many of them will start feeling more inclined to engage in sexual activity because a major area of concern has been lifted off their shoulders.

While the increased availability of contraceptives sponsored by CATCH may help decrease the risk of unplanned pregnancies, it does not help lower or stabilize the number of teens who are going to have sex and who are still at risk of contracting STDs. Just because teens are going to have sex anyway, does that mean that we should accept that trend and merely try to cope with it? The distribution of these additional contraceptives by an authority figure further emphasizes the issue of underage sex and the unfortunate fact that it's, so to speak, normal to have sex even before one enters college.

CATCH should also focus on how to prevent underage sex rather than solely on how to prevent the pregnancies that occur as a result of it. The fact that the program advocates for protection and not abstinence sends teens a message that it's okay to have sex as long as you don't get pregnant. It's important to try to solve the problem when it hap-



Michele Lin / The Spectator

pens, but it's even more important to try to prevent it from occurring in the first place. With the idea that we are only concerned with what can happen after sex and not that it happens with such high frequency, who can guarantee that ten or twenty years from now, we won't be implementing the CATCH program in middle schools, where students may also start to think that there is nothing wrong with underage sex as long as contraceptives are used?

Sex is complicated. You want to do it, but you don't want to do it. It's already difficult enough to try and fight your hormones, but it's even harder when someone

literally hands you a bunch of contraceptives and tells you that if you use them during sex, you can essentially eliminate the burden of possibly becoming a teenage parent. The CATCH program has good intentions in trying to protect sexually active teenagers, but jeopardizes those who have the opportunity to have sex but who are unsure of whether or not to take that chance. While we should be helping those who are at risk of becoming teenage parents, we should not disregard the fact that we can help prevent that risk from existing in the first place.

How to Lie with Statistics

son Institute's 2010 study, which found that 59 percent had cheated on a test in the past year. By intentionally choosing two distinct quantities and comparing them as if they were the same, the media gave the impression that "80 percent of Stuyvesant students cheat, while only 60% of students nationwide cheat." This of course was not the case. The most ironic thing about an article that discusses cheating is when it cheats itself.

When we instead use more comparable quantities from both studies, using data on the number of students who have cheated on tests, we find that while 59 percent of students nationwide have cheated over the past year, only 20 percent of Stuyvesant students have cheated on a test during their Stuyvesant career. Stuyvesant students actually cheat more than three times less than their peers.

Cheating remains an important issue and there are many ways for us to eradicate it. But let's start with the right mindset: cheating is an international epidemic—not something unique to Stuyvesant. Instead of using Stuyvesant as a scapegoat, let's confront the real problem—that students nationwide are being taught everything from art history to advanced calculus—but not how to live ethical lives.

Numbers Matter

With a growing number of students pushing for letter grades (A,B,C) and this paper's Staff Editorial itself suggesting a range of proposals that differ from the status quo, all in order to reduce student stress, we must

ask ourselves what will be the consequences of reducing the precision with which we measure grades.

Tom Allon, candidate for New York City Mayor, proposed one answer in his Op-Ed piece for the New York Daily News. He wrote "Stuyvesant has now become a school populated by very good test takers. It is also a school where one point on a test or on a report card (the school grades on the 0-to-100 system, without letter grades) is thought to be crucial in determining who will go on to the Ivy League...This has made an educational jewel a soulless place in far too many ways, one where education and knowledge have taken a backseat to testing and grades and college admissions."

Grades, he argues, create a hyper-competitive environment where we waste our time on petty numbers rather than getting a well-rounded education. If we instead replaced our system with letter grades, or more radically with paragraph comments from teachers, competition would be reduced and due to increased freedom, students would be motivated to take harder classes and learn more.

At the Yale School of Management, Columbia's Business School and many other prestigious higher learning institutions across the country, similar logic was used to justify a policy known as "Grade Non-Disclosure." According to this policy, students were recommended not to share their grades with prospective employers. This way, rather than obsessing over getting great grades, students could dedicate their time to tougher

classes and a more intense learning environment. Sounds like the Stuyvesant dilemma all right.

A recent Wharton study exposed what actually happened in this "ideal world" where students are giving the "freedom to learn," which anti-stress advocates espouse so ardently. The change caused "a 22% decline in the time students spent on academics during the first four years after the school passes a grade non-disclosure policy." The researchers explain their findings, arguing the average student will converge upon a medium grade. [1]

In the long term, students go to school to learn. But in the short-term, competition is the fire that keeps us on our toes. Think about it this way: when you are doing your homework, are you thinking "Great, I get to learn" or "I wish I could go to sleep, but I'm going to do this so that I don't fail Wednesday's test?" Social Science research confirms this idea, demonstrating that short term gains (in this case, high test scores) are much

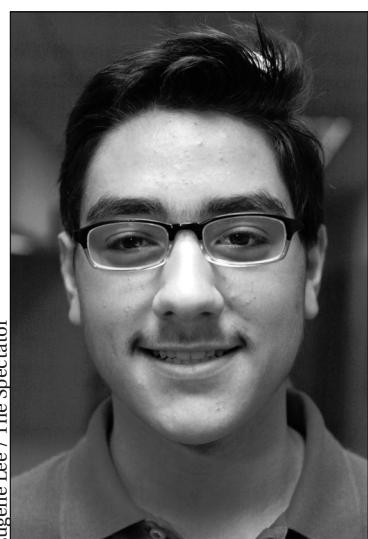
more powerful motivators than even more important gains over a longer period of time.

Moreover, reducing the precision with which we measure grades would force us to categorize most students in 1 of 7 categories: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, and every grade below them. In a school of 3,000+ students, this would make it impossible to distinguish students from one another based on their unique ability. Effectively, the gradient of students' grades would become a series of unreachable plateaus. Since it's much harder to jump from an A- to an A, student motivation would quickly decline, and grade mobility would become more difficult.

Our system works very well. It's grueling, but educational. It motivates us, even if we hate it at times. You signed up for the most rigorous school in the city because you are the type of student who loves a challenge. Don't take the easy way out by signing up for a less competitive school. If you do, the result will be a less effective education.



Judy Lee / The Spectator



By DAVID CAHN

How to Lie with Statistics

"How to Lie with Statistics," by Darrell Huff, first published in 1954, offered the first major study on how to manipulate data in order to prove your point - even if the data actually proves the very opposite of your desired conclusion. The media has not only adopted many of his techniques, but they've also developed new ones of their own – and Stuyvesant's recent cheating scandal provides an ideal case study.

A recent New York Times piece ("Stuyvesant Students Describe the How and Why of Cheating," by Vivian Yee) cited The Spectator's February survey which found that, during the duration of their Stuyvesant career, 80 percent of students have cheated in some way - be it on a lab, a homework assignment, or a Regents exam. The article compared this result to the Joseph-

Opinions



Alice Li/The Spectator

By TAHMID ALI

As we scan the news channels on TV or flip through the pages of the newspaper of our choice, we are confronted continually with the same Congressional gridlock, the same reports concerning unemployment, slow job growth and threats of a second recession. Increasingly, we are confronted with the idea that our government is so inefficient that it is incapable of solving even the smallest of issues. We wag our fingers and tsk at those silly politicians on Capitol Hill who are driving this country to ruin. But politics are not the reason why this country has gone to ground. It is us.

On July 15, 1979, President Jimmy Carter addressed the nation in a time of recession and a troubling energy crisis: "Why have we not been able to get together as a nation to resolve our serious energy problem? It's clear that the true problems of our Nation are much deeper..." In this, Carter was able to convey the unpopular message that our true problem stems not from increasing inflation, burgeoning debt, gridlocked politicians and ridiculous social and economic ideological warfare. The root of our problem lies not in Washington, where our politicians battle daily, refusing to compromise and failing to solve problems. Nor does it lie on Wall Street, where financial institutions and businesses enjoy special privileges and loopholes in the tax codes so as to pay less than the average American. The heart of the crisis lies in the American people and this must be addressed before any hope of change can truly become a reality.

Perhaps we can most easily understand this if we consider those who came before us.

On October 29, 1929, the bottom fell out of the stock market, collapsing a fragile economy already weakened by a number of underlying causes: huge income inequality, incredible debt as a result of stocks bought on margin, lack of regulation of any economic activity and overproduction coupled with decreased exports. In a few years, over 20 percent of Americans were unemployed, with over \$30,000,000,000 of life savings wiped out. It was a terrible era of psychological trauma, extreme lack of confidence and a despair so deep that surely it signaled the end of a nation. Then, in the midst of this Great Depression, on December 8, 1941, the United States declared war against the Axis powers, plunging into the greatest conflict in world his-

tory, requiring that her citizens make the most enormous of sacrifices and struggle through the greatest of hardships. So was the story of our predecessors.

In 2007, the housing bubble burst, collapsing a fragile economy already weakened by a number of underlying causes: houses with shady subprime mortgages, deregulation of large banking institutions and financial instruments like derivatives, easy issuance of credit to those ill-deserving of such, fantastic global inflation and a crushing debt that was worth 60 percent of the GDP. Within a few years, unemployment had risen to 10 percent and millions of families had lost their savings and their homes. It began a period of inefficient government response, lack of confidence

The heart of the crisis lies in the American people and this must be addressed before any hope of change can truly become a reality.

and a despair so troubling that we thought this was surely the end of American supremacy. In the midst of the two longest wars in American history and crushing debt, the American people were confronted with a Great Recession.

Two remarkably similar sto-

It's Our Fault

ries with starkly different endings. The aptly named Greatest Generation went on not only to overcome the greatest economic crisis, but to triumph in World War II, only to then forge the strongest middle class and economy the world has ever known.

We, on the other hand, have only just dropped the unemployment rate below 8%, are stuck in a political gridlock so intractable that it threatens to shut down our government in our time of greatest need and are embroiled in a ideological struggle so overwhelming that it makes our economic recovery secondary to our desire to destroy the other side.

Why can we not be as great as the Greatest and succeed where they did, too?

Our forefathers were of a far different mindset than us today and understood readily the two concepts vital to the functioning of a modern nation: sacrifice and political participation.

The builders of this modern nation understood that there was something bigger than themselves, that they would have to give up having everything their hearts desired in order to further the progress of the nation they loved and cherished. They were willing to do what it took, work where it mattered, build what was needed and give what was best so that they might see a brighter future for them and their posterity. President Kennedy so nobly said it in his time-honored words: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." And what is the situation in our nation today? In the most stark and straightforward words, Americans have become greedy and uncompromising. We have become entrenched in our beliefs and spew the foulest of invectives at those who insist upon the need for public forum, discussion and compromise. We are self-assured on the opinionated and false grounds of "I am right and will stand firm despite all evidence, fact and truth."

Such extremism applies, admittedly, to a smaller, yet still far too large, fraction of our population. The majority of Americans, surely, want some sort of solution, regardless of which party proposes it, to our grievous problems. But this majority, too, suffers from a debilitating flaw. Political participation in the workings of our government is lower now than it has ever been in the modern history of this nation. The majority of Americans have become complacent, ready to stay at home and not vote, not take action, not improve our government. Their ignorance runs rampant, making them content to allow politicians and political pundits to sell them skewed data and facts. They rely on people like Rush Limbaugh and Chris Matthews to fact check for them and accept the words of the presidential candidates at face value, basing their choice on impressions and feelings, rather than the beautiful truth of facts and policy.

I can give numerous reasons as to how the noble and virtuous sentiments of sacrifice and participation have become

so conspicuously absent in the American psyche, the most concrete of which is the people's increasing cynicism and firm belief that no matter what we give, no matter how much we trust, we will never be rewarded, never be proven right in our trust. Perhaps such a sentiment is not so ill-conceived. After all, if one examines the terrible occurrences in the last half-century – Vietnam, Watergate, Iran-Contra, Iranian Hostage Crisis, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – it is hardly surprising that the American people have developed such cynicism in the effectiveness and good of government. And what has such sentiment resulted in? What benefits does it provide to the American people? President Kennedy's glorious message has been lost and firmly replaced with the perverted idea of "what can I do for me?" We have retreated from active participation in our own democracy and become detached and ignorant of those facts and truths so necessary for proper decision-making.

It is then, in such a condition, that we elect politicians from amongst ourselves who assemble on hallowed ground to govern this nation. They are either forced to pander to howling, rabid masses who demand nothing resembling the dirty sin of compromise, or are able to slide past a complacent mass

their constituents and that they do not spout such nonsense on their own, but rather represent and present the ideas of those who elected them. When we shake our heads at the embittered battles between the President and Congress, when we condemn for their inability to compromise and just give the other side a chance, we must not forget that it is we who elect them again and again without understanding or caring about the truth and facts, and it is we who demand that they not commit the terrible depravity that is working for the greater good.

Why can we not be as great as the Greatest and succeed where they did, too?

I have never before been more afraid for this nation than I am today. It is because there is no danger more grave than there is to be suffered from the hands of a maniac so set in his ways that he will suffer no thought, no idea, no soft whisper that challenges his notion as to right and wrong, good and evil, truth and lie. What is the solution, then? What glimmers of hope can I possibly hope to spread through the hallways of Stuyvesant?

It is this: change always comes from the bottom up. In our hands, in our minds and in our hearts lies the key to America's success, to our nation's salvation from a self-inflicted doom. If we, in our everyday thought, can acknowledge that our voice does matter, that compromise is the way and that it is our responsibility, not our government's, to fix our nation, we can find our way. If we can acknowledge that it is we who elect politicians, it is we who vote for gridlock, it is we who allow Wall Street to run amuck, it is we who allow inequality and injustice to haunt and destroy the American dream, we can find our way. If we can find it within ourselves to take back the reins of government and rule it according to unbiased intelligence that we have determined through research and effort, not through the media or political candidates, we can find our way.

If, in the end of all things, we can find it in ourselves to thrust our voice, not of demand but of hope and compromise, back into the American democracy, only then do I see a positive future. I do not promise a quick fix, only a long road to recovery.

If we can do this, then we can do anything. And that is what shall make us great.

In our hands, in our minds and in our hearts lies the key to America's success, to our nation's salvation from a self-inflicted doom.

Opinions

Admittedly Wrong



Sam Kim/The Spectator

By ADAM SCHORIN

In the months after the cheating scandal, discussion has turned from punishing the offenders to justifying their motives. Bloggers, media outlets, and columnists have united to attack the perceived high-pressure environment at Stuyvesant.

In an article published in The New York Times in September, "Stuyvesant Students Discuss the How and Why of Cheating," reporter Vivian Yee mentions the college office's website that contains the grade-point averages and SAT scores of students accepted or rejected to various colleges (www.students-stuyhs.theschoolsystem.net/college-stats.rb). Yee goes on to quote alumnus Elias Weinraub ('12) about the site: "It becomes kind of a numbers game," he told

is the subject of this edition's staff editorial. Namely, would a different system—such as letter grades or a 4.0 scale—end the numbers game and reduce the rate of cheating in the school? Can a change in methodology transform an ideology?

Some teachers already use different grading scales in their classes in order to relieve some level of student pressure. Eric Grossman, the Assistant Principal of English, has been grading his student's essays on a 1-6 scale for the last decade. "It's like when you go to casino," he explained in English-teacher analogy. "The first thing you do is cash in your money for chips. It's easier to play, it's more fun to play, you're going to play better if you're not playing with dollar bills. Chips are some kind of artificial currency, but for the purposes of the game, it's better to use them." By limiting the range of the scale, Grossman, and other teachers like him, places less of an emphasis on the grade and more on the learning—you're playing with artificial markers, not actual transcript grades.

But this casino model can be implemented in reality; the chips can become real money. The Department of Education does not mandate the grading systems of its schools: each school can decide on its own to use the 100 scale, the 4.0, letter grades, or pass/fail. If Stuyvesant were to adopt letter grades, competition would decrease as the transcript differences between students decreased—a 94.3 and a 95.2 would now both be A's; the inherent subjectivity of deciding between giving a student a 90 or a 91 would be eliminated by the wider range of letters. Likewise, the subjective differences between various teachers' grading styles would even out in letter ranges. I will not go further into the benefits—these can be found in the Staff Editorial—but I will say that letter grades, even with potential disadvantages, would be an improvement in eliminating the Stuyvesant numbers game, in restoring grades to what they should be: "a rough shorthand for how [students] have done, how prepared they are," as Grossman said.

A change in methodology, however, can only go so far. In order to effectively combat the point-obsessed culture at Stuyvesant, the student population must itself change. We are in a unique point at which this is a real possibility: for the first time since 1972, the admissions process at specialized high schools is being challenged on a large scale.

On Thursday, September 27,

the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) filed a federal civil rights complaint against the admissions process, claiming that admission "based solely on rank-order SHSAT scores causes this unjustified, racially disparate impact, [and] the admissions policy violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Damon Hewitt, a lawyer with the LDF, further stated that the SHSAT "has no demonstrative relationship to past academic achievements or future academic potential." I do not believe the test itself is racist, but Hewitt's comment holds some weight. In 2009, former Editor-in-Chief of The Spectator Sam Gerstenzang ('09) conducted a study on the relationship between his classmates' SHSAT scores and their academic performance at Stuyvesant. Gerstenzang "discovered that on the so-called English portion of the test, there's actually a slight inverse relationship between how well students do [and] how well they do in their English classes once they're at Stuy," Grossman said. "Most of the things I believe members of the English department tend to value [...] aren't measured on the test."

to: The regression coefficient (the "a" variable in the best-fit equation $y = ax + b$) for English GPA relative to a student's verbal score on the SHSAT was -0.015, which would indicate that students who scored higher on the verbal section actually did worse in English once at Stuyvesant. In fact, the regression coefficient for a student's overall GPA relative to his or her

in rather unpredictable ways." Many also point to the democratic nature of the test, claiming other methods of selecting students would corrupt the process—indeed, I had long felt that way as well.

But unlike the current admissions process, the need for change is not a single-reason argument. Improving the student mindset, increasing ethnic and intellectual diversity, decreasing the rate of cheating, and selecting students who are more likely to succeed at specialized high schools—all of these could be accomplished if additional criteria were considered for admission. Perhaps because I am caught up in the midst of the college admissions process myself, I keep on encountering the phrase "a holistic approach." Why should the specialized high schools not use a holistic application? In addition to the SHSAT could include a brief essay question, and students could submit a middle-school transcript and attendance record. Something like this, which takes into account more than a single test score, is a step in the right direction. Townsend Harris High School, which the US News survey has ranked above Stuyvesant the last few years, considers middle-school GPA, attendance, and a cutoff for standardized math and verbal scores in admission. If they can do it, why can't we?

We need to recognize that we are accepting students, not numbers. If one of high school's goals is to prepare students for colleges (most of which claim to admit holistically) and, hopefully, for life, then it should start with a holistic approach to admissions.

This column started as a response to one comment by one alumnus, and look how far we've come: Cheating! Grades! Admissions! These issues are undeniably connected. To counter the numbers game at

If one of high school's goals is to prepare students for colleges (most of which claim to admit holistically) and, hopefully, for life, then it should start with a holistic approach to admissions.

total SHSAT score is only 0.036. Unfortunately, any statistician would tell you that these numbers are meaningless: for both equations, the coefficients of determination (the r-squared values), which indicate how well best-fit lines explain the data, are less than five percent for both regression coefficients. The best-fit equations don't really fit.

For further analysis, I brought my father, who has a doctorate in economics, onto the scene. "In and of itself, the test score isn't telling you anything," he said. "If there were more data available, it is conceivable that a positive relationship may show up." Once accepted into Stuyvesant, a student's SHSAT score has no bearing on his or her performance at the school. Additionally, the single-score nature of admissions places us in a numbers game before we even get in. These two facts necessitate a change in the admissions process.

Unfortunately, that statement is enough to set off a chain of teacher, administrator, and student rage; when the status of specialized high schools was threatened in the early 1970s, there were mass protests that lead to the passage of the Hecht-Calandra Act, which committed the SHSAT to law in 1972. Sure enough, the feeling was similar this time around. "They have to keep the test," biology teacher Dr. Maria Nedwidek said. "The test is the only way to ensure that the students come in with the basic level of skills needed."

English teacher Dr. David Mandler responded to the NAACP complaint on his blog. "While sympathizing with the NAACP's goal to increase diversity at specialized high schools, I find the logic of the complaint seriously flawed," he wrote. "Were the New York State Legislature to change the law and allow admission to be based on other factors as well, I fear that it would alter the very nature of specialized high schools

Can a change in methodology transform an ideology?

her. "It was kind of addictive, in a bad way, in a sick way. People will assume, well, I have a 92, most kids who got into that school have a 94, so there's no way I can get in."

A few days later, Times columnist Joe Nocera wrote an article in which he decried college rankings, claiming they "exacerbate the status anxiety that afflicts so many high school students." This is not an original idea. Many students at Stuyvesant feel caught in the "numbers game" Elias mentioned. They feel their chances at Ivy League Paradise slipping away with each decimal below their dream GPA and so, in some circumstances, they cheat.

The cheating scandal has drawn attention to this mentality, and now, a question that has long simmered under the surface now rises to the forefront: Should the Stuyvesant grading policy be changed? It was brought up at Tuesday's School Leadership Team meeting and

I acquired the data for 782 students from the Class of 2009, and, running it through an Excel spreadsheet, found what Grossman was referring

Unlike the current admissions process, the need for change is not a single-reason argument.

Stuyvesant, we must do away with 1-100 grades and an admissions process that fosters this obsession while reflecting nothing about a student's performance in the school. But for now, we are stuck in this ideology, and simply cracking down on cheating is not going to change that.

Humor

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

Honor Code Plagiarized

By JEREMY KARSON

In a stunning development, it has been reported that the Stuyvesant High School Honor Code was plagiarized. The Honor Code was distributed in late September to all Stuyvesant High School students in their English classes. It was designed to discourage students from cheating, with a special emphasis placed on plagiarism.

In the midst of the ongoing cheating scandal at Stuyvesant High School, it became clear that the administration needed to take action to end this type of behavior among Stuyvesant students. The Honor Code is the first

From now on, administrators will be required to submit all official documents to turnitin.com, a website commonly used to detect plagiarism.

major measure taken by Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang in her mission to eliminate cheating at Stuyvesant. Zhang was given the important task of writing a code that would be inspirational, intimidating, and most importantly, effective.

"I had a lot of other administrative work to do, and Kern kept hitting me up on Facebook," said Zhang. "He's way too cute for me to just ignore, so I did what any principal would do: Copied an honor code off the Internet, and asked Kerny Kern to Skype with me."

A quick Google search revealed that the Honor Code was in fact copied verbatim from

a website called "How To End Your School's Scandal in Less than Fifteen Minutes." "Let me tell you, that website really has its shortcomings," said retired Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky.

After a hoard of angry parents formed a coalition calling for Zhang's immediate resignation some teachers came out in defense of the new principal arguing that the infraction could have been far worse. "She didn't use Wikipedia, SparkNotes, or Yahoo Answers UK Edition," said English teacher Jonathan Weil. "Frankly, that would put her at the top of my class."

In order to placate the angry parents Principal Zhang decided to serve as an example for students by giving herself a zero on the assignment. "I felt it necessary to show that faculty members are not exempt from disciplinary action as a result of plagiarism," Zhang said. "This is why my parents will be receiving a call home about my wrongdoing."

From now on, administrators will be required to submit all official documents to turnitin.com, a website commonly used to detect plagiarism. A plagiarism percentage of over 5 percent will automatically cause a New York Post article to be written.

Despite the fact that it was not original work, the Honor Code is still in effect in Stuyvesant. By now, all students and their parents should have signed a copy of the Honor Code and returned it to their English teachers. Many of the honest, hard-working students who fill the Stuyvesant halls are enthusiastic that they will finally have an honest, fair, just environment to do their writing and thinking.

"I fully understand the importance of the Honor Code. I believe that my words and ideas alone can genuinely express the intricacies of my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs," junior Spencer Weiss said.

"I fully understand the importance of the Honor Code. I believe that my words and ideas alone can genuinely express the intricacies of my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs," senior Ellie Shanahan said.

Senior Bar Expanded to Bar and Grill

By MUKI BARKAN
and TIMMY LEVIN

A new restaurant will be opening on Chambers Street, and it's not another Chipotle. The senior bar on the second floor is being converted into the Senior Bar and Grill. Opening in the coming months, the Senior Bar and Grill will be staffed by qualified seniors and teachers during their free time. This is part of a new initiative by the Student Union (SU) to "raise some dough, geddit?" Student Union President Adam Lieber said.

Students have mixed feelings about the incorporation of a new eatery in Stuyvesant. Many students look forward to the new opportunity to get



Senior Jordan Wallach grabs a burger and beer during lunch.

Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

The plans for the renovations are rather extensive, the SU office will be turned into a kitchen and the lockers by the Senior Bar will be turned into a seating area.

food in school, while others believe that the existing cafeteria is sufficient. Some seniors are outraged because their bar lockers will be undergoing renovations in the coming months. "Where am I supposed to put my weed [clippers] and my alcohol [swabs]?" senior Patrick So said.

Others are upset because the senior bar will no longer be solely for seniors. "For the last three years my loins trembled with fear as I walked by the bar," senior Justin Wong said. "It is only natural that the underclassmen feel the terror I felt." Despite the general unrest among the senior class, the restaurant will be open to all classes—however, only seniors will be allowed to order alcohol, provided they present sufficient fake identification.

The restaurant is a new outlet for the administration to enforce the dress code, which has been neglected in recent months. "No shoes, no shirt covering your midriff, no covered shoulders, no skirt down to your fingertips, no service," Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie said.

The plans for the renovations are rather extensive, the SU office will be turned into a kitchen and the lockers by the Senior Bar will be turned into a seating area. Contractors are optimistic that the restaurant will open soon. "Before we start on the bar, we need to finish the library and the pool," repairman Hank Atwood said. "So I can safely say the bar will be done by November 2038."

In addition, seniors whose lockers are in the area will be compensated to the tune of \$100 each. "That's not fair," se-

nior Ellie Abrams said. "I'd still be losing money on it."

The Atrium will be filled with picnic tables from which you can enjoy a hotdog while

Seniors will be allowed to order alcohol, provided they present sufficient fake identification.

watching freshman flail helplessly during their swim tests in the pool below.

Some students are optimistic for the opportunities the new Bar and Grill will hold. "I can't wait for second term so that I can work at the bar full-time," senior Charlie Kramer said. "Spending a lazy Wednesday afternoon flipping burgers—that's the life."

If you are thinking about spending four years and a fortune at a college, make sure it appreciates you for all your accomplishments and imperfections. This means if you have any misdemeanors, an extensive criminal record, or a violent

By ALEKS MERKOVICH

*Dear Ms. Leading,
I am a Big Sib who got a little too wild at the Big Sib Little Sib Dance; now little prepubescent freshmen boys are following me around. How do I get them to stop following me?*

love you for who you are, they aren't worth your time.

*Dear Ms. Leading,
Now that the library is closed and the school is swarming with security guards, I don't have anywhere to sleep during free periods. Where am I supposed to sleep now? Help me, Ms. Leading!*

There are many ways to deal with sleep deprivation. I suggest sleeping in class. It is a win-win situation. You get to catch up on your beauty sleep, and you flatter your teacher in the process. Flatter your teacher, you ask? Yes, studies have shown that 90 percent of students fall asleep in class due to their teacher's sweet melodious voice. Make sure to site this study when your teacher throws a pencil at you.

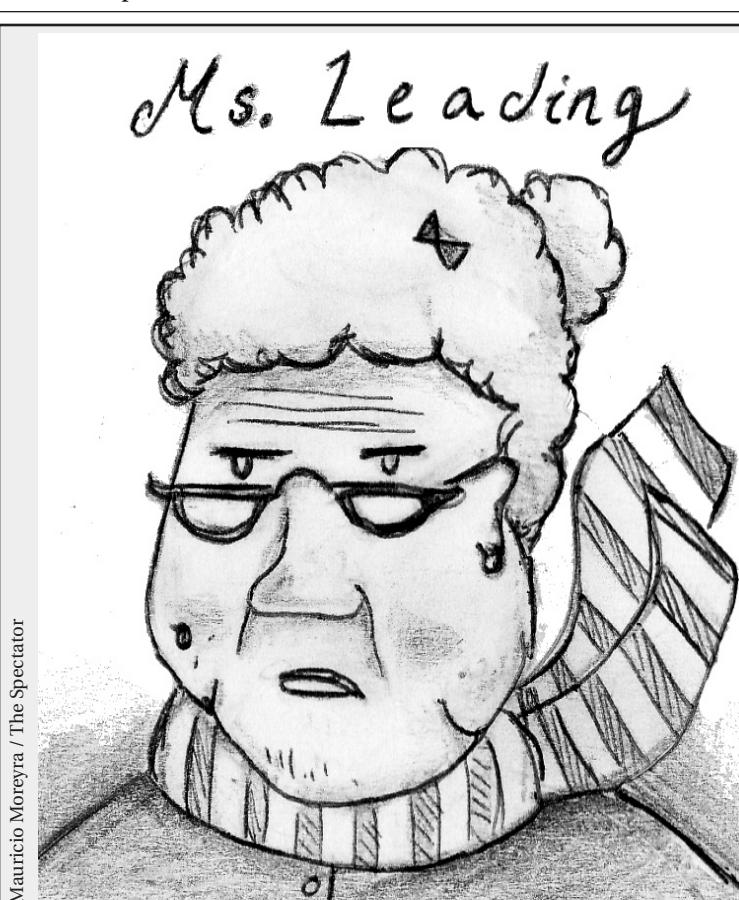
*Dear Ms. Leading,
Now that I am applying to colleges, I feel so plain and unoriginal compared to everyone else. What can I do to make myself interesting?*

I suggest sleeping in class.

streak, let them know! In fact, flaunt it, show the college reps that you're a risk taker and compose your entire college application around that one time the cops give you a ticket for public urination. I guarantee success. Occasionally.

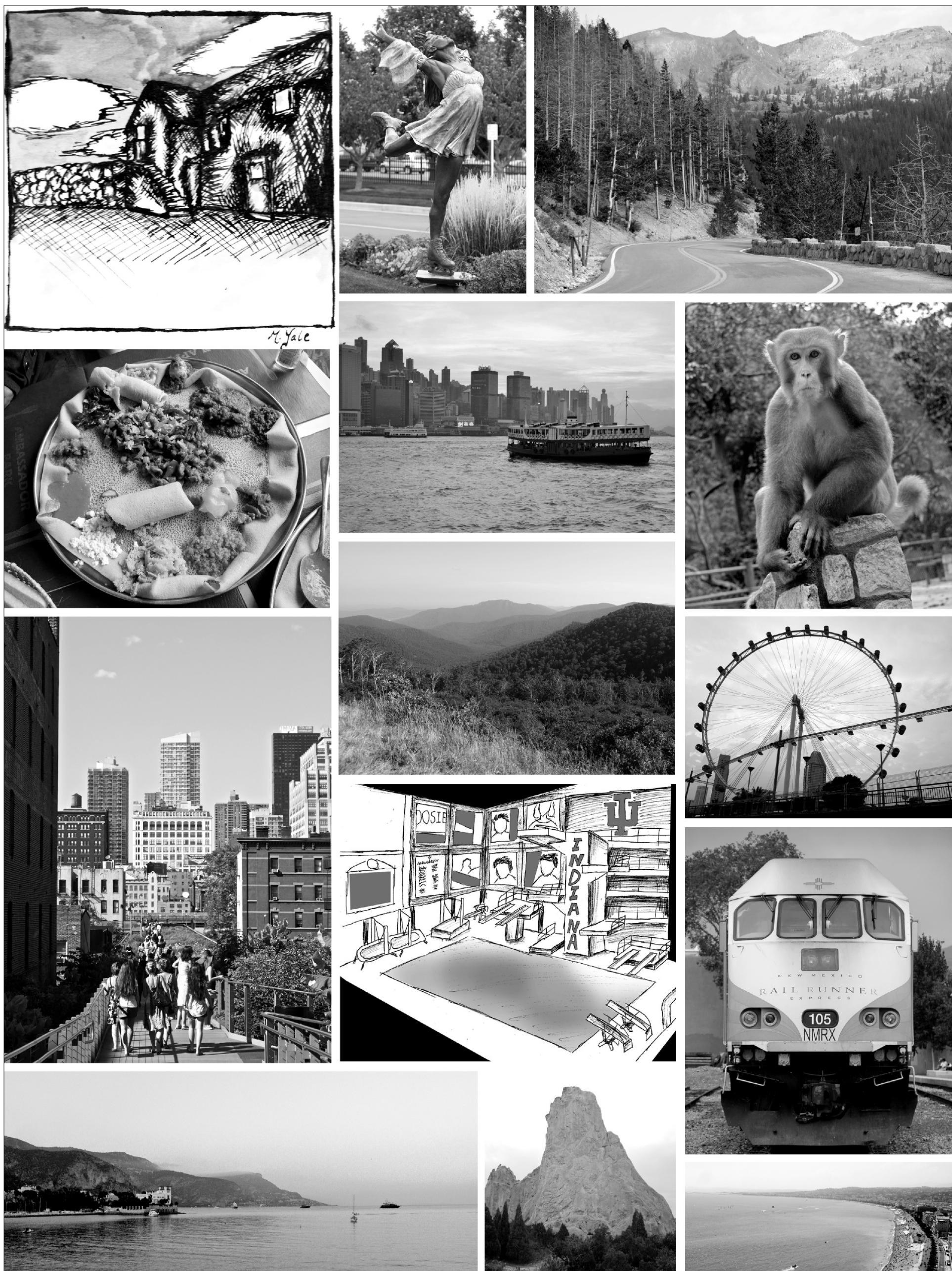
**I guarantee success.
Occasionally.**

Be gross. Embrace your inner nasty. The key to getting rid of these pests is to show them your natural form, and by that I mean refrain from taking showers, applying deodorant, and shaving your legs. If they don't



Mauricio Moreyra / The Spectator

Flashbacks From the Summer



By the Photo and Art Departments

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Arts and Entertainment

Food

The Dirty Bird Nests On Chambers Street



Alicia Chen / The Spectator

By BEN VANDEN HEUVEL and OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

Chambers Street is lined with restaurant after restaurant, but it's easy to grow accustomed to the selection and find yourself in a set routine. Most Stuyvesant students, for instance, have worked out a small handful of places that they make sure to hit during their lunch periods and after school almost ritualistically. That's why it's nice to see a very new kind of place open its doors. The Dirty Bird, a mostly take-out fried and rotisserie chicken hideaway at 135 Chambers Street,

presents a new option to Tribeca lunch-goers.

Though quite small, the new location is actually larger than the original Dirty Bird on 14th Street. The Bird's staff had expected a much smaller turnout of customers eating in, since Dirty Bird was originally conceived as an almost exclusively take-out joint. One employee, who wished to remain anonymous, said, "The eat-in business has surprised us but we are actually happy about it. It's bringing in more customers and more people."

The crux of the menu is the "Dirty Bird" fried and rotisserie chicken. The restaurant also offers chicken fingers, salads and sandwich wraps, and a variety of sides including mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, and coleslaw. All of the food is free of antibiotics and hormones.

The fried chicken is by far the best item. It's crispy, but not dried out, with a mild seasoning. The chicken fingers are less exciting; they're somewhat bland and the breading seems to fall off the hand-cut pieces. As far as sides go, try the mashed potatoes, which are buttery and freshly made. Another solid choice is one of the salads: if you're looking for something with more green, you can get a tasty small chopped salad with an unusual variety of vegetables for \$5.95. Shredded rotisserie or fried chicken can be

added to the salad for an extra \$4. Aside from the chicken and sides, the menu is limited. According to Dirty Bird employees, however, it may be expanded in the near future.

The interior of the restaurant is tiny: the Dirty Bird has done a nice job of working what is essentially a single hallway into an attractive-looking take-out joint with a distinct city feel. While the menu is full of Southern comfort food, the restaurant itself seems very urban, with its modern, starkly decorated interior and some 1990s hip-hop playing in the background.

One thing that isn't tiny at this place is the cost. Organic or not, Dirty Bird charges some very high prices for its food. A three-piece fried chicken with one side dish, for instance, is \$11.75. Half a rotisserie chicken with sides: \$16.75. There's definitely some food out there that's worth high prices, but for the fare offered here, maybe not. The food is tasteful and filling; it's just not incredibly exciting and might not be able to attract a Stuyvesant crowd to offer up a large piece of its wallet. Even when looking for healthier or higher-quality food, Dirty Bird can't beat the nearby Whole Foods Market, which offers a large variety of less expensive organic food and a more pleasant eating space.

A Roomful of Cheer

By MEG PALMER

In 2008, breast cancer survivor Iris Dankner founded Holiday House NYC to raise money for breast cancer research, using her talents to search for a cure to what could have killed her. Holiday House NYC, a seasonal design show located at 2 East 63 Street in Manhattan, benefits breast cancer research foundations, including Greater New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure and, for the first time, The Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Dozens of designers, many survivors themselves, come together each year to put on the show. Wandering from room to room, visitors can celebrate the Lunar New Year and the Winter Solstice, Halloween and Chanukah. Last year, the Christmas room nearly overwhelmed the viewer with the smell of holiday spice, and the Mother's Day room glistened with a chandelier, white walls, and a vase of beautiful pink flowers. Each festive and dreamy room transports visitors to a different magical night, from the Oscars to a wedding proposal.

The rooms, though, are not the only things on display. Stunning art collections, from sculpture to photographs, are scattered throughout the house, and pop-up stores dot each floor, including a restaurant on the first floor.

This year, newbies and veterans alike come together to put the show together for another season. Designers such as Suzanne Eason

(last year's Halloween designer) and Ally Coulter (last year's Mother's Day designer) will be returning again this year, though they'll be designing for different holidays.

Holiday House NYC runs from October 25 to November 18, from 11 am to 5 pm, and on Tuesdays and Thursday until 8 pm. Tickets

**Each festive
and dreamy
room transports
visitors to
a different
magical night,
from the Oscars
to a wedding
proposal.**

are pricey, running \$30 for general admission, but proceeds go to breast cancer research. This year, the show will benefit The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, a top-rated breast cancer research charity. It is easy to be swept up in the magic, and the benefits of visiting the show last far longer than the few weeks its doors are open.

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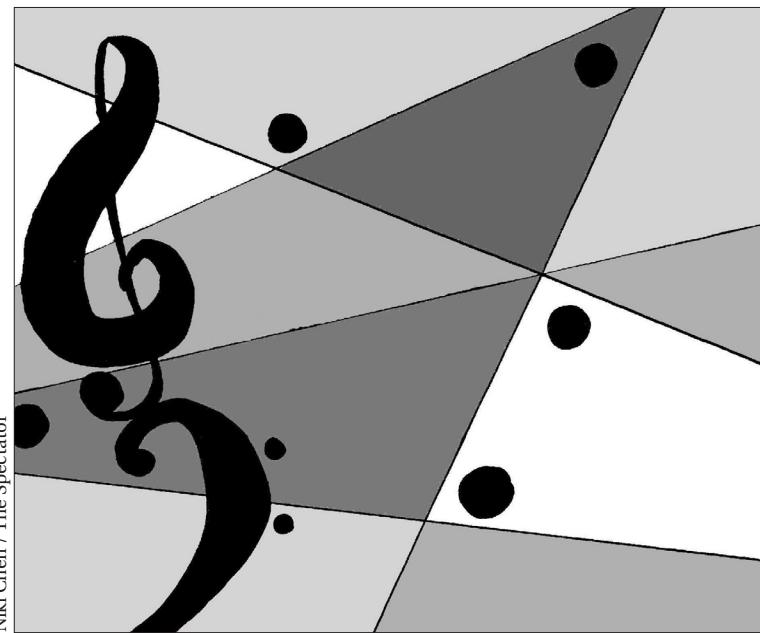
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Arts and Entertainment

Art

Revolutionary By Chance: A Closer Look at John Cage



By EMRE TETIK

To many, John Cage seems the archetypal modern artist – a self-indulgent pseudo-intellectual who justifies his pretentious work with esoteric notions. Given that his most famous musical work is “4’33’’, a piece in three movements consisting of four minutes and 33 seconds of the performer playing absolutely nothing, it’s understandable that his work invites eye-rolling skepticism and confusion.

In the midst of this inaccessibility, the record needs to be set straight, or rather, Cage needs to be experienced on his own terms so that more informed judgments of him can be made. The National Academy of Design, an art museum and school located at 1083 Fifth Avenue, steps up to the challenge with its recently-opened exhibition “John Cage: The Sight of Silence.” It tries to help the average museumgoer make sense of his work by offering a comprehensive view of it, from his watercolor paintings to his musical pieces, through the prism of his artistic philosophies, which are elucidated throughout the exhibit.

Most of the wall space is taken up by Cage’s watercolors, many of which come from his “New River

Watercolor” and “River Rocks and Smoke” series. As the names suggest, the paintings are highly evocative of nature. The exhibition makes a point of noting on its wall descriptions that for Cage, the function of art was “to imitate nature in her manner of operations.” True to form, the paintings of the “New River” series conjure up flowing rivers with long, thin brushstrokes, and the “Rocks and Smoke” paintings effectively capture the physical qualities of smoke (Cage did this by literally using smoke to tint and create smoke-like patterns on the paper of these works).

The paintings generally differ in materials, size, and amount of canvas space used, but all are pervaded by a deceptive arbitrariness and sense of chance. Cage used what he called “chance operations,” a method of creating art in which the artist provides a framework by asking stylistic questions such as, in the case of painting, space and color, but minimizes his personal choice by leaving the answers to these questions up to chance. Decisions are made by coin tosses and arbitrary sequences of numbers.

The exhibition does well to explain the chance theory, devoting a whole gallery to it. On display is a glass case showing Cage’s

original materials that he used to apply chance to his watercolors: numbered rocks, used for tracing shapes onto paper; bird feathers, used as brushes; as well as ordinary painting brushes. Cage would consult the “I Ching,” a Chinese book of divination, for patterns of numbers to decide what combination of rocks, brushes, and paints to use. Aside from the display, the gallery contains a 12-minute documentary in which Cage elaborates on his method. This gallery in particular does well to give some rhyme or reason to Cage’s work for those totally perplexed by it.

The rest of the exhibition, however, could have done more to win over skeptics. It opens by giving visitors the chance to listen to recordings of Cage’s work. Included is “4’33’’, which also follows chance method because its sounds are exclusively ambient and not determined by the performer (in this sense, it’s not a piece of “silence,” as the exhibition’s title misleadingly suggests). But most of the other recordings are sound collages consisting of superimposed sounds and records, accompanied by a presentation of his unconventional graphic scores. While the pieces are rewarding to the patient listener, their bizarre and alien format and medium serve to begin the exhibit on an uninviting note. Cage’s “Music of Changes” or “Music for Piano” would have been better suited for the exhibit. These pieces retain the experimental chance concept while also illustrating Cage’s aesthetics in the recognizably musical framework of solo piano instrumentation.

Undoubtedly, many will leave the exhibition still unsatisfied and still firm in their skepticism of Cage’s art. Cage probably wouldn’t have had a problem with this, but he’d warn the viewer against getting too worked up. He ultimately sought to achieve the high and noble goal of imitating nature, but was apparently lighthearted about it all. “There are two things,” Cage said, quoting Immanuel Kant, “that don’t have to have to mean anything. One is music, the other is laughter.”

Origins of Originality

By CAROLINE BREDTHAUER

One would never assume that the rhinestone, considered tacky and cheap by many, could be used as an art tool. Viewing the work of Mickalene Thomas can easily change this perception. In the Brooklyn-based artist’s newest exhibit, “The Origins of the Universe,” rhinestones adorn many larger-than-life works. They sparkle under dim lights, accentuating the subjects’ hair and eyes and the collars of black shirts. It is almost impossible to imagine that the same flecks of plastic can be found on sweatshirts, jeans, and preschoolers’ art projects. In “The Origins of the Universe,” the rhinestone seems like a gem: it draws the eye and captivates the mind.

“The Origins of the Universe” depicts African American females in genres previously dominated by whites. Many famous works, including “Luncheon on the Grass” and “Le Sommeil,” have been redone by Thomas, with black females replacing the paintings’ original inhabitants.

In addition, the exhibit contains sets of domestic interiors, as well as a series of photographs, many of which were taken in Brooklyn. The photographs are hung on the wall in the salon style; scattered randomly, they can seem daunting through their sheer multitude. Close examination of the photographs reveals several spots in Brooklyn, as well as collages that Thomas has transformed into her massive works.

Thomas’s paintings and collages are so large that many require separate walls. As you step into the exhibit, the first visible painting, “Le Dejeuner Sur L’herbe: Les Trois Femmes Noires,” dominates the entire far wall. Walking past this wall reveals another eye-catching painting. In this way, with every wall covered with massive works, the exhibit is never boring. The ceilings are high to allow enough room for each work, and the walls are neutral so the paintings’ bright colors have a startling effect.

As the movie in the exhibit will verify, Thomas’s mother was addicted to drugs and hospital-

ized several times as a result. Her husband, Thomas’s father, was her dealer. Thomas’s mother expressed that she was disappointed in herself for failing her daughter.

While returning to the large portraits and paintings, one will be drawn to the only depiction of a white female. This painting is of Thomas’s partner, and it mirrors a similar painting that Thomas did of herself. Her self-portrait is based on Courbet’s “L’Origine du Monde,” which also served as inspiration for the name of the exhibit.

The suggested price for students is \$8.00, and the exhibition is worth the money. “Her vision and passion... is amazing. This has been a remarkable experience for me, and I am truly humbled and grateful,” said Sandra Brannon, a museum visitor. Indeed, the massive works are both startling and humbling. At the very least, they make one thing very clear: thanks to Thomas, the rhinestone may at last be utilized as the wonderful art tool it is.

Web

Caught on the Web: The Sexcapade From Hell

By CHRISTINE LEE

Being shipped off to a mansion for an indefinite amount of time for a reality television show focused entirely on hypersexual encounters between housemates may sound ludicrous to some, but it may sound like any reality show to others. Satirical giant “The Onion” proves to viewers of “The Sex House” that it is anything but heaven with a healthy splash of irony. The program is the Onion Digital Studio’s first mini series, spanning over ten episodes that last eight to nine minutes each.

The show’s intent is to ridicule the trite reality shows that crowd our television sets. However, peeling away the thick layers of humor reveals a surprisingly dark and remarkably twisted show not expected from a master of mockery. “The Sex House” is not only a piece of witty social commentary but also a chilling work that both disturbs and provokes thought.

The show entices with its potentially humorous and seemingly innocuous premise, following the business adage that “sex sells.” And, indeed, it does. Its first episode, aptly titled “Meet the Nymphos,” has received around 3,400,000 views since its first airing on July 12, 2012. The characters are a colorful medley of sexual variants: Jay, the “DTF” fist-pumping bro; Erin, the awkward virgin; Derek, the only homosexual; Tara, the thick-skulled cheerleader; “Big Daddy” Frank, married and father of two; and Alex, the horniest of them all. In only eight minutes, alliances are made, attractions are formed, alcohol is consumed, and sex is had.

Ironically enough, for a show that includes adult toys, bondage, and sex therapy, there are very few actual sex scenes. And laughingly, any sex scene thus far stars wrinkly, old Frank. In fact, as the show

progresses, it becomes less sexual and more macabre, less of a satire and more of a horror fest. Swept away by their luxurious apartment and wanton events, the characters miss all the details. They slowly realize that their only way out of the house locks from the outside. There are no windows. All of the technology has been confiscated, and there is none to be found in the house. The only way to communicate with the outside world is an intercom linking them to the producers, who often don’t listen to their demands unless they perform certain sexual acts, reducing the cast to trick ponies—or would they be prostitutes?—in a televised circus. In a sense, “The Sex House” is reminiscent of “The Truman Show,” a film in which Jim Carrey’s “life” is controlled by a television crew. In this case, the crew consists of irresponsible, avaricious producers who fail miserably at keeping humans as pets.

The food begins to run out and trash piles up in the bedrooms, until a deadly mold consumes the entire space. The vibrant, plump faces of our stars become haggard, emaciated shadows by the middle of the show. At one point, the cast requests a technician to “fix” one of the sex toys, intending to hold him hostage until their demands are met. They successfully knock him out and shackle him with fuzzy handcuffs in the mold-infested bedroom. When they check on him later, he is dead, his body consumed by a forest of gray mold.

Despite the intriguing plotline, the last aired episode of “The Sex House” only received around 173,600 views, a far cry from the millions its first video raised. However, it looks like those who stick around won’t be disappointed. And if one thing must be taken from “The Sex House,” let it be this: never star in a reality television show, even a fake one.



Lisa Lee / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

An Ode To Eggplant Parm

No matter who you are or what walk of life you come from, deep down in your heart, you know that there is nothing quite as rewarding, as wholly engrossing, emotionally liberating, and viscerally satisfying as good Eggplant Parm.

Whether stolen from the fridge cold in the dead of night, or served aside a warm bed of linguine, or blanketed by two hard pieces of Italian hero bread (flawlessly greasy, no less), this simple but bold marriage of eggplant, breadcrumbs, tomato sauce, and cheese has a lot going for it.

This is for you, Eggplant Parm. Go forth, be glorious! The world is watching.

One Man Struggles To Learn To Love

For much of my life I have detested eggplant in all forms. Until I was twelve, I was able to get away without eating the strange-looking food at all. However, it became more and more a part of family meals when my sister became a vegetarian, and soon, I had no choice but to try it myself.

The taste was not endearing. In fact, the mushy consistency was all that I had feared it would be. From that first tasting on, I did all that I could to keep eggplant away from me. I truly didn't understand why the rest of my family enjoyed it so much. So for a while I was able to subsist on whatever else was accompanying the eggplant when the rest of my family was eating it. It was a sound strategy, and was largely effective until last year when I too became a vegetarian.

Once you stop eating meat it becomes much harder to find nutritional foods that will fill you up. I found some alternatives, but as the year went on it became clear that I could not subsist on falafel and rice and beans for half of my meals. I was cornered into turning to the dreaded eggplant as a potential meat stand-in. One night at a family event, I tentatively took a bite of the Eggplant Parmesan that occupied its domineering spot at the center of our table.

Shockingly, it was not as bad as I remembered it being. Perhaps it was due to lack of anything to compare it to, or maybe even because my tastes have evolved, but this incarnation of eggplant was something I could tolerate, and perhaps even come to like. Since that fateful night, I have continued to eat Eggplant Parmesan on various occasions, and I have found myself liking it more and more.

Though it will never be my favorite food, eggplant has come to be a culinary option that I enjoy. Long live the eggplant, and I hope my love for you only flourishes with time.

—Daniel Teehan ('13)

Backhanded Compliments and a Recipe

There's no doubt that a little olive oil, melted cheese, and marinara sauce can turn pretty much anything into comfort food—even a bitter, bizarre fruit like eggplant. Of all the ways people have used these peculiarly purple plants around the world, the one that resonates the most here in United States is the ubiquitous Eggplant Parm. However, this commonality has detracted from its merit, slowly eroding its Italian identity and settling into the seat of mediocrity that dollar pizza has grown into.

Eggplant Rollatini, the dish's slightly more superior brother, provides the novel twist needed when the Eggplant Parm from the hot bar at Whole Foods has lost its allure. Creating it might be a trickier business, but totally worth the time—and let's be honest, a lot more fun to wrap our tongues around.

Eggplant Rollatini Makes 4-6 Servings

Ingredients:

- 2 eggplants
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 4 tablespoons oil
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 20 slices prosciutto
- 1 jar of marinara sauce
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- (served well with) angel hair pasta

Directions:

1. Peel and slice the eggplants into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slices (the skin is very tough, so peeling with a knife is easier than with a peeler). Dip the eggplant slices in egg, then breadcrumbs. Heat half the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry half the eggplants, then use the rest of the oil to fry the other half. Turn over onto each side until golden brown, then remove to a paper towel lined plate to drain.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Spread a layer of ricotta cheese onto each slice of eggplant, and then place a piece or two of prosciutto over it. Roll the slices up tightly and place in a baking dish. Pour marinara sauce over the rolls, and sprinkle the shredded cheese on top.
4. Bake for 15 minutes in the preheated oven.
5. To cook the pasta as a side dish, bring a large pot of water to a boil, and add the pasta for 2 to 3 minutes or until tender, stirring regularly. Drain.

—Claire Burghard ('15)

Philosophical musings

The Eggplant Parmesan serves as something we can compare our own lives to. While we humans aspire to reach middle grounds and to not be extremists, the life of Eggplant Parm is simple: if it is good, it's fantastic; yet if it's bad, you will probably find yourself throwing up for days on end.

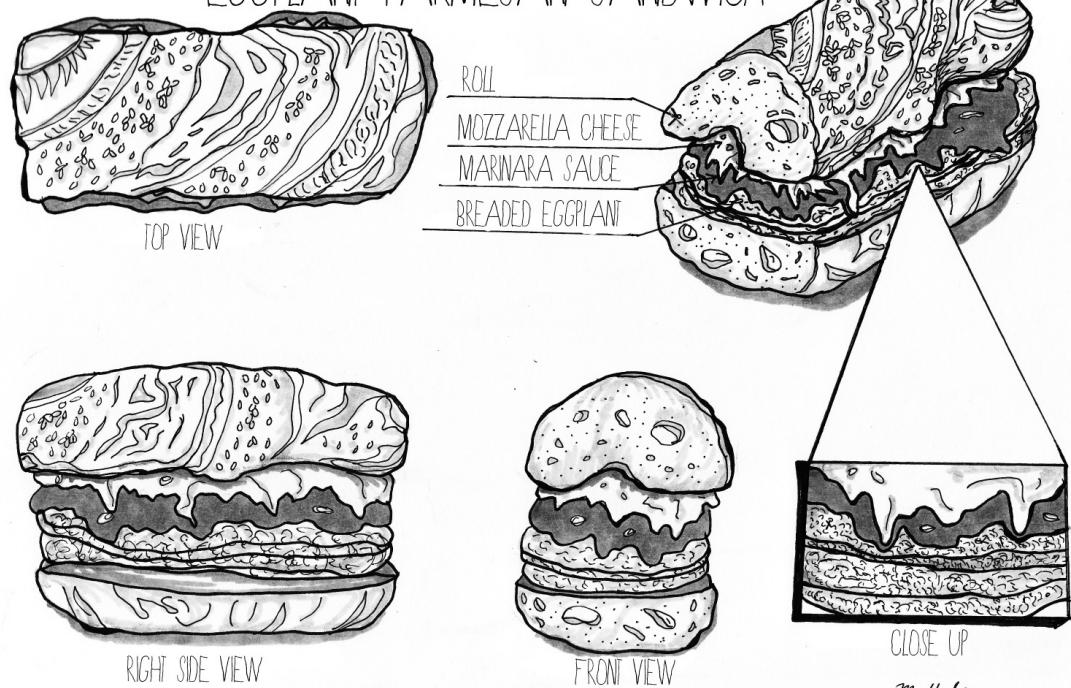
—Emma McIntosh ('15)

A Haiku

Thinly breaded flank
Made of nature's fair plum child
One bite brings me joy

—Christine Lee, ('13)

ORTHOGRAPHIC DRAWING OF AN EGGPLANT PARMESAN SANDWICH



Margot Yale / The Spectator

A Recipe For the Real Deal

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 lb medium eggplants (about 3), cut crosswise into 1/3-inch-thick rounds
- 3 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 5 lb plum tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups plus 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 20 fresh basil leaves, torn in half
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 5 large eggs
- 3 1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 2/3 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 1 lb chilled fresh mozzarella (not unsalted), thinly sliced

Directions:

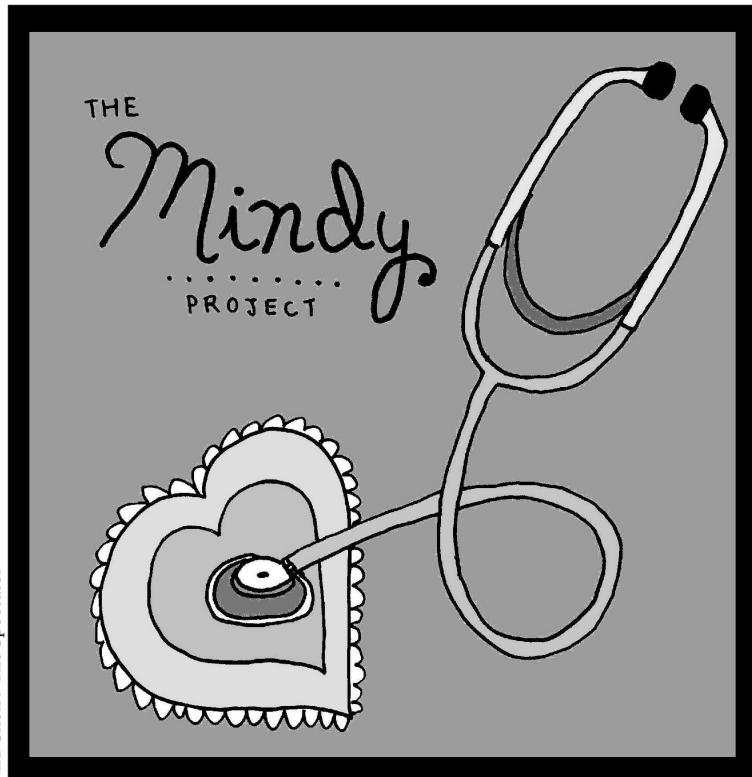
1. Toss eggplant with 2 teaspoons salt in a colander set over a bowl, then let drain 30 minutes.
2. While eggplant drains, cut an X in bottom of each tomato with a sharp paring knife and blanch tomatoes together in a 5-quart pot of boiling water 1 minute. Transfer tomatoes with a slotted spoon to a cutting board and, when cool enough to handle, peel off skin, beginning from scored end, with paring knife.
3. Coarsely chop tomatoes, then coarsely purée in batches in a blender. Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a 5-quart heavy pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then add garlic and sauté, stirring, until golden, about 30 seconds. Add tomato purée, basil, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and red pepper flakes and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 25 to 30 minutes.
4. Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 375°F.
5. Stir together flour, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a shallow bowl. Lightly beat eggs in a second shallow bowl, then stir together bread crumbs and 1/3 cup Parmigiano Reggiano in a third shallow bowl.
6. Working with 1 slice at a time, dredge eggplant in flour, shaking off excess, then dip in egg, letting excess drip off, and dredge in bread crumbs until evenly coated. Transfer eggplant to sheets of wax paper, arranging slices in 1 layer.
7. Heat the remaining 1 1/2 cups oil in a deep 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then fry eggplant 4 slices at a time, turning over once, until golden brown, 5 to 6 minutes per batch. Transfer with tongs to paper towels to drain.
8. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce in bottom of a rectangular 3 1/2-quart (13- by 11- by 2-inch) baking dish. Arrange about one third of eggplant slices in 1 layer over sauce, overlapping slightly if necessary. Cover eggplant with about one third of remaining sauce (about 1 1/4 cups) and one third of mozzarella. Continue layering with remaining eggplant, sauce, and mozzarella. Sprinkle top with remaining 1/3 cup Parmigiano Reggiano.
9. Bake, uncovered, until cheese is melted and golden and sauce is bubbling, for 35 to 40 minutes.

—Meg Palmer ('13)

Arts and Entertainment

Television

Some Projects Need More Work



By EDA TSE

For those looking for a show about independent women, "The Mindy Project" is not for you. Its rom-com premise is similar to that of many other shows: a successful woman looking for Mr. Right, who (what do you know?) happens to be a doctor. She also happens to be "man-crazy," thinking of nothing else but finding the right man.

Fox's "The Mindy Project" premiered Tuesday, September 25. The first episode begins with a voice-over from Mindy Lahiri (Mindy Kaling) as she's curled up on the couch, watching multiple romance movies. A montage shows Mindy as a child, a teenager, and a college student, constantly fawning over Tom Hanks. The screen then cuts to her present-day self with as a Princeton University graduate with a job as an OB-GYN physician, still searching for the fairytale love. Out of this obsession comes her instant crush on a colleague, which very quickly leads to her detention in jail after a drunken bicycle ride away from the very same colleague's wedding. She then proclaims that she will "better herself" in order to find the right man.

The show is funny, at times, and has great one-liners, such

as when Mindy shouts "racist" at a car that almost runs over her. Its relatable protagonist is also a plus: Mindy Lahiri is an average woman – self-deprecating of her weight, unprofessional as she tries out a first date outfit in the office, and savvy in searching for blind dates on the Internet. The secondary characters, however, are boring and stereotypical. There's sexy British doctor Jeremy Reed (Ed Weeks) who consistently hooks up with Mindy. (Honestly, it's not a spoiler, who wouldn't expect that?) Co-worker Danny Castellano (Chris Messina) is another cliché, a doctor who simultaneously annoys and flirts with Mindy, and is certainly on his way to being another love interest. The rest of the characters are forgettable, due to their lack of screen time.

Though "The Mindy Project" appears to center on Mindy as a professional woman, her job as a physician is barely mentioned. Instead, most of the show is devoted to following her as she tries to find her dream guy. Of the scenes that do show her at work, most are incredibly uncomfortable to watch. In one, Mindy agrees to deliver a Muslim immigrant's baby at the request of a 12-year-old translator. Afterwards, Mindy corrects her secretary by saying that the

immigrant wasn't made "rich with oil money," but "poor with nothing money." She follows this by nodding to her secretary's scribble of "more white people."

Another scene features Dr. Castellano, who has a habit of stealing Mindy's patients, informing her that she needs to lose 15 pounds. This is one of three mentions that Mindy is overweight during the thirty-minute show, despite the fact that she isn't overweight at all – just not Hollywood's regular definition of "normal weight." It seems that as "radical" as "The Mindy Project" might be called, simply for having a woman of color as the star, Kaling still has to resort to racial and fat "jokes" to get laughs.

The entire show is a disappointment, especially since it

Hopefully, 'The Mindy Project' is a work in progress that will only get better.

was thought up by the likes of Mindy Kaling, whose experience working for "The Office" should have prepared her in producing an effectively edgy program. Hopefully, "The Mindy Project" is a work in progress that will only get better. To do so, her characters must come alive on screen, instead of being one-dimensional. A healthy dose of girl power would help, as well, to help female viewers appreciate their own bodies, instead of having to conform to Hollywood standards of being skinny and obsessively looking for love, as Mindy Lahiri does.

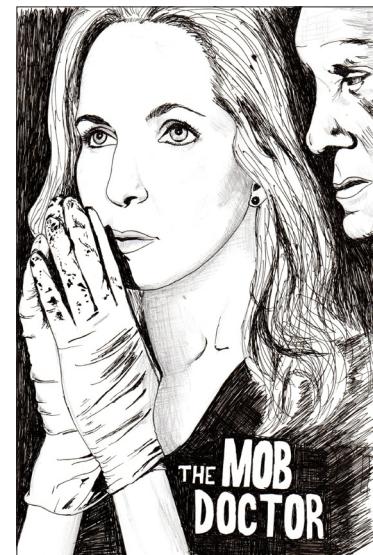
Someone Get This Show a Doctor

By DAPHNE LU

In a hazy background, a little girl stands out clearly, alone and lost in a vast meadow. She stumbles upon a dead man, as a voiceover announces that this moment plays a significant role in the narrator's childhood. Unlike most children, she crouches down, touches the man's face, examines his cuts and bruises, and closes his eyes—enchanted in a somewhat devilish way. A black screen later, we're shifted to present-day Chicago. Now, Grace Devlin (Jordana Spiro) is a young, talented, inexhaustible doctor in the process of removing a screwdriver from a goon's forehead—sans anesthesia, operating room, and hospital attire. She hurriedly leaves this shady operation to return to her real job. In the hospital, residents hook up in their resting rooms, doctors bend the rules for new, possibly lethal surgical tactics, and nobody messes with the chief of surgery. We've seen this all before in the medical genre, but this time the jargon is much harder to find; instead, we watch Devlin's life as a physician and as a "mob doctor" on the side.

Spiro plays a convincing role as half-angel, half-mobster (more like mob helper), but her position is barely explained. We don't know much about Devlin's past and just how involved she is with the scary, big-talking, cigar-chomping Chicago mobsters. Furthermore, though Devlin supposedly helps out to protect her mob-indebted brother Nate (Jesse Lee Soffer), her family is scarcely mentioned in the show, weakening her backstory. Parents? So far, they seem not much more than shadowy background figures. Grace seems hypocritical with her "family comes first" motto: she decides to stay in Chicago after dropping a deadly situation in the lap of an old family friend, mob boss Constantine Alexander (William Forsythe). (Forsythe is also one of the few bright spots in a shockingly dull ensemble.)

In her daily life, she faces enemies, too, but they're not quite as dramatic. Devlin's nemesis



Cynthia Zhou / The Spectator
Olivia Watson (Jaime Lee Kirchner) jumps at any opportunity to snag a surgery when Devlin's other job calls, and David Pasquessi channels his inner snob to play Devlin's arrogant superior, Dr. Flanagan. However, someone as loveable as Grace would, of course, have made a couple great friends along the way. Her best friend, nurse Rosa Quintero, is bland and underdeveloped, a sassy "girl-fran" played by Floriana Lima. Grace's boyfriend isn't much more interesting; fellow doctor Brett Robinson (Zach Gilford) is a wholesome, handsome innocent who doesn't know the truth about Grace's other life.

It's the perfect TV relationship for drones: a boring man with a superhero doctor for a lover.

The idea of a mob show fused with a medical drama sounds genius on paper, and the conflicting worlds may still work themselves out. Still, it's hard not to judge FOX's newest addition, especially with a name as blunt as "The Mob Doctor." And it doesn't help that the pilot episode is loaded with clichés: high-speed car chases, deaths upon deaths, implausibly clean getaways, the importance of "family" on the south side of Chicago—it's basically "The Sopranos" plus "ER" minus dozens of Emmy awards and 10-year primetime runs. A little more plot and character development would go a long way for this show, but right now, its future, like Devlin's flashback past, is blurry.

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Arts and Entertainment

Film

A Love Letter to the Unloved Teens

By NINA WADE

Misfits all over the world have taken comfort in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Stephen Chbosky's 1999 novel chronicling self-professed "wallflower" Charlie after a nervous breakdown in his freshman year of high school. It's been praised and banned for its honest look at issues that are often swept under the rug, such as depression, teen sexuality, and alcohol and drug use. Now, the teens of a later generation can find solace in the film version, carefully brought to the screen by the author himself.

As a novel, *The Perks of Be-*

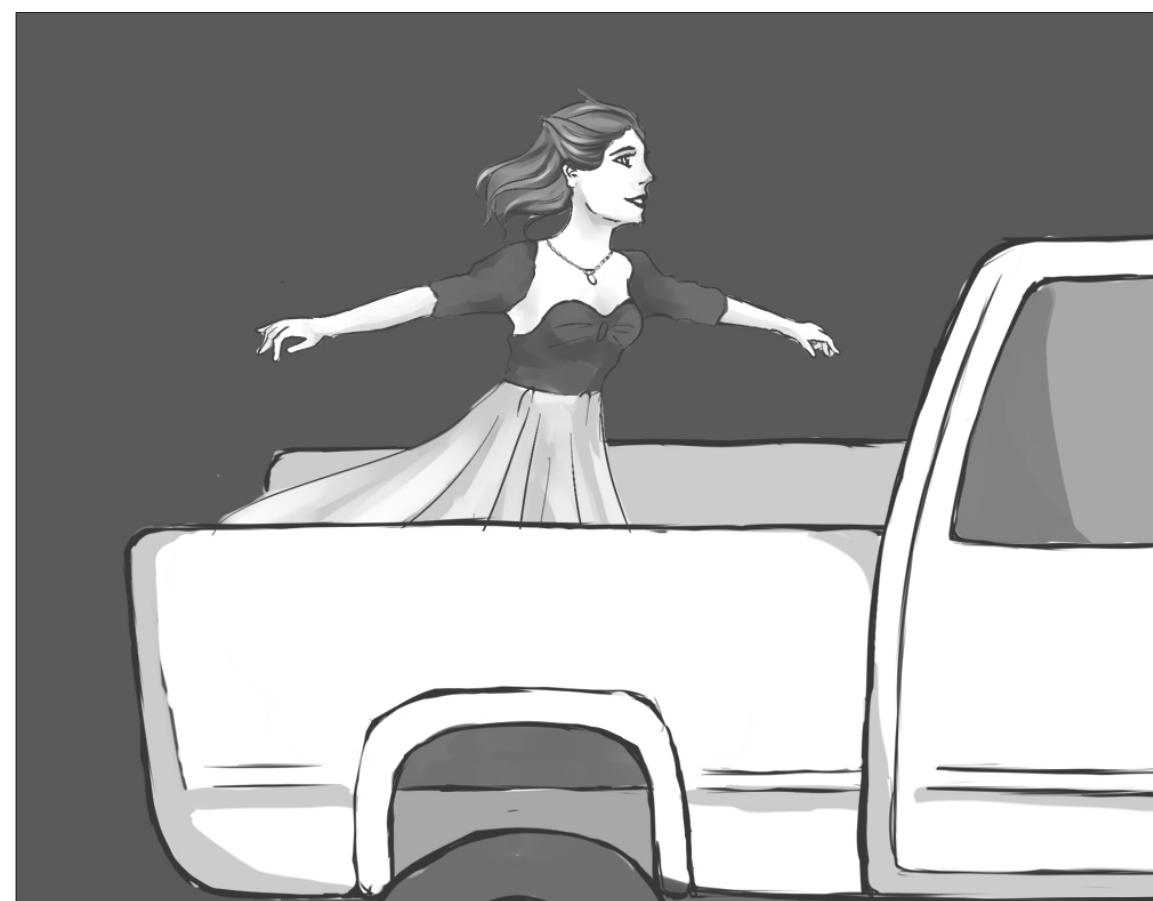
girl as pre-hipster era hipster as Sam wouldn't recognize David Bowie.) In fact, it's so understated in its setting that it can be jarring when characters cheer over a 1300 on the SAT.

But the sharp, intelligent, impulsive, confused, and above all else deeply human characters are what give it heart, and the three at the center drive its soul.

Watson, an internationally recognized teen superstar, has definitely succeeded in breaking type. Sam is enigmatic but warm-hearted, hard to read but easy to love. Her smile has the resigned cynicism of a girl who lost her innocent view of the world long ago. Still, her character occasionally feels flat, though this may be a result of the movie's structure. Charlie is far from a reliable narrator, and his infatuation with Sam makes it harder for him, and by extension viewers, to see her flaws; we see her as he sees her, through filters of love and respect, with faults excluded. This makes some of her decisions difficult to understand, as viewers aren't privy to her thoughts.

Miller and Lerman both shine, giving their characters incredible depth and intensity. Miller, once again in an eccentric, off-kilter role, keeps Patrick from lapsing into a stereotypical, one-dimensional homosexual. Instead, Patrick is soulful and sympathetic, balancing his campy persona with sarcastic one-liners and witticisms. We see him star in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" (corset and heels included), but we also see him staring blankly out a car window, hands tightening on the steering wheel as he runs out of distractions from his melancholy. When Patrick's heart breaks, so do ours.

Lerman excels at giving Charlie unexpected complexi-



ties. Charlie is quiet, but not boring—a wallflower, as the

what makes him tick—and that is how we see the world, as the movie is shot from his perspective. His angsts are the heart of the film, from nightmares about his dead aunt to his painful pining for Sam. A character like Charlie demands a deft touch, and Lerman delivers. Subtle and nuanced, he shows us what an introvert is: not someone with less of a personality, but someone less inclined to reveal it. Earnest and nervous, he stands out next to Watson and Miller—which is no small task.

That's not to say the movie is perfect. Aside from the core three, other characters are rather underdeveloped, and plot threads are woven in, only to be left dangling: Charlie's relationship with his sister, and hers with her boyfriend; Sam's referenced, but never explained, fraught relationship with a friend; and Charlie's parents, who seem practically non-existent. Still, Watson, Miller, and Lerman are more than enough to carry the film through. The film tackles heavy topics, but that doesn't mean it's cliché; in fact, it carries them off bet-

ter than many other movies. And it does something more than most teen movies these days: it inspires. When Charlie

Subtle and nuanced, [Lerman] shows us what an introvert is: not someone with less personality, but someone less inclined to reveal himself.

title says. We want to understand how he sees the world,

[Miller's] soulful and sympathetic, balancing his campy persona with sarcastic one-liners and witticisms.

throws his arms out, seemingly floating in the night air, it's poetic enough to make his words seem profound. "We are infinite," indeed.

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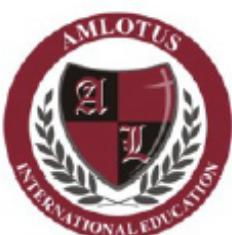
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Boys' Soccer**Centaur Shake off Loss to Win Two Straight**

Ellie Abrams / The Spectator

Sophomore Sean Fitzgerald makes a pass to Sophomore Demosthene Sfakianakis during a game against Beacon High School at Riverside Park on September 24.

**By RAYYAN JOKHAI,
DARYL CHIN,
and EAMON WOODS**

**Monday, October 1: Stuyvesant
Centaurs vs. Martin Luther
King Jr. Knights
Wednesday, October 3:
Stuyvesant Centaurs vs. Man-
hattan Center for Science and
Math Rams**

**Wednesday, October 10:
Stuyvesant Centaurs vs.
Bard Raptors**

**Centaurs Toppled by MLK Again
by RAYYAN JOKHAI**

As Stuyvesant and Martin Luther King Jr. High School fans alike packed the sidelines of the field, the two division rival teams got ready to start their second face-off of the year. In the previous game, Stuyvesant lost 4-0 and were no doubt looking for revenge in this game. However, the boys' soccer team, the Centaurs, were not able to pull off the win in

their game against the renowned MLK High School Knights on Monday, October 1. Once again, the team was beaten badly by the Knights, losing 5-1.

In the first half, the Centaurs came out with very solid play and were outscored by only 2-1 at the end of the half. The team kept the game very close by pressing up on the opponents whenever they had control and quickly moving the ball up the field when it was in their possession. The Centaurs only goal of the game, scored by senior and co-captain Asa Conover, occurred after a steal that took place at midfield. Conover dribbled up towards the opponent's goal, protecting the ball against two defenders, and was able to achieve the only goal of the game.

During the second half, Martin Luther King Jr. High School was able to take advantage of their deep bench and attacked the tired Stuyvesant players. The Centaurs were outscored 3-0 by

MLK High School and were never able to respond. "I was really proud of the team during the first half, but was humiliated because of our play during the second," Conover said.

Despite letting five goals score, goalie Nicholas Miller was able to save a total of 10 shots throughout the game. "I think the team played a very good game, but needed to capitalize on more opportunities to score," senior Maxwell Berkow said. "In the second half, I think we just got tired. Their bench is really deep and they have the ability to just keep on subbing in players."

The Centaurs hoped to bounce back from this loss and win their next game against Manhattan Center for Science and Math High School on Wednesday, October 3. "For the next game, we just need to practice fitness, and fitness of mind," Conover said.

**Centaurs Dominate Rams to Get
Back on Track
by DARYL CHIN**

The reserves on the sidelines held their collective breath as they watched a Centaur shot on goal sail through the air and over the frozen Ram goalkeeper. Although the ball clanged off the top of the goalpost, it was the Centaurs' 21st shot on goal that day, showing just how dominate they were over the Rams. Coming off a tough loss earlier in the week, the Centaurs rebounded nicely with a 3-0 win over division opponent Manhattan Center for Science and Math on Wednesday, October 3.

The Centaurs demonstrated that they were the better team early, controlling the ball much

throughout the first half and into the second half as well. The constant pressure the Centaurs kept on the Rams along with their constant switching of fields kept the Rams off balance.

The Centaurs finally broke through midway through the first half, when senior and co-captain Lee Popa stole the ball from a Ram defender around midfield. Popa then placed a beautiful lead pass to senior and co-captain Asa Conover, who was streaking up-field past his defender. Conover then took one dribble and slid the ball past the outstretched arms of the Ram's goalkeeper.

The Centaurs opened up the second half with a quick goal by sophomore Darien Cox. The Centaurs then proceeded to threaten the Rams with three more deep pushes into the Ram's side of the field. Although they took two corner kicks they were unable to come away with any goals. "We need to take better shots on goal and work on finishing better," Conover said.

The final goal of the game came midway through the second half, when sophomore Sean Fitzgerald was fouled in the goalie box and went on to place a beautiful penalty kick past the Ram goalkeeper.

Even though the Centaurs won, they felt they could have done better. "We definitely played much better today than last game," Coach Vincent Miller said. "But there are still many things we need to improve in our games."

"We need to improve our finishing, crossing and passing," Berkov said. "We easily could have beaten this team by a wider margin."

**Centaurs Gallop to Victory Over
Bard Raptors
by EAMON WOODS**

The Centaurs knew going into their game against the Bard Raptors on Wednesday, October 10, that it would be a tight contest, after they won by a margin of only one in their previous meeting with Bard. Their latest encounter proved to be equally as close, as the score was tied late into the second half.

In a game characterized by physicality and vigor, senior and co-captain Asa Conover scored early in the game to put the Centaurs up by a goal. Then, about halfway into the second half, the Raptors countered the Centaurs and quickly tied up the game with a goal of their own.

Finally, around five minutes from the end of the game, senior and co-captain Lee Popa sent a magnificent through ball to sophomore Mohammed Haque who finished perfectly to cap a close victory in dramatic fashion.

The win not only proved the ability of the team to work together in the clutch, but it also showed that the Centaurs are capable of competing as a single unit at a high level. "It was a tough win, but we earned it, and I am proud of how the team played during that game," senior and co-captain Maxwell Berkow said.

With one game left in the season against division rival Beacon, the Centaurs look to finish the regular season strong. This impressive win over Bard will certainly help boost morale. "The team turned the tide in the last minutes and showed that we can really pull together," Conover said.

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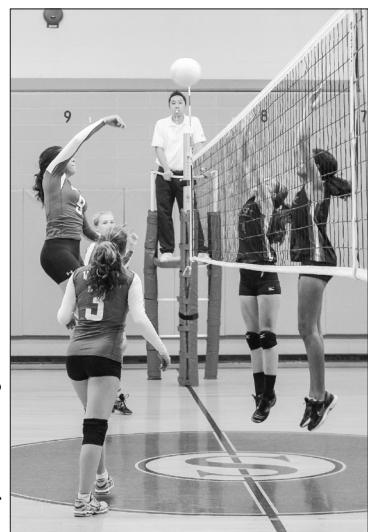
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Sports

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens Remain Undefeated Halfway Through the Season



Danny Kim / The Spectator

Junior Paula Carcamo spikes against Bard High School Early College during their game on October 5.

Lady Bulldogs Bitten by Vixens

By NOAH HELLERMANN

The third floor gymnasium at Stuyvesant High School was filling with spectators as the Vixens warmed up. Stuyvesant's girls' volleyball team took their warm ups as an opportunity to be loud and proud, hyping up the gymnasium. Seniors Marta Poplawski and Diane Forrest slammed kills over the net off of feeds from setter and senior Anna Wang.

As fans whistled and cheered with each practice shot, coach Joshua Yang appreciated the atmosphere. "Going into our first home game, I didn't know what to expect. It was a good crowd, and the seniors especially seemed excited," Yang said.

The Washington Irving Lady Bulldogs responded with their own cheers, breaking out of their huddle chanting and rocking back and forth. Junior Alice Li of Stuyvesant took the team on their first scoring

run, serving and giving the Vixens a 5-1 lead. The Lady Bulldogs fought back to bring the score within two, until Stuyvesant's senior and captain Natalie Kozlova spiked a ball over the net, and began to serve, winning the last six points to make the final score 25-12.

In the second game, the score stayed almost even until the Vixens again pulled ahead. After a long run that put Stuyvesant up 20-10, Forrest had two kills, and freshman Mariya Kulyk served until the Vixens won the game and the match, 25-10.

After the match, the team wasn't done. Most of the players continued to practice setting and spiking, digging and passing. In fact, the team was far from satisfied with the game.

Kozlova was less worried about physical errors than she was about the team's spirit. "It's fine to make mistakes, but our attitude wasn't great. We need to forget about mistakes and keep looking to the next point," Kozlova said.

Coach Yang concluded that the Vixens could have played better and harder, even though they faced one of the weaker teams in the division. Considering the upcoming game against Seward Park, a contender in the division this season, Yang wanted to make sure his team was prepared. "We need to play well consistently, all the time, no matter what the competition is," he said.

Vixens Sweep Lady Raptors in Close Sets

By MATTHEW MOY

The undefeated Vixens faced a strong team in the 2-1 Bard High School Early College Lady Raptors on Friday, October 5. In two competitive sets, the Vixens earned their fourth win with scores of 25-19 and 25-23.

Going into the game, the Vixens faced the absence of seniors Anna Wang and Diane Forrest. "Since we didn't have a setter and a hitter, I

was a little nervous," senior Marta Poplawski said. "But we've played without them before, so I knew that we had a chance to win. I was expecting personal mistakes especially because a lot of the players are younger."

The Lady Raptors sided out off their first serve, and the Vixens continued to pile on the points after that. The Vixens took the first set 25-19.

The second set saw the Vixens fall behind 8-9 at one point. Senior and captain Natalie Kozlova sparked a comeback with a kill down the middle, which drew a nice round of applause from the crowd. She also hit an ace when she served the ball short to the center, which caught the Lady Raptors off guard. The Vixens took the heavily contested second set 25-23.

"In the second set, I got some of the other girls in. I got Mariya [Kulyk] in, she's a freshman. I wanted her to get used to playing outside, hitting the ball, playing aggressive, just learning that position," coach Joshua Yang said. "I put Emma [Loh] in the back row; same thing, just learning how to pass, getting familiar with the position. I'm trying to filter in a couple of girls that haven't really played too much, and that might have cost us a couple of points, but I think later on it's a good investment."

Kozlova attributed the closeness of second match to lack of cohesion. "For next game, we should know each others' positions and trust each other more. [We need] to get the ball better within your range, like coach says, 'within your radius,'" she said. "Everyone has a different radius, so you have to know each player, and trust them to get what they have to get. And of course we could talk more."

Following this game against Bard, the Vixens continued their winning streak beating Norman Thomas and Murry Bergtraum each in two sets.

Boys' Fencing

The Untouchables Start Untouched

By SAMUEL FUCHS

After their first scheduled match of the season was canceled, one of the most winning Stuyvesant teams in recent history, appropriately named Untouchables, competed against the Benjamin Banneker Spartans on Tuesday, October 2. Having never faced the Spartans before, the Untouchables was confident and excited for the season opener, especially after missing their shot at a city championship last year.

"Last year was a relatively bad season," senior and co-captain Adam Schorin said. "We only came in second."

However, coach Joel Winston has no fear for the upcoming season. "The only thing that worries me is that the championship game falls on the same day as the National event," Winston said. This could prove trouble for Stuyvesant, because several of their fencers will likely compete in that national tournament.

Because the Untouchables were shortchanged for this match, with several starters, including Schorin, suspended, they relied on senior and co-captain Kevin Wan and junior Philip Shin to be the main scorers of the match.

After the team's chant, "One-two-three, touch this," Shin began the foil matches and won his round, scoring 5-2. Junior Ryan Li followed suit, taking down his opponent in a similar fashion. Li, though lacking in size, was able to get the quicker hand on his opponent, each time stealthily avoiding his opponent's lunges and getting the first touch. Li's round resulted in a 10-3 score. After Li, junior Andrei Talaba had a scoreless round that seemed to be caused by malfunctioning equipment on the side of the Spartans.

Nonetheless, the round was counted, though it ended with the time expiring. The Spartans then managed to even out the score to 10-10 in the next round.

Following the Spartans' comeback, the Untouchables did not allow their spirits to be dampened, and were able to win the foil match with a score of 45-21.

Junior Josef Omar led off the épée matches, giving the Untouchables a 5-1 lead. Senior Andrew Wu followed up with a stunningly short 37-second round that ended with a score of 10-2, lifting the morale of the other Stuyvesant fencers. As the matches wound down, sophomore Malcolm Wells had his debut match, which he won after exchanging lunges with the opponent for over 30 seconds. Senior Dmitriy Treyger had a trying two and a half minute match that ended with a total score of 30-17. With a final boost of confidence, the last three fencers for the match, junior Victor Jiao and Omar, and senior Noam Dorogoyer sealed their win with a final score of 45 touches to 27.

The Untouchables seem to face few issues except some new fencers' lack of experience. "I'm not sure we have enough experience to secure a solid first place, or maybe not even a solid second," Jiao said. "We're a really good team, when I say not enough experience, I mean not enough to win PSAL solidly."

However, regardless of whether the Untouchables will win the PSAL Championship, the playoffs are the only thing on their radar at this point.

"We need a little work but I think we'll get there," Winston said. "Once we get to the playoffs then that's what it's all about."

Adam Schorin was not involved in the editing of this article.

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Sports

Boys' Football

Peglegs' Alone in First with Big Matchup Looming



Stuyvesant's football team, the Peglegs, doing pushups before a game at Pier 40.

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After the Peglegs missed a field goal on their opening drive, a strong defensive effort on the ensuing Tigers possession left the Stuyvesant offense with good field position. They soon got on the board with a rushing touchdown by senior Werner Zhanay, but that was their only score until the fourth quarter, as they were stifled by the stingy Tigers defense. "We lost the game

at the line. Their linemen just overpowered ours, and because of that, we weren't able to get anything going on offense," senior and co-captain Nathaniel Biggs said.

The Peglegs were able to keep up with the Tigers throughout the half, limiting them to only two touchdowns and keeping the half-time deficit at a manageable 16-7. But at the beginning of the third quarter, a tough gamble led to a Tigers kick return for a touchdown. "We tried to squib it to prevent a

long return, but they wound up [with a long return] anyway with a couple of broken tackles and bad coverage," junior Solomon Quinn said.

The Peglegs' special teams struggles continued in the second half, as a muffed long snap led to a touchdown and a blocked punt resulted in a safety. However, the Peglegs' offense and special teams were not the only units to blame.

"They scored because of a mix of bad tackling, and our defensive line just getting destroyed," Biggs said. The Tigers ended up scoring 32 unanswered points, including five rushing touchdowns on the day. In the fourth quarter, senior and co-captain Alen Makhmudov ran in for a touchdown, but it was too little, too late.

Still at the top of their division, the Peglegs look to move forward and focus on preparing for their game next Saturday against KIPP NYC College Prep. Also with a record of 4-2, it is only behind the Peglegs by nine power points in the standings. Junior Robert Melamed said, "Next week will be our biggest game of the year—we will be fighting for a bye week [in the playoffs]."

Going to WAR: Who's Most Valuable?

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season as the American League leader in batting average (.330), runs batted in (139), and home runs (44). These achievements have made him the first Triple Crown winner since Carl Yastrzemski in 1967. The symbolic weight this holds, especially considering the amount of time since it last occurred, will give Cabrera a huge boost in the MVP race. If that ultimately catapults him to the MVP, then the age-old method of enjoying baseball, which is by analyzing the traditional statistics and historical accomplishments, and through scientific skepticism, would be highlighted.

On the other hand, Trout has burst onto the scene as the electrifying rookie, drawing stark contrast with Cabrera's years of steady production. He steals bases, jumps over walls to rob opponents of home runs, and hits his own, providing a more complete package of all-around skills, in addition to the entertainment factor. Although he just turned 21 this past August, he has already been advertised as the best player to enter the league in the past half century and is even being projected as a future Hall of Famer.

Trout's youth is a major contributing factor to the attention he has been receiving, but even with his lack of experience, his talent is undeniable. He represents a new "Moneyball," sabermetric path that professional baseball can possibly go down—his worth as a player is measured by more abstract metrics than the regular statistics. Trout's 2012 regular season average, on base percentage, and slugging numbers represented by his .326/.399/.564 slash line are not record-breaking, but many analysts are putting him on the same level as Cabrera's Triple Crown potential based on his

WAR, or wins above replacement. This non-standardized measurement combines a player's fielding, batting, and base running into a single number. Trout's current WAR is 10.3, making him one of only fifteen other players in league history who have achieved such a number, including Babe Ruth, Stan Musial, and Willie Mays.

His base-stealing prowess has also been a point of comparison with Cabrera's Triple Crown win. With 30 home runs and 49 stolen bases, Trout has become the first rookie in MLB history to have a 30-40 season. The only other players who have come close are Eric Davis in 1987 and Barry Bonds in 1990 who both had 30 home runs but were one stolen base shy of Trout's record. Overall, Trout embodies the possible transformation of the current system into a MLB that questions tradition by judging players with more in-depth and technologically advanced methods of analysis.

Right now, baseball is in the final period of its own Meiji Restoration while its fellow primetime sports are much more in the present. It is rooted in tradition, from having a notable person throw out the first pitch of each game to the seventh-inning stretch, and steeped with convention: many spectators at a baseball game will keep their own score card, and everyone from the loud speaker announcer to the radio broadcasters will make sure not to mention the possibility of a pitcher throwing a perfect game for fear of jinxing it. Whether or not baseball's glorified past will be the foundation of the sport for years to come, or be left behind to become a nostalgic talking point is yet to be determined. The winner of the American League MVP award will not decisively show whether or not the league will change, but he will signify where the sport of baseball is moving.

The Sports Quotient: Where Blogging Pays Dividends

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have opportunities to share his perspective on the sports world with a wide audience. To do so, he, along with several other Stuyvesant alumni, started their own blog, "The Sports Quotient."

He was inspired to start The Sports Quotient after his college roommate, who doesn't like sports, told him how entertaining he found many of the "late nights arguing about sports with my friends," Weiner said. While he currently hosts a radio show, Weiner got his start writing for The Stuyvesant Standard. Though he said he "never really even thought about writing for The Daily Pennsylvanian," he looks back on his time writing for The Standard as invaluable.

Writing for the Standard "gave me an opportunity to formalize my thoughts and articulate my analysis," said Weiner. "When I would see students pick up the newspaper, I realized how cool it was that people were actually reading my work." While at Stuyvesant, Weiner met Leo T. Ernst ('10), Mike Block ('10), and Robert Hess ('10), some of the

people he would later go on to found The Sports Quotient with. "I thought it would be awesome to create a website that would give me and my friends a community to discuss sports and share that with other people," Weiner said.

When he heard about the idea, Ernst was eager to write for the blog. "To be a part of a new news outlet is a huge opportunity in general, but SQ's focus on original, varied, and perhaps even unintuitive content is not to be missed," Ernst said in an e-mail interview. Though he had not done any sports writing in high school, he "was honored to be offered the opportunity to both write and edit for the site," and immediately jumped at it.

As a general rule, the most successful blogs are those that are frequently updated and written well by knowledgeable people. It is Weiner and his staff's persuasive writing coupled with their passion for sports that make The Sports Quotient stand out among other similar blogs.

Weiner's writing skills were honed in English teacher Emilio Nieves's AP American Literature English Class. In the class, "I really

learned how to write convincingly and make sure that my points are conveyed effectively," Weiner said. He was also inspired by legendary baseball writer Buster Olney, who told him that the key to success was to "write, write, writer."

"The frequency with which each writer submits content is staggering," said Ernst. "I can tell you firsthand that SQ's writers are intensely and obsessively knowledgeable on their particular sports, to the extent that each of the articles so clearly reflects it." The Sports Quotient produces about four articles every day, detailing anything from fantasy sports advice to the use of Native American names/images in collegiate and professional sports.

As for pursuing a career in sports writing, both Ernst and Weiner seem uncertain. While Ernst jokes that he'll "probably end up becoming a lawyer like everyone else," Weiner is still trying to figure it out.

"I love sports as a fan, but when it becomes a job, well, we'll have to see," Weiner said. "So far this doesn't seem like a job—it's the most fun I've ever had."

Girls' Swimming

Penguins Paddle to Victory

By AARON COPPA

Coach Anna Markova's first meet heading up the Penguins was a success as the Penguins won their first meet swimmingly. Despite some major setbacks throughout the preseason, the team managed a clear 51-27 victory in the opener.

"The biggest problem we've had is that we don't have the pool at school," senior and co-captain Olivia Balderes said. Due to the current construction on Stuyvesant pool, the girls have had to make a big adjustment to attend morning practices at Seward Park Campus and then travel to school. In fact, not all of the girls managed

to get in the required ten practices to participate in the first meet.

Without enough girls to fill all the events, some had to participate more than they were used to. "When you're doing three of four events, it takes a lot out of you," Balderes said. The girls fought through.

"It's tough for the girls. A new facility, a new coach," said Markova. The Penguins put in the needed effort, especially the veterans who were not used to traveling so far for practices and games. "These girls truly care," coach Markova added.

Winning first and second place in most of the events gave coach Markova a great start to this year's

season. What was most impressive was the performance of the new freshmen. Although Markova had most of them swimming in unofficial lanes, where their times weren't counted, the freshmen still managed to shine. "The freshmen showed us up," Balderes said.

With further training and sorting out of the lineup, especially once the freshmen are placed in official lanes, the Penguins will improve. The season is looking bright—the team is 3-0 as of October 15—and the Penguins look forward to fighting to maintain the place atop the Public School Athletic League.

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas Capture Second Win

By SAMANTHA LAU

Stuyvesant 4, Riverdale / Kingsbridge Academy 0

The last time the Stuyvesant Mimbas faced off against Riverdale / Kingsbridge Academy, they blew them out, winning 9-0. However, the Mimbas didn't want to be overly confident going into their second match against them on Thursday, October 4.

"We did win our first game against them but we knew they were missing some of their better players for that game. They have had a good record since then so we were worried we would go into the game overly confident and they would surprise us," senior and co-captain Alicia Vargas Morawetz said.

Luckily for the Mimbas, junior Rosalie Campbell was able to return to the field after a head injury she sustained from the match against the Beacon Blue Demons. Though she has been a leading goal-scorer for the team earlier in the season, she played sweeper in this game, aggressively defending the goal.

The Mimbas had good control of the ball coming into the game sticking to their "first five minutes" strategy, which involves coming strong within the first five minutes of both halves to set the

bar high for the rest of the game. Stuyvesant drew first blood with a goal from freshman Alexis Kushner off an assist from freshman Sarah Joseph. Within five minutes of the first score, senior Kelsey Bernal followed with a second goal off an assist from Kushner. After these goals, the energy of the game slowly faded, but the Mimbas were able to maintain their 2-0 lead going into halftime.

"During halftime, the team talked about being aggressive to win the fifty-fifty balls and taking more shots. We knew we had to work on our strategy," sophomore Madison Truemner said.

Disappointed with their play at the end of the first half, the Mimbas picked up their game in the second half. They were more patient with the ball, and were able to gain more consistent possession. Vargas Morawetz placed the ball on the far left of the goal in the middle of the second half, to increase Stuyvesant's lead to 3-0. Finally, Kushner topped it off with a fourth goal towards the end of the half, making the final score 4-0.

"I definitely noticed today that we need to work on controlling the ball out of the air and having a better first touch," Campbell said. "We can work on it and come back again with another win."

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Football

Peglegs' Alone in First with Big Matchup Looming

By TIMOTHY DIEP
and GAVIN SCHALL

Saturday, October 6: Stuyvesant Peglegs vs. Alfred E. Smith Warriors
Saturday, October 13: Stuyvesant Peglegs vs. Evander Childs Tigers

Down 19 at the Half, Peglegs Storm Back for the Win
By GAVIN SCHALL

It couldn't be classified as anything but a Hollywood ending. On fourth and goal with under 10 seconds left in the game, senior quarterback and co-captain Alen Makhmudov ran for a touchdown to complete a miraculous comeback for the Stuyvesant Peglegs. After trailing 28-9 at halftime, the Peglegs scored 21 unanswered points in the second half and escaped with the 30-28 win over the Alfred E. Smith Warriors on Saturday, October 6.

Though the comeback showed great resolve, Stuyvesant's atrocious first half play cannot be overlooked. After an impressive opening drive that ended with a field goal from senior kicker Gabe Hurwitz, the Warriors quickly moved the ball down the field to go back up 6-3. After another Warriors touchdown, Stuyvesant cut into the lead when junior and backup quarterback Solomon Quinn entered the game for Makhmudov, who had injured his ankle, and hit sophomore Clay Walsh for a 33-yard touchdown pass. It would turn out to be the Peglegs' last points of the half. Things looked

particularly bleak when Makhmudov threw an interception that the Warriors returned for a touchdown to take a 28-9 lead.

Instead of getting on his players' case at halftime, Head Coach Mark Strasser took a proactive approach and tried to motivate them. "He told us to think of the second half as a 0-0 game. He also said that we needed to pick up the intensity and hit the other team just as hard as they are hitting us," Makhmudov said.

"We didn't really make any schematic adjustments at halftime. It was really more of a mental adjustment as a team," senior linebacker and co-captain Jack Haggerty said. "We came out with a lot more intensity in the second half."

Stuyvesant forced fumbles on the Warriors' first two possessions of the second half and converted both turnovers into touchdowns to cut the lead to five. And after another stop by the Peglegs' defense, they moved the ball down to the opposition's five-yard-line. But the drive stalled there, and they were forced to return the ball to the Warriors with three minutes left in the game. After they converted a third and 10 with a 30-yard pass, the game seemed to be all but over for the Peglegs.

But when the Warriors were forced to punt with 50 seconds left, Haggerty ran past the protection and was able to get a hand on the ball to block the punt. Stuyvesant recovered around the 10-yard-line with a chance to win the game.

After failing to convert on the first three downs, Stuyvesant put

the ball in Makhmudov's hands in their last chance to complete their comeback. On a designed passing play, all of the Pegleg receivers were covered, so Makhmudov scrambled into the end zone to clinch the win.

The win moved Stuyvesant into first place in the Cup Division with a 4-1 record. Senior defensive linemen and co-captain Vinit Shah summarized the team's selfless attitude best when he said, "There was no standout player. We won because everyone did their job."

While they were proud of their improbable comeback, the Peglegs know that to consistently win, they have to play good football for two halves instead of one. Shah acknowledged this Tebow-esque knack for late comebacks, admitting that the Peglegs are a "second-half team right now."

Winning Streak Snapped, Stuyvesant Falls to Evander Childs in Rough Outing

By TIMOTHY DIEP

Going into their game against the Evander Childs Tigers, the Stuyvesant Peglegs were riding a hot three-game winning streak. However, the Tigers were on a three-game winning streak of their own, and it certainly didn't seem like two Cup Division powerhouses were colliding on Saturday, October 13, as the Tigers won in a blowout, 50-14.

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Going to WAR: Who's Most Valuable?



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

By ALISON FU

The NBA values the little man: the players who come off the bench for a couple of minutes at a time, the role player, the specialist. But in the MLB it is more cut and dry: a pitcher who has 20 wins is elite, and a .300 hitter is great. As the NFL undergoes an evolution away from ground-and-pound mindsets to pass-heavy, quarterback-centric offenses, the MLB prides itself on the consistency the game has maintained throughout its 136-year history. However, because of the American League Most Valuable Player(MVP) race between Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and Miguel Cabrera of the Detroit Lions, this adamancy to staying classic—archaic, some would argue—is starting to waver.

The only aspect of the MVP contest that is not hotly contested

is the fact that Trout and Cabrera are the only two clear candidates. Other than that, everything from their age to their respective teams' rosters is being brought up in the hopes of giving one of the players a slight advantage over the other when the voters submit their ballots. Disregarding any hypotheses that can be made through side-by-side technical comparisons between the two, there is an underlying conflict at the heart of this already-heated debate. The final decision will reflect not only the mindset of the baseball writers who vote for the winner, but also the general direction that the sport is heading in. Votes for Cabrera or Trout represent two contrasting ideals in Major League Baseball: old-school and contemporary.

Cabrera finished the regular

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The Sports Quotient: Where Blogging Pays Dividends



Courtesy of Zachary Weiner
Stuyvesant alumnus Zachary Weiner ('10) started a blog, "The Sports Quotient," along with several other alumni.

By GABRIEL SUNSHINE

Sports blogs have been in existence for nearly as long as the internet itself. The novelty of blogs is that they provide readers with a more empathetic perspective on sports—that is, they are often written by fans, or people who aren't considered to have an expert knowledge of sports. They put an emphasis on discussion, and on posts there is often room for the reader to leave comments on what he or she thinks. The concept is that blogs are supposed to appeal to no single demographic. They're accessible and often not written at a very high reading level, yet someone wouldn't be embarrassed to say that they read one. Additionally, because blogs tend to be independent publications, they aren't restricted by conventional rules of journalism,

and can often be more opinionated than an official publication. If a sports blog becomes successful enough, it can attain privileges that are generally reserved for official publications, such as press passes to attend games and exclusive interviews with players.

Stuyvesant alumnus Zachary Weiner ('10) has his own radio show, "The Zone," on the University of Pennsylvania's radio station, through which he attained these privileges. However, there were some drawbacks to this system: "I realized though that when I graduated, these opportunities wouldn't be there for me—I was tied down to the college radio station," Weiner said in an e-mail interview. He decided that he wanted to be able to continue to

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Meeting Held to Unite Teams Under One Name

By LEV AKABAS

What do Mimbas, Eagles, Greyducks, and Birdies all have in common? Although the average Stuyvesant student probably wouldn't know it, they are all names of Stuyvesant varsity sports teams. Many people feel that it would be ideal for all Stuyvesant sports teams to have the same name. One of these people is senior Jordan Wallach, who decided to organize a meeting to try and make it happen. On Thursday, October 4, 26 students representing 24 of Stuyvesant's 33 sports teams met to discuss the issue of whether or not all the teams should unite under one single name, which would likely be the Peglegs.

One of the many advantages of having a uniform name is that it would be significantly easier for Stuyvesant students to be fans of the many sports teams. "It would energize the sports scene at Stuyvesant, because we have 33 varsity teams, all of them are competitive, and they'd really benefit from the support of the student body," Wallach said. "One name to cheer for would bring more unity amongst the students, and you could see posters around the school saying 'Go Peglegs' instead of 'Go Penguins' or 'Go Greyducks,' because a lot of people don't even know what the actual individual team names are."

"People would be more likely to go to games," said senior and boys' basketball player Ian Outwhait said. "I, for one, have no idea what some of the teams in this school are, and it would make advertising a lot easier be-

cause a 'Go Peglegs' poster would be supporting everybody."

Another positive result that could come from the Wallach's idea is that it would vastly increase sports teams' support of each other. "Right now, we aren't connected—all the different teams are their own groups," senior and boys' cross-country co-captain Jack Stevenson said. "I feel like if I'm supporting my own team, I should also support other teams."

"With the same name I feel like more people would come to watch," senior and boys' swimming co-captain Brian Chen said, "The teams would support one another more because they'd all have the same name so they'd all be fighting for the same title and cause."

The last major benefit of all the sports teams sharing a common name is that smaller, less watched teams could gain fan support. "It would be good for the small teams especially to be included in this whole big entity because they don't have many fans and not as many people show up for their games," Wallach said. "Each team seems isolated in their own exclusive environment that fans can't really get into. But, if they're included as the Peglegs, they won't seem as exclusive and small, and it's open to the entire student body to root for them."

"I love being able to go to a football game and root for the Peglegs," Stevenson said. "I think [teams like] the track team would get a lot more fans if people could cheer for the Peglegs."

Although the preliminary vote at the meeting was 21-5 in favor

of the change, some athletes, including members of boys' swimming and boys' track, are opposed to the idea of having to give up the team name which is unique to their team. "If we changed it to Peglegs, I feel like we'd lose the motivation to swim because Pirates is what we've been fighting for all these years, and we've been doing pretty well," Chen said. "So I think for some teams it might ruin their tradition."

"A lot of people don't like the name Peglegs because it's not intimidating," Stevenson said, voicing yet another opinion of those opposed to the proposed change.

"A lot of teams can try to build a community and pump themselves up with their one name," Wallach said, "and they can still call themselves the Pirates, for example, within their own team, but when they go out and compete, they would be competing under the name Peglegs."

The team representatives and captains will likely have to hold another meeting to reach a final decision, due to the few teams still opposed, but the goal is for the change to be implemented by the fall of 2013. One minor issue is the fact that the vast majority of the teams are currently using uniforms that have their specific team nicknames written on them. Wallach is going to try reaching out to the Parents Association as well as the Alumni Association to get funding to change the uniforms, and "I think they will be all for it," Wallach said.

Jordan Wallach was not involved in the editing of this article.