



# The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"*

Volume CI No. 8

January 21, 2010

stuyspectator.com

## Stuy-Naught Programs Robots in Space



Peter Brooks mentored the Stuy-Naught Computer Science Team, who finished fifth in a national programming competition.

By MAYA AVERBUCH

Space exploration is often considered the work of erudite astrophysicists and intrepid astronauts, but the Stuyvesant students who watched a satellite they programmed navigate through the International Space Station will tell you otherwise.

A group of Stuyvesant students, under the team name Stuy-Naught, were given the opportunity as part of the 2010 SPHERES Zero Robotics Challenge after being selected as one of the top ten teams out of

24 competing schools. After the final round of competition, they achieved fifth place.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Space System Laboratory and astronaut Greg Chamitoff created the competition in 2009 with the intention to "inspire future scientists and engineers so that they will view working in space as 'normal,' and will grow up pushing the limits of engineering and space exploration," according to the Zero Robotics Web site.

Each year, students must write software for Synchronized Position Hold, Engage, Reorient, Experimental Satellites (SPHERES) to complete a given game objective autonomously. The small, roughly spherical satellites release streams of carbon dioxide from multiple surface gas jets in order to propel themselves in a direction dictated by the program loaded onto their internal computer.

"They serve primarily as teaching tools for scientists, for scientists to figure out how to get these objects to move and accomplish tasks that will be important in space in the future," said computer science teacher Peter Brooks, who mentored the team along with Stuyvesant's robotics team's adviser, Dan Lavin.

This year, the first year Zero Robotics Challenge was opened to students nationwide. The objective was to enable SPHERES to explore a set field in search of a virtual solar panel. The satellite had to rec-

ognize the panel, grasp it with a virtual arm and bring it back to the docking station before the opposing team's satellite did the same with its own panel.

"That's a very sophisticated program that you have to write because it has to deal with all sort of different possibilities. Is the object spinning quickly? Is it spinning slowly? Is it also moving while it's spinning? How do you actually grab a spinning object?" Brooks said.

Junior Blake Elias, Stuy-Naught's leader and a member of Stuyvesant's robotics team, first heard of the competition in August through a robotics forum on LinkedIn, and contacted peers whom he thought would be interested. However, the team was given little time to advertise and assemble because their application to participate in the competition was due on Friday, September 10, just two days after the opening of New York City schools.

After being accepted as one of the 24 teams out of the maximum of 100 applicants, Stuy-Naught, which had a core group of about 10 students, began preparing for the competition. Though some of its members were in Advanced Placement Computer Science (MLIX) or Systems Level Programming (ML5), others were unfamiliar with C, the advanced programming language used in the competition. As a result, the team held several short

*continued on page 3*

## Ava Is Here: Remembering Ava Hecht



Courtesy of Gabriele Dehn-Knight  
Teacher Gabriele Dehn-Knight's fourth period German class takes part in "Project Ava Everywhere."

By ELINA BYSTRIKSKAYA  
and SAM LEVINE

Ava is here. These three words echo the sentiment of "Project Ava Everywhere," an event in commemoration of former Stuyvesant student Ava Hecht, who passed away two years ago due to meningitis.

The event took place on Saturday, January 8. Over 400 people signed up to participate in the project on Facebook, and others who keep Ava in their thoughts contributed as well. Hundreds of posters decorated with safety pins and the bold text, "Ava is Here" appeared everywhere, reaching from New York to Hollywood, London, Germany, Brazil, Japan and Israel. The safety pins were meant to commemorate one of the signature items that Ava wore, safety pin earrings.

Elena Hecht ('03), Ava's sister and the creator of this project, was inspired by the documentary "Exit Through the Gift Shop," directed by famous graffiti artist Banksy. Although Hecht's project did not involve graffiti, the medium through which information was spread was the same, as the posters were hung on walls and public places in cities. Hecht hoped that the project would make everyone remember the wonderful person that Ava was. "Ava is still with us every day," Hecht said. "[Ava's] spirit lives in many ways, and this is a way of proclaiming it to the world."

Many of those who participated knew Ava personally while others were students in Stuyvesant when

*continued on page 2*

## First Blood Drive of the Year Held

By NABANITA HOSSAIN  
with additional reporting by  
JOANNA GAO  
and ANI SEFAJ

Five years ago, firefighter Jeff Cool fell from the third floor of a burning building. He suffered many serious injuries, including 13 fractured ribs, a fractured skull and a shattered pelvis. He was taken to Saint Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx.

"It took 46 units [pints] of blood before the bleeding stopped," Cool said. By the time Cool was out of his final surgery, he had received 72 pints of blood. "Twelve of those units came from Stuyvesant students," he said.

Members of the Student Union and seniors Daniel Frankel and Aiste Blaudzunas used Cool's story to garner support at the first blood drive of the year, held on Thursday, January 6, in the first floor lobby, in concert with staff from The New York Blood Center (NYBC)

Despite the new advertising techniques used, the amount of blood collected was similar to that of previous drives. This year, 195 pints of blood were collected, one pint fewer than the total donated at the first drive of last year.

However, according to the



Stuy students 16 years old and older went to donate blood on the first floor, Thursday, January 6, 2011.

drive's organizers, this year's collection ran notably smoother than last year's. "We had a lot more machines and were much more well staffed this year," Frankel said. "We also put out benches where people sat in an organized line, which did not happen last year."

The presence of six ALYX Component Collection machines also contributed to the efficiency of the drive. The ALYX systems allowed donors to give twice as much blood as they would have been able to give if the blood was drawn manually. According to the New York 1 article "New York Blood Center Unveils New Do-

nation Technology," published on July 24, 2007, the ALYX machines spin blood in a centrifuge, from which the red blood cells are taken out and put into a separate bag. The remaining fluids are returned to the donor's body, which allows donors to safely donate a higher volume of red blood cells.

There are very strict requirements for donors using the ALYX machines, since the machines remove large amounts of blood. According to Frankel, the 29 donors who were allowed to use the ALYX

*continued on page 3*

### Arts & Entertainment

Article on page 16.

Over 100 years of the Record Industry:  
From Phonography to MP3s

In following the tracks that music made.



Article on page 9.

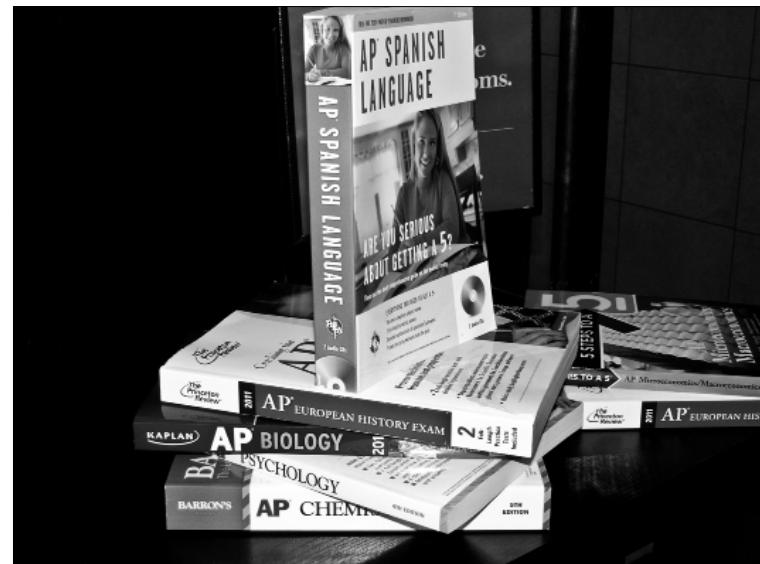
### Opinions

In Defense of Democracy

Defense of the working man.

Harry Poppick / The Spectator

## College Board Redesigns AP Curricula and Exams



Students spend many hours practicing with AP review books.

By ALLIE BURNS  
and ELENA MILIN

The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) program is widely regarded by students, teachers and schools as a system that allows students to test their abilities by taking more challenging college-level courses while still in high school. With its examinations taken by almost two million students, the AP system of courses followed by a rigorous exam has changed little since the program's inception in

1955. However, following recent reports of AP classes requiring too much memorization, the College Board is planning a drastic redesign of many of its AP courses, stressing intuitive thinking over memorization.

The plans include changes to the AP Biology, Physics B and C, Chemistry, World History, European History, US History, Spanish Literature, French Language, German Language, Italian Language,

*continued on page 2*

Jessie Toib / The Spectator

Elana Movshovich / The Spectator

# News

## Ava Is Here: Remembering Ava Hecht

*continued from page 1*

Ava's tragic death was announced. "When Elena told me of this day over Christmas dinner, I was just so excited. This suddenly gave me something specific to do on that day to remember her and honor her, because she is here," said Ava's close friend Erica Sands ('09), who put up signs in London and made a YouTube video to document the process. A few of Ava's other close friends added information about Ava's life and death onto their posters to make the proclamation that "Ava is Here" more personal and powerful.

The teachers who knew Ava Hecht also put up signs to celebrate her life. German teacher Gabriele Dehn-Knight placed signs that read, "Ava is here" in German all over classroom. "After Ava's death, I kept looking for her in my class, but she was not physically there," Dehn-Knight said. "There was a vacuum of her presence, but I think she was deeply remembered by everyone."

"We took a picture of us with 'Ava ist immer noch unter uns' written on the blackboard, meaning 'Ava is always among us,'" said junior Simon Gervets, who was in German class with Ava the year she passed away.

Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman taught Ava in his Great Books class. "I was struck by her ability to be both really edgy and

totally accepting and warm towards everything," Grossman said. "She very much had her own style, but she had a talent for never seeming to judge other people because of their styles or tastes or groups of friends or anything like that. She was rare and special for being someone that I have never heard a single negative or unkind comment about."

Grossman also felt that this project would be important for the school. "Often in schools it's easy to feel like all that matters is the next test, the next paper, the next weekend or vacation. The idea of keeping connections to other peers, to memories from a while ago alive seems a really helpful and important thing," Grossman said.

After taking part in Project Ava Everywhere, Elena Hecht has asked the attendees to email images of their signs hanging in specific locations around the country or post them under the Facebook event. Hecht received photographs of posters hanging around the world and is currently uploading them for public browsing on Flickr. She plans to compile the images into a slide-show, creating a permanent record of the two-year anniversary of her sister's death.

"Each and every photo means a great deal to me. The thought, creativity and dedication to bringing Ava into everyone's life is more than I could have ever hoped for," Hecht said.

## College Board Redesigns AP Curricula and Exams

*continued from page 1*

Latin and Art History classes, all to be carried out over the next 4 years with new examinations given in all subjects by 2015, according to the New York Times article "Rethinking Advanced Placement," published on January 7, 2011. The College Board will release new examinations for US History and AP Biology by next month and a new Italian Language examination by the 2011-2012 school year. Revisions to the French and German Language programs are also to take place this year. Significant revisions to the Physics, Chemistry, European History, World History and Art History curricula will be made as well, with hopes of being ready for 2014 or 2015 examinations.

The new curricula are necessary because, according to critics of the AP system, many current AP courses, especially the AP Biology course, overwhelm students with information they are required to memorize, instead of teaching them how to analyze information and think conceptually. The national average AP Biology exam score has fallen over the past years from above a 3 to a 2.7 out of 5, with scores above 3 considered passing level for a college class. While AP courses are meant to be taken for potential college credit, some colleges like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Texas have been reluctant or unwilling to award credit for the AP Biology exam in recent years because the course does not provide students with the problem-solving and critical analysis skills needed in college-level Biology classes.

Principal Stanley Teitel said he is not sure how these changes would affect Stuyvesant's AP offerings since the College Board has not yet released the new AP syllabi. "I'm not sure what [the changes] mean to us yet," Teitel said. "It appears that [the College Board is] trying to get away from memorizing material and into analyzing material, which is of a high intellectual level as opposed to pure memorization."

Teitel said that Stuyvesant will make all future changes that the College Board requires, but is quick to note that many of the criticisms of the AP tests do not seem to apply to Stuyvesant students. "Over 90 percent of our students' AP Biology scores are 3, 4, or 5," Teitel said, and none of his AP teachers in any subject have specifically complained to him about courses having too much rote memorization or being too challenging for the students.

"AP Biology is an extremely difficult course, but there are students who do well, so it's clearly not an impossibility," said senior Billy Yang, who is taking AP Biology.

While Teitel believes that the College Board may be making these changes to ostensibly benefit students, he also believes that another motive may be to attain federal Race to the Top funds for states with well-performing schools. Without reaching common core state standards, states are not eligible for the Race to the Top money, and the College Board's changes correspond with the common core state standard for learning at higher intellectual levels.

"They're not necessarily course changes, but changes in methods of teaching, to instill a higher order of thinking," said Teitel, and provided the example of teachers asking students to analyze a graph rather than simply describe it.

Biology teacher Dr. John Utting believes making the curriculum less memorization-oriented would be a positive change. "It will really help teachers be more effective," he said. "The idea is to make it less broad and deeper and more intuitive in the way experiments are done."

Students do not believe the changes will affect them significantly.

"Certainly, biology is a lot of memorization, and you can't really help that," Yang said.

"In the class that I'm taking, we do analyze scientific papers and the data in them, so it's not entirely memorization," junior Esme Cribb said.

### BuildOn Holds Fifth Annual Pie-a-Teacher Event

On Tuesday, January 11, BuildOn, formerly known as Building with Books, held its fifth annual Pie-a-Teacher event in Stuyvesant's cafeteria on the fifth floor. BuildOn is a nonprofit organization that holds programs at local United States schools and contributes all proceeds toward building schools in developing countries such as Haiti and Mali.

Admission cost one dollar at the door. Refreshments, such as desserts and soda, were also available for purchase. Students paid 50 cents per raffle ticket to pie each teacher. Club members randomly selected three to four tickets from the bag and winners would be able to pie the respective teacher.

Club leaders were satisfied with the event's yield this year. "Our goal was to raise 200 to 300 dollars and 300 dollars was pushing it, but it came out to be close to 400 dollars and more," BuildOn faculty advisor Angel Colon said.

However, last year's Pie-a-Teacher event raised approximately 500 dollars, according to BuildOn President Becky Chao. Chao believes that a lower turnout this year may be the reason for a decrease in funds raised. She attributed the lower turnout to there mostly being upperclassmen teachers participating and the event being held on a Tuesday near the end of Stuyvesant's first term.

Colon said that it was too chaotic to tell how many students attended the event, but estimated the number to be approximately 50.

Of the 10 teachers that were scheduled to be pied, eight were in attendance. "[BuildOn] reached out to about 25 teachers, and only half of them agreed which was pretty much what we expected. A few of the teachers had last minute emergencies though so they couldn't make it," Chao said.

Most of the teachers that participate in the event do so because they support BuildOn's cause.

After social studies teacher and dean Daniel Tillman was pied, he addressed his reason for participating. "It's all just for good fun, you know. It lets the kids get out some of the frustration they have towards some of their teachers and it all goes toward a good cause, so I have no problem with it."

Some students voiced concerns about there not being enough teachers and hoped for more efficient ways of choosing teachers.

"Eight teachers wasn't nearly enough for me to thoroughly enjoy it, considering that I didn't even know half the teachers," sophomore Akash Howlader said.

However, overall, the event was well received. "[Pie-a-Teacher] turned out to be a lot funner than I originally expected. It was hilarious watching some of the teachers I've always disliked get pied in the face," sophomore Nadeem Choudhury said.

### English and Biology Departments Receive TVs and PS3s

Alumni Association member Wai Ng ('81) donated two new 46-inch Toshiba LCD HD televisions and two PlayStation 3 systems to the English and Biology Departments in November of last year.

"He doesn't have enough time to mentor as he wanted to, so this is his way of making a difference," said Hannah Silverman, a consultant for the Alumni Association. "He really wants to help students think in the context of the world as it is today [...] be inspired to learn."

Ng, an engineer, visits Stuyvesant frequently to speak with teachers about their classroom needs. In the past, he has gifted various educational tools to the school, including three Yamaha YPG-635 electric pianos to the Music and Fine Arts Department in the fall of 2010, and several DVDs to the English, Biology and Social Studies Departments in September and December 2010. The films included *Rome: Power and Glory* and *BBC Earth: Nature's Most Amazing Events*.

## News-in-Brief

"We didn't really plan to recruit, but we had a chessboard if anyone wanted to play while they waited."

The Carnival was postponed from earlier in the year. "Not enough clubs wanted to do it, and we didn't want to have [the Carnival] with so few clubs," Huberman said. "Extending gave more clubs an opportunity to participate. It's really an opportunity for the clubs to fundraise."

Huberman is optimistic about future carnivals. "It's run well for two years. If the clubs want, we will have another carnival next year."

### Five Stuyvesant Students Named Intel Semifinalists

Seniors Milo Beckman, Mao Hu, Joseph Park, Dmitri Teplov and James Law Thompson were named semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search Competition (STS), according to a list released by the Society for Science and the Public (SSP) on Wednesday, January 12.

Intel STS, America's oldest pre-college science competition, provides "a national stage for the country's best and brightest young scientists to present original research to nationally recognized professional scientists," according to the SSP Web site.

Of the 1,774 students from 30 states and the District of Columbia who entered the competition this year—the largest number of applicants since 1996—300 were selected as semifinalists. Intel will award each semifinalist \$1,000 dollars and each semifinalist's school will receive an additional \$1,000 dollars.

The students were elated that their many hours of intellectual toil had paid off.

"If I had to estimate the amount of time put into this, it might be around 200 hours, maybe more. A lot of those hours were dedicated to just staring blankly at an equation and wondering what I should do with it," Park said.

They did much of their work in one of the four Intel science or math classes at Stuyvesant. The classes start in the spring term of junior year and continue through the fall term of senior year. "All of the semifinalists had the help of a teacher plus a mentor, but Joseph Park worked with a program outside the school while the other four worked either with me or [computer science teacher Peter] Brooks in a class and during the summer," said biology teacher Dr. Jonathan Gastel, who teaches Intel Senior Research (SB7RA).

Hu and Teplov researched projects in biology, Beckman and Park in math, and Thompson in computer science and biology.

Although the students spent about a year working on their projects in school, labs, and with professors at universities such as New York University and Hofstra University, their "Eureka" moments often came shortly before the project deadlines.

"I spent hours at the lab last summer developing and debugging my program," Thompson said. "I was about to give up when I suddenly found a way to collect data on my algorithm's performance the week before the deadline."

The finalists are now anxiously awaiting the release of the names of the 40 finalists on Wednesday, January 26. The finalists will compete for the grand prize of \$100,000 at the final judging in Washington D.C. in March.

"I wasn't even sure I would be a semi-finalist," Park said. "I'm not really expecting much right now. I'm just grateful I got to this stage."

## Coral Reef Club Applies for Grant from PepsiCo



The Coral Reef Club is taking part in the Pepsi Refresh Project to win a \$5000 grant, which they plan to use to grow and distribute corals for medical research and conservation.

By ANNE CHEN

If you enter room 727 after school, you are liable to see students hard at work, their hands submerged in fish tanks with about twenty species of corals, including the Tonga Blue Mushroom, African Red, Purple Mushroom and leather corals. Sea snails, star fish, copperband butterflyfish and other colorful marine organisms linger around them, at home in their man-made environment.

Stuyvesant's Coral Reef Club maintain these organisms by diligently feeding them, cleaning the tanks, adding supplements to the water and testing it to maintain a stable environment in which the organisms can survive.

However, the club wants to expand its activity out of the classroom and have a greater impact on global coral-preservation efforts. It is currently in the running to win a 5,000 dollar grant from the Pepsi Refresh Project.

"We have done everything by ourselves, so it would be nice to have outside funding," biology teacher and Coral Reef Club advisor Stephen McClellan said. The corals and marine organisms were donated over the past several years by people around New York City, and McClellan covered all additional expenses.

The project, which is sponsored by PepsiCo, awards grants to individuals, small groups, companies and organizations "with ideas that will have a positive impact," according to the Pepsi Refresh Project Web site. It was started in January 2010 after the company decided not

to advertise in the Super Bowl XLIV and instead pursue a new form of marketing, according to The New York Times article "In New Campaign, Pepsi Invites Public to Do Good," published on Sunday, January 31, 2010.

Every month, PepsiCo accepts up to 1,000 applications in one of six categories: Planet, Health, Arts & Culture, Food & Shelter, Neighborhoods and Education. The following month, candidates solicit as many votes as possible in their bid for a 5,000, 25,000, 50,000 or 250,000-dollar grant. Ten awardees will be picked per grant amount with the exception of the largest amount, for which two awardees will be picked per month.

The Coral Reef Club applied for a 5,000 grant in The Planet category in December with the intention to raise awareness for coral destruction, ship corals to Indonesia—where corals have been dying off due to environmental pressures—and supply corals to researchers.

Their idea to contribute corals to scientific studies was inspired by the work of Intel International Science and Engineering Fair finalist Katrina Koon ('10), whose project showed that the Kenya Tree coral exhibits anticancer and antibacterial properties.

Although junior and Coral Reef Club President Judy Pu admits that their goals are ambitious and not entirely realistic, they hope that the grant will help them grow even more corals and make members of Stuyvesant more aware of their existence. "Corals play a central role in the oceans since they support quite a number of organisms," she said. "Students and many teachers don't know that they have this resource. The tanks offer a view into a habitat that most people would not see regularly."

As of Sunday, January 16, the club's proposal was 113th out of 1,133. People can vote for the club on the PepsiCo Web site or by sending a text message to PepsiCo by Monday, January 31.

"The grant is important not just for the club, but also to Stuyvesant," Pu said. "It's a chance for a school based club to make a real world impact."

*To vote for the Coral Reef Club, go to [www.refresheverything.com/coralreefclub](http://www.refresheverything.com/coralreefclub)*

## Stuy-Naught Programs Robots in Space

*continued from page 1*

lessons to inform its members of the rudiments of the language. However, due to the limited code memory capacity of the SPHERES, students had to learn a simplified version of the language that was tailored to the competition.

"It should have made [the competition] easier, but for the people who already knew [C], it made it a lot harder because the language was not as customizable as they were used to," junior and Stuy-Naught member Daniel Lee said.

The team met about twice a week to write computer code and test their various strategies by using an online simulator created by MIT. Tested strategies included a simple retrieval strategy as well as a "kill" strategy, in which virtual repulsion rays pushed the opponents' robot away from its target until it ran out of fuel.

The process was much more complex than it seemed at first. "There is constant involvement in correcting things because these are real word objects that don't do exactly what you want all the time, and that's what they are trying to train people to adjust for," Brooks said.

Because it was the first full year of competition, there were some flaws in the setup. "We were kind of the lab rats for them, so there were a few bugs they didn't see beforehand that we had to work with," junior and Stuy-Naught member Wei-En Lee said.

By the end of the October, all teams had to submit their programs so that MIT could conduct

an online simulated competition with one-on-one 210-second matches from Friday, October 29 to Monday, November 1.

Stuy-Naught came third in the round, but still felt there was much room for improvement. "We took very careful mental notes on what our competitors did and figured out what clever things they found that we didn't," Brooks said.

They were given less than two weeks to revise their code for the second round of competition, which was held at MIT on Wednesday, November 10. In the round, the satellites were attached to air carriages that shot high-pressure air stream downward, suspending the satellites midair. As a result, they were able to move in two dimensions with negligible resistance from friction.

Although Stuy-Naught had difficulty in the second round, their success in the first round gave them a high enough combined score to place in the top ten, qualifying them for the third round of competition.

With plenty of schoolwork, the team had to run on a tight schedule. "We were testing and making modifications to our program up to two minutes before the deadline," Brooks said.

However, according to Elias, this was just part of their efforts to perfect their code. "It wasn't like we were under pressure to make it work because everything was broken," he said. "We just kept on trying to make it a little bit better."

The third round of competition was conducted on Thursday, December 16, by an astronaut

aboard the International Space Station. Stuy-Naught traveled to MIT to view the competition via a live feed.

"We got to listen to the audio feed of [...] mission control and all the steps in between to communicate with the astronaut," Elias said. "It's a whole other side of things that you wouldn't see as a high school student, or as a college student or even as a graduate student."

Despite all their hours of programming, there were numerous problems aboard the station that they, or the MIT and NASA challenge creators, had not accounted for.

"In the simulation there was a box you could not go out of, but in the actual International Space Station, they neglected that since this was real life, there was no imaginary wall keeping the object in," junior Kevin An said.

At the end of the competition, errors and all, Stuy-Naught tied with three other teams for fifth place.

The teams non-graduating members were enthusiastic about the competition and said they planned to participate again next year.

"You don't need to be a big hot-shot [with a] PhD to play with these things and learn about them," Elias said. "Nobody knows what it will be or where space flight is going to go in 20 years, 50 years, but it really says something about [...] what can be done with this, and they're just pushing that envelope, seeing what we could do."

## Student Inspires New York Times Critic

By NADIA HOSSAIN and BRIAN SOU

The chief classical music critic for The New York Times, Anthony Tommasini, featured sophomore Mohammed Rahman in his article, "Top Ten Classical Composers: Help Write the List," published on January 7 in the Arts & Music section.

Rahman had interviewed Tommasini at the end of the 2010 spring term as part of the research process for his Freshman Composition I-Search paper. The I-Search question he decided to answer was, "Why do people have different tastes in music?"

Tommasini wrote in his article, "My thinking about [having personal favorites in music as opposed to naming all-time greats] was shaken last spring, when Mohammed e-mailed me."

Interviewing a professional is a requirement for the I-Search paper. After a failed attempt to contact a music critic whom Rahman had read about in the AM New York, Rahman came across Tommasini's name while reading The New York Times.

"I thought my chances were pretty slim. I guess I just got lucky," Rahman said of his decision to e-mail Tommasini with a list of questions relevant to his I-Search.

"Mohammed had very interesting and serious questions. He was taking on big issues in his school essay, by wondering why certain kinds of music appeal to certain people," Tommasini wrote in an e-mail interview. "So I agreed to meet him for an interview."

Tommasini suggested that they meet at a café to delve into Rahman's I-Search question together.

"I asked him what he liked personally and what's his opinion of music nowadays like with Justin Bieber and Ke\$ha and all that stuff," Rahman said.

Rahman chose his I-Search topic to satisfy his curiosity. "My friends used to criticize me for listening to rock music. I decided to run some tests of my own. I went on YouTube and listened to different types of music, but I was always biased on my responses," Rahman said. "I wanted to know why this was."

Regarding his experience interviewing Tommasini, Rahman said, "I wasn't re-



Mohammed Rahman was featured in a New York Times article after interviewing the chief classical music critic.

ally nervous interviewing him. He helped me clear my head on my question. [...] He said that all music had a specific guideline, and for music to be tasteful to anybody it'd have to be like a hallway. It'd have to guide you through."

However, Rahman was not the only one to benefit from the interview.

"In exploring my tastes and perceptions Mohammed was really trying to get at a larger question: how are tastes and perceptions formed?" Tommasini said. "Even though he did not specifically ask me to rank the top composers in classical music, talking with him led me to think seriously about that issue."

Inspired by the interview with Rahman, Tommasini decided to develop his Top Ten Composers series, with the article featuring Rahman as the first in a series of installments. In this first article, he attempts to explain the numerous ways a composer can be judged and attempts to create a list of the top 10 composers of all time. So far, the series involves two weeks of articles and five on-line videos. Though the series remains unfinished, it has proved extremely popular.

"I've had, so far, about 1,100 comments from the readers, which is an amazing response," Tommasini said.

Rahman was unaware that Tommasini had published an article addressing their interview. "I didn't know he'd write about it," he said. "I guess I feel a bit swell-headed to be honest with you but it feels pretty good."

## First Blood Drive of the Year Held

*continued from page 1*

machines to give blood contributed a total of 58 pints to the drive.

However, some students contended that the donation process was not as efficient as the drive's organizers claim.

"Waiting for the ALYX machine was so tedious. I spent a period waiting, another period filling out a form and getting my finger pricked, another period giving blood, and then half a period eating," junior Eric Han said.

Donor restrictions not only limited the number of students able to use the ALYX machines, but also the total number of donors. To be eligible to donate, students 16 years old and under had to have their parents sign a consent form, and all students had to meet high and weight requirements.

The guideline's regulations for females are stricter than those for males: a male donor who is five feet tall must weigh at least 110 pounds, but a female donor of the same height is required to weigh at least 138 pounds.

"I'm disappointed that I couldn't donate because I

didn't meet the weight requirements. But I would have donated if I met the requirements," junior Carmen Zeng said.

"It's necessary to have requirements because people get really freaked out about fainting," Blaudziunas said.

In addition, students were disqualified for reasons such as iron deficiency or high blood pressure. According to Frankel, 36 of the drive's registered donors were found to be unqualified, and prevented from participating.

Even though some students had difficult donating, most were able to accomplish what they had set out to do in a few periods. "I liked the concept of being able to help others in such a simple way," senior and donor Elizabeth Szulita said. "[The drive] was run very efficiently."

Cool, present in the first floor lobby during the morning of the blood drive, expressed his support and thanks for Stuyvesant donors.

"I want to say thank you to the 2005 alumni and the current class," he said. "It's important to donate blood."

## Features

### Making Something of Herself

By HANNAH O'GRADY

"It still feels pretentious to call myself an artist or a designer," senior Samantha Chiu said. The 50 or so Stuyvesant students who have purchased her colorful found-object jewelry and other creations would probably disagree. Chiu, who has been creating accessories since she was

**"We are forced to be educationally active everyday in school, and I wanted to apply that same idea to art as well,"**  
—Samantha Chiu

in elementary school, has recently started selling her handiwork, mainly via the internet.

"I post pictures of what I make on Facebook, and put the price in the description," Chiu said. She has also put some items on Etsy, a Web site that features handmade goods, and on Ebay. However, the budding entrepreneur sells most of her handiwork to classmates.

Although her business has just begun to take shape, Chiu has been involved in art for a long time. She started learning how to make jewelry when she was younger by doing online research and checking books out from the library. Then she started to experiment herself.

"I made earrings for myself in middle school, just because I wanted earrings but I didn't want to buy them," Chiu said.

She makes things out of everything from soda cans to fruit skin—"just stuff I find at home," Chiu said. "I tend to make a series of things, such as one group of soda-can jewelry and then I move on to ear cuffs. I see something that inspires me and I take that and make a collection." Chiu sells her products to kids at school, usually for five dollars or less, "since we're students and can't afford to spend a lot of money," she said. She generally prices things she sells online for a little higher.

Chiu also likes to work in other media. She took drawing classes at FIT this past summer, and a fashion-drawing class and a pattern-making course there the summer before. She is now enrolled in a Saturday sculpture class at Cooper Union.

Like any extra-curricular, Chiu's art poses a challenge when it comes to time-management.

"Schoolwork and college apps especially are always in conflict with making stuff. I do my best to try to keep school first, but there have definitely been times where I've gotten distracted because I wanted to make something," Chiu said. Chiu has tried to be diligent with her art as well as with schoolwork, demonstrating this in a Facebook album called "One a Day," in which she documented her attempt to make something new every day over the summer.

"We are forced to be educationally active every day in school, and I wanted to apply that same idea to art as well," Chiu said. In the end, she did not make something every single day, but a friend liked her idea and tried to do the same thing. "It was nice to be able to encourage and support other people [...] I would highly encourage anyone who is interested in making jewelry or any type of art," Chiu said.

Senior Vanessa Yuan owns a beaded ring and polymer-glossed paper earrings by Chiu. "Her stuff is so cool and innovative," Yuan said.

**"I made earrings for myself in middle school, just because I wanted earrings but I didn't want to buy them,"**  
—Samantha Chiu

Chiu intends to continue making things, either as a lifelong hobby or even a career. "I really want to expand. I'll probably stay on Etsy, or eventually make my own Web site," she said. But for Chiu, mass-production is out of the question, even if it would mean more income. "I definitely want to keep it all handmade."

### New York City History: Up close and personal

By JOANNA GAO  
with additional reporting by  
REBECCA GAEBLER

The 6 train's City Hall station is one of the more interesting places in the entire subway system but is only visible to commuters if they choose to stay aboard the train as it turns around at the end of the line. While commuters have to crane their necks to catch a glimpse of the high ceilings, skylights and brass fixtures, a group of Stuyvesant students were recently allowed to leave the train and explore the station on foot. They were given this opportunity, and many others, because they are members of the New York City (NYC) History class.

For 10 years, the NYC History course was taught by Social Studies teacher Phil Scandura. Since Scandura retired, Social Studies teacher Robert Sandler has taught the class since the Fall 2010 semester. According to the Stuyvesant High School Online Course Guide, the course is recommended for those with an intense desire to learn how New York City became the diverse metropolis it is today.

"The class focuses on the modern era of New York City history by studying urban architecture, the culture of the city, graffiti and punk rock music," Sandler said. "We study everything from the Teacher's Strike of 1968 to modern issues. We confront [questions] like, 'What should be done with Coney Island? Who is responsible for the rebirth of New York City?'"

Students in the class explore these places and issues through field trips, like the one to the City Hall train station. In addition to that trip, the class has also traveled to various locations throughout the city.

During the first field trip, the class traveled to the Financial District, visiting Bowling Green, Wall Street, Battery Park, Fraunces Tavern and City Hall. On the second field trip, they visited the Lower East Side and Chinatown, passing by famous locations such as Eldridge Street Synagogue and the Tenement Museum. The class then traveled uptown to Morningside Heights and Harlem, where they visited Harlem Renaissance era clubs, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Grant's Tomb.

"On our tour of Morningside Heights and Harlem, we dis-



The New York City History class took a trip to City Hall.

Marsha Kononenko / The Spectator

cussed the increasing resentment that many Harlem residents have against the whites that are now moving in. But the most memorable part of the tour was when Mr. Sandler took us to Sylvia's Queen of Soul Food for lunch," senior Ming Yang said. "I find it to be a refreshing change from just staring at text and pictures from the textbook. New York City is our textbook."

"Learning through field trips is more exhilarating than just being in the classroom," senior Derek Ku said. "We can walk around the narrow staircases of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and live the history ourselves."

During the visit to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the students were given a full vertical tour, climbing more than 124 feet of spiral staircases to the top

the Morningside Heights area of Manhattan.

"Even though I didn't get to go on the full vertical tour, visiting the ground floor was still amazing. [The cathedral's] atmosphere was so mystical and serene, and the architectural style was simply magnificent," senior Austin Chun said. "The class is really interesting in that it goes into details that you never really mention about New York, allowing a new perspective into our city's history."

"I love that the class is supplemented with actual trips because nothing compares to actually seeing the things you are learning about. There's not much you can really get done in a 45 minute period, but you really have time to learn during a full day class trip," senior Audrey Fleischner said.

Senior and fellow classmate Ariel Lerner agreed. "It's different to read about the conditions of life on the Lower East Side than to actually stand in a cramped, dimly lit tenement," Lerner said.

Although the students all live in New York City, many of them have never explored or toured the city. It is this ability to relate to the subject, Sandler claims, that makes the course unique. "I love that a lot of the course is personal," Sandler said. "I grew up in the Lower East Side during the late 70s, and my parents lived in that era. Usually, history is taught by other historians. With this course, I can tell my own stories or my parents' stories."

"It's a great class. New York refuses to sit still, and its history will shock you," Lerner said.

**"New York refuses to sit still and its history will shock you."**  
—Ariel Lerner, senior

of the world's largest cathedral. The tour ended on the roof, a perfect vantage point for viewing

**331556**

**964**

**6404**

**13**

Queries on [thehandtes.com/stuy/sched.php](http://thehandtes.com/stuy/sched.php)

Quotes on [Stuybash.org](http://Stuybash.org)

Stuyvesant teacher ratings on [RateMyTeachers.com](http://RateMyTeachers.com)

Definitions for "Stuy" and "Stuyvesant" on [UrbanDictionary.com](http://UrbanDictionary.com)

\* as of January 2011  
Thanks to: Senior, Felix Handte

**78.11**  
Percent of students who attended Stuyvesant on 1/12/11

**85.1**  
Percent of freshmen who attended Stuyvesant on 1/12/11

**82.22**  
Percent of sophomores who attended Stuyvesant on 1/12/11

**75.86**  
Percent of juniors who attended Stuyvesant on 1/12/11

**68.42**  
Percent of seniors who attended Stuyvesant on 1/12/11

Thanks to: Assistant Principal of Technology Services Edward Wong

*From the Archives:*  
**From the Voice of September 1982**

# Teacher Evaluation Survey: The Results...

Getting an education at Stuyvesant can be a rewarding experience, or a miserable one; most often, it is a combination of the two, and the quality of the teaching is the largest factor in determining the quality of the education.

The purpose of this survey is to examine the quality of teaching at Stuyvesant, as evaluated by students. It is not meant as a guide per se, but if it can lead the incoming student towards those teachers who have been most appreciated, so much the better. On the other hand, the survey may point out to teachers areas in their performances which seem lacking in the eyes of their students.

VOICE has done 2 such surveys in the past, in 1978 and 1979. The questions used this year are essentially the same as those used in 1979; thus, we may compare the results of the two surveys.

Approximately 1700 surveys were distributed to students over a period of several days, in March of 1982. Students were asked to evaluate those teachers that they had had during the fall term. About 400 surveys were returned; this low number decreases the reliability of the results, especially in teachers receiving fewer than 10 responses.

This year, we have divided the survey up into departments, enabling us to take a closer look at the various trends in this "math and science" school.

The Fine Arts and Industrial Arts departments are placed together, as every non-music fine arts teacher teaches drafting, an Industrial Arts subject. This past year, both Arts departments were subject to a policy change, requiring that their grades be included into the overall academ-

ic averages of the students.

We have examined the Physics and Chemistry sections of the Physical Sciences department separately, as we have each of the foreign languages.

The Physical Education department was omitted entirely. Although the questionnaire asked students to rate only their Hygiene teachers, too many rated their gym teachers to allow us to make any observations.

The average Stuyvesant teacher received an overall grade of 83.0/87.5 (mean and median). In 1979, the mean grade of 83.5 was remarkably close (no median was used that year).

56.25% of the teachers had averages of 85 and above, while 83.9% had medians of 85 and above. 5.4% of the teachers had averages which would be considered failing (65 or below), while 3.6% received failing medians as well. Medians tended to run somewhat higher than averages (aka means).

In examining each of the departments' statistics for the individual categories (questions #1-#7), certain categories are consistently among the highest or lowest rated. Both question #3, dealing with the teacher's knowledge of the subject, and question #6, dealing with the fairness of the student's final grade, were repeatedly rated highest within the departments. The lowest-rated category varied from department to department, although question #2, dealing with the usefulness of homework, was most commonly at the bottom.

The overall averages of the departments, are as follows: Biology 87.13, Chemistry 87.05, English 85.51, History 84.25, Mathematics 84.05, Foreign Language 83.93, Industrial/Fine Arts 82.16, Physics 81.48.

# Humor

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

## Supreme Court Mandates Integration of Sophomore Bar

By SAM FURNIVAL  
and CHESTER DUBOV  
with additional reporting by SHANNA CHEN

No one asked sophomore Wilson Stamm if he minded being a pioneer for civil rights.

In a scene reminiscent of President Dwight Eisenhower's deployment of the 101st Airborne division to integrate the public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, Stamm--a Caucasian--was escorted by Social Studies teacher and administrative dean Daniel Tillman to the sixth floor "Sophomore Bar," where he took possession of sophomore Kevin Tam's locker on Tuesday, January 11. Tam was then forcibly bussed to the fourth floor hallway overlooking the third floor atrium.

The Bar's omnipresent background din of illicit hall handball and unintelligible Vincent Miller mutterings about "settling down so I can take attendance" died down as Stamm removed Tam's belongings from the locker.

Just as in 1957, the January 11 events were the direct result of a controversial Supreme Court decision. The case, Caucasians United v. Li, Li, Li, et. al. mandated full racial integration of Stuyvesant High School's student locker areas. According to the case's majority decision, written by Justice Samuel Alito, Stuyvesant's locker selection

process - while student-driven - violates the privileges and immunities clause of the 14th amendment by "making it impossible for anyone who isn't interested in the collected works of [K-pop star] Jonghyun, the hacking of Nintendo DS devices, or the flagrant plagiarism of Spanish homework to enjoy the bar's comfortable seating and light-filled ambiance."

"This represents a major step forward in fourteenth amendment jurisprudence. The founders clearly intended for every one of these [cretinous] sophomores to be able to aimlessly loiter at equally high elevations, regardless of creed, color, or affinity for Yu-Gi-Oh! cards," Attorney General and Stuyvesant High School alumnus Eric Holder said. Holder filed an Amicus Curiae (friend of the court) brief in the case.

Stamm said he enjoys his new locker's proximity to the Ira A. Levy Multimedia Center, but has been having trouble adapting. "I think I may have been approached and threatened by a Triad," Stamm said. "But he might just have not done the reading for Silverio."

Stanley Teitel fully supports the bar's integration. "This is definitely something we want to pursue here at Stuyvesant," he said. "Just wait 'til you see what we have planned for the fifth floor hallway."

## Tech Classes Eliminated, Attendance Unaffected

By JAMES FRIER  
with additional reporting by SAM FURNIVAL and CHESTER DUBOV

When principal Stanley Teitel announced the elimination of the Technology Department at Stuyvesant High School, analysts predicted a sharp drop in the attendance rates of the classes made redundant. However, recent reports from the attendance office have revealed that attendance rates in these now non-existent classes remain unchanged.

When the Stuyvesant High School Technology Department was still intact, the aggregate year-over-year attendance was a perennial 3.6% of students enrolled. While classes are no longer taught in these tech rooms, the same number of individuals continue to congregate.

A recent visit to these abandoned classrooms by a reporter revealed a diverse group of loafers. Lost freshmen, privacy seeking sophomores couples, juniors playing hackey sack, and seniors looking to just like, hang out for a little while, man, are still found amongst the unused darkrooms and rusted machinery. These students and the occasional grifter are honoring the memory of the Tech department by doing the same things that students of official technology classes in the past did: chilling.

While the Technology Department no longer technically exists, it remains a de facto presence in the school. Studies show that students are still receiving the same level of technology education expected when tech classes were mandated for

graduation. "It seems that either students are receiving their practical, real world technology education in fields such as 'energy systems' and 'principles of technology' elsewhere," analyst Clive Burkman of Barclay Capital Partners said. "Or it could be that students had never received a useful technology education in the first place."

Clearly, of these two scenarios, the former is far more likely; it appears that students have turned to mysterious and little-known sources such as "computers" and "the internet" to learn what the now defunct Technology Department Website calls "the knowledge and skills needed to understand and effectively meet the challenges we will face in the future."

Tech teachers have also been largely unaffected by their department's dissolution. Many have merely gone from not teaching in a classroom, to not teaching in the comfort of their own homes. In fact, not teaching has become even easier for many long time tech teachers. According to a former Technology teacher who declined to be identified, citing union issues, "Without those dumb kids who show up once in a while, sit in the back, and stare at the wall for the entire period, I can get a lot less done," they said. "It's great."

Principal Stanley Teitel expressed disappointment that his elimination of technology classes did not have a more profound effect on the culture of the school, and resolved to "do better" in a recent address to the Parents Association. "Just wait for what we're planning to do with the Art Department," he said.

## Math Class Teaches Life Skills

By SAM FURNIVAL  
and CHESTER DUBOV  
with additional reporting by SHANNA CHEN

The Math research class (MMIR) has long provided freshmen with an opportunity to do practical research in fields that are applicable to their everyday lives. As one of the few electives offered to Freshmen, it has allowed this oft-neglected breed to express themselves mathematically.

The class explores many topics relevant to freshmen, including the famous rolling backpack causality. This crucial theorem was proved in the class earlier this year, confirming the stunning inverse correlation between the friction of a wheeled backpack and the ability to form friendships. "We spent a long time pondering our discovery, and came to the conclusion that the 76% decrease in social ties is well worth it to be able to carry exactly 32.7% more books, with an added 100% decrease in shoulder stress," freshman Anthony Teplov said, who has recently ditched his shoulder strap bag for a more accommodating and mathematically sound rolling one.

"The class has been a huge success" Assistant Principal of Mathematics Maryann Ferrara said. "These freshmen need a way to deal with real life issues that apply to them. Unlike the useless Oprah-style banter practiced by the English and History departments, the math research course gives them valuable life skills. Like Pre-calculus."



Math Research: Jocks are scary.

Marsha Kononenko / The Spectator

in the real world," Ferrara said.

The discoveries made on the fourth floor can be seen in practice across the school. The first unit teaches students how to get from floor to floor in the most efficient way possible, the so-called "swarm" approach that every other upperclassmen has been stymied by. "Before I took the class, I assumed that the only way to get places was by walking" freshman Victor Tang said. "Now I can navigate my way through Stuy at record speeds, without even lifting my head!"

Skeptics of the class claim that certain elements of the curriculum are not only unnecessary but detrimental to the student body as a whole. "There is no reason that freshmen need to be taught how to break escalators with 97% accuracy," junior Joseph Solomon said. "It's getting out of hand."

"I think its great that this class is teaching nerds the skills they need," Kumar said. "Nerds."

The math department is enthusiastic about the class's future. "Students really seem to take what they learn and apply it

## Which Stuyvesant Teacher Are You?

By SHANNA CHEN

1. What's your catch phrase?

A) "SIT DOWN!"

B) "1, 2 and 5"

C) "Sad days are these..."

D) "Child..."

E) "Is it clear? Yes or no?"

2. How do you get people's attention?

A) You say, "ALL STOP!"

B) You surreptitiously walk up to people and then ask, "What are you guys doing?"

C) You throw pieces of chalk at people.

D) You glare.

E) You don't.

3. What's your passion?

A) Ridiculously-hard math that students can only understand if they've studied in Germany

B) "1, 2 and 5"

C) College apparel/college flags

D) Dreadlocks

E) Convincing people to become Physics majors

4. If you were to give a test, what type of questions would you give?

A) Ones where students will fail, even though you've already

given the answers the day before

B) The same ones as your first test

C) Questions about yourself

D) What are...tests?  
E) Ones where students will be proud to get a 35/100

5. What's your favorite food item?

A) Fish

B) Anything that doesn't leave trash

C) Starbucks

D) Students who haven't memorized their lines

E) Martians don't need food!

Results:

Mostly A's: Dr. Chen

You are probably a genius who expects everyone else to be just as much of a genius. You are probably also quoted on stuybash.org a million times.

Mostly B's: Mr. Tillman

Patrolling should be your middle name! You probably dislike any garbage and loitering. You secretly wish you could swim in the pool in the mornings.

Mostly C's: Mr. Cocoros

Your room is probably decorated with feather boas, college flags, and a "low-rider" chair. You also shave your hair as an award for people winning competitions. Rumor has it you huck a mean disc.

Mostly D's: Mr. Mott

You are probably lurking on the tenth floor, searching for a teacher's assistant. You're also a boss.

Mostly E's: Dr. Esper

You were probably hatched, not born, on Mars. You love doing physics demos and collecting any physics-related cartoons and posting them on the 8th floor bulletin board. Have a nice day. Hey! I said, "Have a nice day!"

ADVERTISEMENT

# LET YOUR SCORES • OPEN •



## THE DOOR TO NEW POSSIBILITIES

**SAT | ACT | SAT SUBJECT | AP**

**PRIVATE  
TUTORING**

**ONLINE  
TUTORING**

**SAT  
ELITE**

**Average Premium Tutoring SAT Increase: 305 points**

Company Average Tutoring SAT Increase: 212 points

### About Appelrouth Tutoring Services

At ATS, we invest deeply in our relationships with the families we serve. We listen closely to parents to understand the specific needs of their children, and we craft an individualized plan to help them achieve their educational goals. Our best-in-class results, uncompromising focus on instructor quality, innovative materials, and cutting edge use of technology set us apart from the rest.

**Better Tutors. Better Results.**

**[www.appletutors.com](http://www.appletutors.com) | [info@appletutors.com](mailto:info@appletutors.com)**  
**PH 917-470-9779**

**appelrouth**  
tutoring services llc



# Editorials

## STAFF EDITORIAL

### Teacher Evaluations: What About the Students' Voices?

The dawn of the New Year marked not only the close of the decade, but also an exchange of power in the Department of Education (DOE). Cathleen Black replaced Joel Klein as chancellor, and with this change came adjustments in teacher tenure guidelines, making the process of obtaining tenure more difficult and more transparent. The process now relies on a four point effectiveness rubric, from Very Effective to Ineffective, encompassing three criteria: instructional practice, impact on student learning and professional contributions. The scores from this rubric, combined with teacher observations by assistant principals, are given to the school principal to use when writing a Tenure Recommendation Form to the superintendent.

This new tenure policy, coupled with the DOE's emphasis on progress (currently measured through standardized test grades and annual school surveys), seems to overshadow a significant question: How do the students feel about their teachers' instructional techniques? The higher-ups do not seem to care about the voices of the people below them in the educational hierarchy. In a system that serves over 1.1 million students in over 1600 schools, the students themselves have almost no say in how teachers are evaluated. On a smaller scale, it is disconcerting that at Stuyvesant the process falls entirely on the administration, which fails to acknowledge the opinion of the 3,200 or so individuals that comprise the student body. Teachers have a duty to educate us, and they should value our perspective on how well we think they are doing.

Though certain Web sites exist exclusively for students to comment on their teachers, they are not legitimate sources for evaluation. On RateMyTeachers.com, for instance, instructors are ranked on a scale of one to five for Easiness, Helpfulness and Clarity. While this may help students get a general sense of what it is like to be in a certain teacher's class, the criteria is not specific or serious enough to make it credible.

What we need is a systematized survey that can evaluate teachers' performances both inside and outside of the classroom. While these critiques should not be the sole factor in deciding an instructor's competence, they should be used as a guideline for improving classroom instruction. Here are some key points for any teacher evaluation:

#### **Preparedness: Is the lesson material thoughtfully chosen and well prepared?**

A teacher's responsibility begins with preparation outside the classroom. It can be split into three key components: understanding of the material, clarity in the lesson plans and quality of the material presented.

When evaluating their understanding of the material, teachers should be rated on how knowledgeable they are on the topics they teach, as well as how familiar they are with content that may relate to their lessons.

If there are areas they are unsure of, they should be able to provide students with sources to find the answers to their questions.

Teachers must not only be in command of the material, but also have a cohesive way of presenting it. While improvisation certainly adds spontaneity and variety, it more often than not creates muddled and aimless periods. Questions like "Does the instructor provide an outline or goal for the day's lesson?" could be used to evaluate this area of teacher performance.

Finally, the quality of the course must be evaluated to ensure that it not only fulfills the curriculum but goes beyond it to illustrate the uses of the subject outside academia. By connecting the subject to something other than the next multiple choice test, teachers can show students the real point of education: application of the information learned.

#### **Presentation: Are the lessons fresh, interesting, and clear?**

A teacher's presentation of the material is just as important as his or her preparation of it. A well-presented lesson should keep students' attention and be smoothly paced, so that the material can be thoroughly explored and mastered.

While the lecture-orientated teaching style can be effective, it is not always suitable to different types of learners. Auditory learners, who learn best from listening to information, will thrive in a lecture environment. However, visual and tactile learners, who learn by seeing and doing respectively, will not receive the information as successfully. By varying the presentation of the material, in ways such as incorporating PowerPoint slides or encouraging active class participation in lessons, teachers can accommodate all types of students.

Similarly, teachers should be rated on their ability to pace the lessons. It is expected that different students will be at different levels in the class, yet teachers should not be teaching to the highest or lowest common denominators. Often, Stuyvesant hallways are filled with students commiserating with one another about "being lost" in a class: a clear indication that many teachers need to reevaluate the clarity and pacing of their instruction.

#### **Environment: Does the instructor promote an unbiased and accepting atmosphere?**

Classroom environment is vital in helping students absorb the information. A teacher's effectiveness is demonstrated by how well he or she commands the room. The teacher should be able to gain the trust and respect of his or her students, and should be able to focus attention without seeming tyrannical.

To achieve this, it is important to maintain fairness inside the classroom and to give everyone the same opportunities during class discussions. To assume that a student who does not understand, or even who misbehaves, will continue to do so all year is to give up on that student completely. Every class

should be started with a clean slate. This will create an encouraging atmosphere that will allow students to not fear making mistakes, thus allowing for greater improvement.

#### **Accessibility: Are students able to approach the instructor for further explanations?**

Teacher accessibility is another considerable concern for students. Teachers should provide students with an after class schedule (free periods, lunch, after school times) when they can meet one-on-one to further explain the day's lesson. Students often have many issues that they need to discuss with teachers, including class participation, exam scores, essay grades, missed work and future assignments. The best teachers, those who care more about a student's complete understanding of the material than his or her ability to memorize enough for the exam, are those who give up at least a portion of their professional or personal time to help students.

It is understandable that teachers will have obligations outside the classroom, and therefore, evaluating their accessibility will not be limited to how much time they have to help students. A teacher's open-mindedness and flexibility will be invaluable for these outside-of-class sessions.

The survey given to students would incorporate the same four point effectiveness breakdown and have multiple questions in each section, plus an accompanying free-response section to garner more personal input. The questions should be written by a committee of students and given to department heads to be reviewed. Students, when creating the survey, should keep in mind the different aspects of teacher competence that they want to evaluate, and department heads, when approving it, should keep in mind the language of the survey so as not to offend any teachers who read it.

To ensure that these evaluations are effective, we request the cooperation of both the administration in distributing them and the students in honestly answering survey questions. It is paramount for the students themselves to take these evaluations seriously. Students should put thought into their answers and not be ashamed of expressing any concerns they might have with their teachers, because ultimately all of the facts and figures would be used to benefit their education. Completed surveys would then be used by the assistant principals to assist in deciding tenure or simply to keep track of individual teacher progress. Additionally, it would be beneficial for administrators to look for trends in the data and schedule meetings with teachers to discuss the survey findings.

What the administration chooses to do with these evaluations is up to them, but we hope that teachers will be able to incorporate this student feedback when planning their next lessons.

If the people in power want tangible, quantifiable data, then that is what we will give them. It is time for the collective student voice to be heard.

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Ani Sefaj\*

MANAGING EDITOR  
Samira Siddique\*

NEWS EDITORS  
Maya Averbuch  
Chester Dubov\*  
Nicole Zhao

FEATURES EDITORS  
Hannah O'Grady  
Max Wycisk

OPINIONS EDITORS  
Shilpa Agrawal  
Christopher Natoli  
Varun Sharma

ARTS &  
ENTERTAINMENT  
EDITORS  
Sadie Bergen  
Emma Pollack  
Hyemin Yi

COPY EDITORS  
Samantha Levine  
Tong Niu

SPORTS EDITORS  
Scott Chiusano\*  
Eddie Cytryn\*

HUMOR EDITORS  
Chester Dubov\*  
Sam Furnival

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS  
Christina Bogdan  
Joann Lee  
Harry Poppick

ART DIRECTORS  
Nils Axen  
Emily Martin

LAYOUT EDITORS  
Shanna Chen  
Harry Ngai  
Vivian Sze\*

COPY EDITORS  
Karen Paik  
Mark Zhang

WEB EDITORS  
Jennifer Kuo  
Cameron Sun

FACULTY ADVISOR  
Kerry Garfinkel

Please address all letters to:  
345 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10282  
(212) 312-4800 ext. 2601  
[letters@stuyspectator.com](mailto:letters@stuyspectator.com)

We reserve the right to edit letters  
for clarity and length.  
© 2010 The Spectator  
All rights reserved by the creators.  
\*Managing Board Members

## The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of past issues.

We are looking for issues published before 1995.

Please send any newspapers to:

The Stuyvesant Spectator  
345 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10282

If you have any questions,  
e-mail us at:  
[archives@stuyspectator.com](mailto:archives@stuyspectator.com)

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

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

## FOR THE RECORD

- English teacher Annie Thoms' surname was misspelled in "Thoms Speaks on 'With Their Eyes.'"
- Sam Levine and Connor Justice were not credited for writing "Modern Physics Class Receives Grant."
- Val Gladstein's name was misspelled in the photo for "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Dumplings."

## In Defense of Democracy

By DANIEL SOLOMON

In today's hard economic times, it's become commonplace for people to talk of belt-tightening and fiscal discipline. Commentators rage on the airwaves about our collective loss of thrift, economists chide governments for excessive spending, and politicians praise the benefits of austerity. Meanwhile, the pundits go home to palatial apartments, the scholars luxuriate in their lavish offices, and the officials enjoy their taxpayer-subsidized perks. Their hypocrisy, however, doesn't stop them from demanding sacrifices from other Americans, particularly those not among the wealthy and well-connected. Indeed, their targets have been the middle-class and the working-class, the laborers and the union members, who they have depicted as leeches and have perversely portrayed as privileged.

Here in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo has joined the chorus of the callous. He has called for cuts in Medicaid, a one-year wage freeze on the salaries of state workers, and a renegotiation of benefits and pensions for civil servants. All the while, he refuses to consider an extension of a surcharge on the incomes of the wealthiest and shoots down tax hikes for Wall Street. The Governor is content to balance the budget on the backs of the vulnerable and the voiceless; he's proud to take on the "special interests," which he sees as the unions that represent the policemen, firefighters, teach-

ers, and railroad workers that keep this state running. Cuomo brandishes his beliefs as a badge of courage when people of his ilk should be branded with a scarlet letter. His actions aren't brave; they're just mean.

Contrary to popular perception and the lies of corporate-owned media, unionized workers are not rich and are not on the taxpayers' dole. Rather, they have accepted lower salaries to stay in the public sector in exchange for a dignified

**Cuomo  
brandishes his  
beliefs as a badge  
of courage when  
people of his ilk  
should be  
branded with a  
scarlet letter.**

retirement, flexible hours, and good health-care coverage. For years before they leave their jobs, they dutifully pay into the state pension system. Nevertheless, they can't account for what New York does with that money, whether it spends it to

cover general operating costs or invests it in the most imprudent way possible.

Cuomo and his conservative cohorts accuse civil servants of profiting from a generous system that doesn't exist in private enterprise. They are right. Most major corporations don't offer their employees quality, affordable health-care, and the majority have replaced pensions with lower-paying retirement accounts, but their workers still receive much higher direct compensation. Nevertheless, these private pension systems are a new development and an unfortunate consequence of an increasingly emboldened plutocracy that cares less and less about the people it exploits and a government that refuses to regulate the royalists of the economic order.

In the 1950s and 60s, at the height of welfare capitalism and in the heyday of the middle class, captains of industry truly believed that they owed something to the Americans who made the economy tick: employees from the board room to the mail room, everyone from the cleaning lady to the business lady, both the managers and the managed. And they acted on this conviction, providing for and treating their workers with respect. However, along the way something changed. Corporate citizenship gave way to corporate greed, social conscience yielded to Social Darwinism, and Washington replaced trust-busting with union-busting. Naturally, benefits evaporated and pensions were snatched away, fading



Mostafa Elmabdoly / The Spectator

into faint memories. Only in the public sector, where the unions clung to life, did vestiges of the old days remain. Miraculously, they have persisted for 30 years after the rise of Ronald Reagan and the soft form of classism that he embodied. In 2011, the organizations who won these rights face a mortal threat in a society so brainwashed by the democracy-destroying dollars of high finance that a party, which once campaigned for social justice, sends a leader to Albany who is complicit in economic injustice.

In the face of adversity, labor has to stand tall and press its case in the court of public opinion. Unions built this nation, won for the Western world's workers a square deal, and have stood in the vanguard of the fight for freedom across the globe. The labor movement plays an indispensable role in civil society and its destruction would pose a danger to the long-term survival of the

Republic. There are fundamentally two kinds of liberty: political self-determination and economic freedom. The government is the guarantor of the former, though it has failed to secure for most citizens the latter. That is the responsibility of civil society, to keep our leaders honest and provide a check on corporate power: to ensure that, in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, "equal opportunity in the polling place" is matched by "equal opportunity in the marketplace."

The fight over union benefits in this state isn't an isolated event. It's the opening salvo of another business-led government assault on working families, the middle class, and our very democracy. The battle lines are drawn and one can only hope that labor summons the strength to defend itself, to declare that shared sacrifice is not self-immolation, and to defeat the swarming hordes of hypocrites.

## We are the Web



Karen Zheng / The Spectator

By EDITH VILLAVICENCIO

You've been working all night, sacrificing precious sleep and, more importantly, social time, for the sake of one day's worth of homework. Just as you squeeze out the answer to your last math question, you remember you have a history essay due tomorrow. The idea of coming up with original thoughts at this point is beyond daunting, so after making a search on Google and scrolling through several pages, you find a few paragraphs that could pass as related to the topic you were assigned. A quick "copy and paste" and you are off to bed—after all, what's the chance that the anonymous writer is going to find out, much less your teacher?

In recent years, students have understandably begun to rely heavily on the Internet. Technology has made communicating and sharing ideas easier and more efficient. In addition, Web access enables us to enrich our understanding of topics in school. But along with the reward the Internet has paid to academia comes a certain degree of risk—plagiarism.

According to the New York Times Article, "Lines on Plagiarism Blur for Students in the Digital Age" (August 1, 2010), 40 percent of college undergraduates admit to copying and pasting sentences from the Internet into their work without giving credit to the source. There is no doubt that high school students do the same, especially

because they have yet to experience the consequences of their actions, and have much less to lose if caught.

Though most students know that plagiarism is wrong, in the midst of work, they forget about its deleterious effects. Copying someone else's work detracts from our learning and skill development, diminishing our own capabilities. As students at an academically prestigious high school, the repercussions of cheating will eventually catch up with our academic abilities and our consciences, even if we are never caught.

By enrolling in a New York City public school, all students at Stuyvesant have agreed to an honor code set by the Department of Education. But many teachers never speak directly about it, other than perhaps in an initial talk at the beginning of the term, causing students to forget about their ethical responsibilities. Though it is easy to pin the punishment for plagiarism on the student who committed it, it is important for teachers to be aware of the easiness of cheating, and act accordingly. Keeping academic honesty a priority in schools should be a collaborative effort.

Teachers should be aware that, despite our moral convictions, we do plagiarize. The Internet may have made it easier

to be dishonest, but it has also made checking for plagiarism convenient. Turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism Web site originally founded in 1996, is popular amongst teachers all over

**But along with  
the reward the  
Internet has  
paid to academia  
comes a certain  
degree of risk –  
plagiarism.**

the country. Students can submit their written assignments to a class page established by their teachers. Their articles are thoroughly filtered for plagiarized content using easily

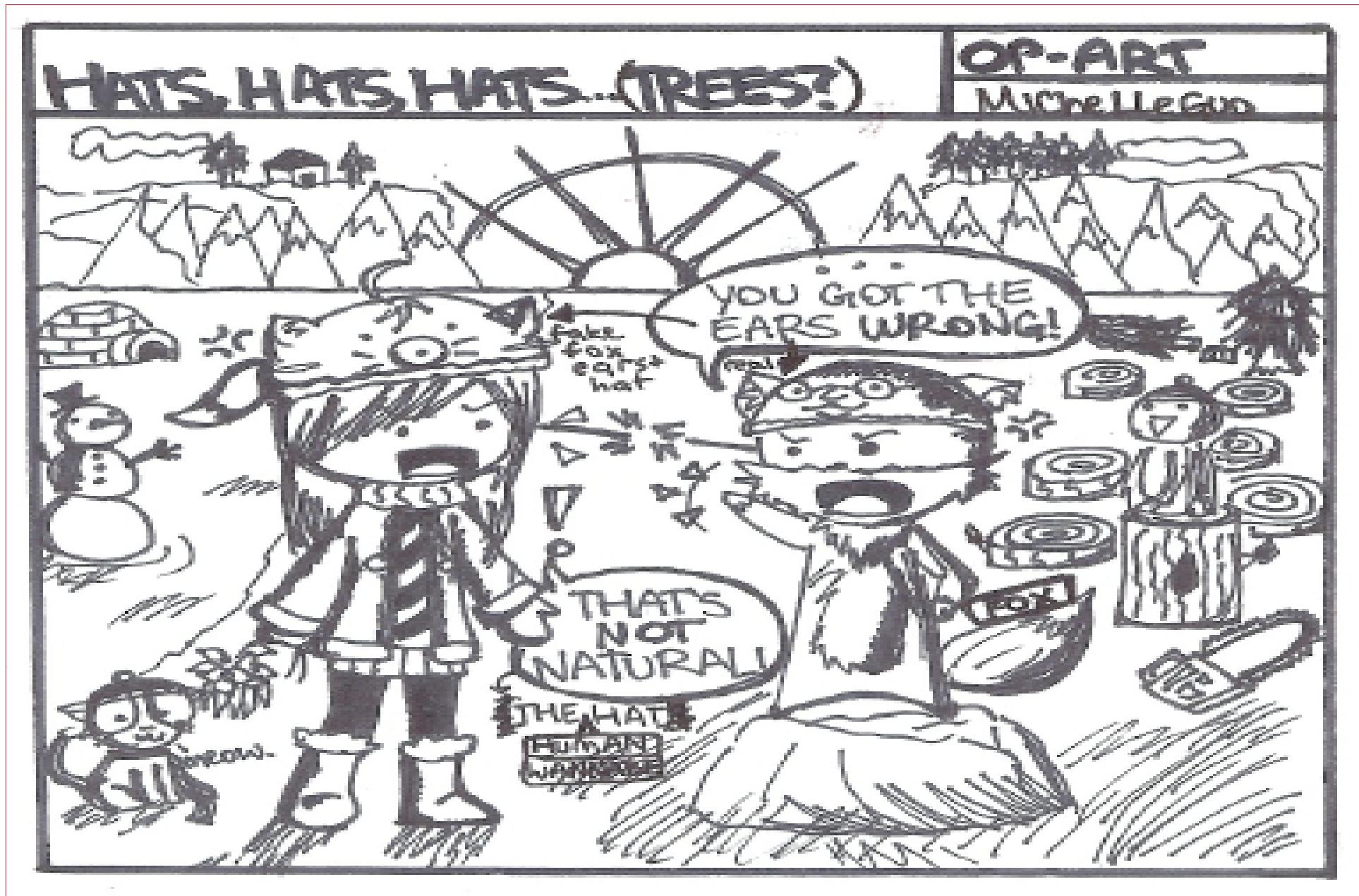
accessible Web pages and a database of previously submitted work, and are given back with a report of the supposed amount of plagiarism.

However, few teachers at Stuyvesant make use of this valuable resource. Consider a Stuyvesant in which plagiarism is guaranteed to be detected, no matter the subject or importance of the assignment. Kids at our school tend to care a lot about their futures, so it is unlikely that they would risk getting caught for something as serious as copying someone else's work. A mandatory widespread use of Turnitin.com would eliminate that as a possibility, upholding the reputation Stuyvesant has as a school with high standards for its students' work.

If plagiarism became more scrutinized, not only would the consequences seem more real to students, but their view of it from an ethical standpoint would be altered. By never putting forward work that was not their own, students would again realize their capability as writers and thinkers, and their chances of cheating in the future would decrease. The Internet has done its job to enhance cheating but made up for it by being able to prevent it. Now it is time for teachers to keep up.

# Opinions

## OP-ART



## Stuy Apparel by the Photo Department



# Opinions

## Ad Nauseam



By ANASTASSIA BOUGAKOVA

How would you like to walk up to your locker one day and find it covered by a poster of a sweating athlete downing a Vitamin Water? Vandalism, you say? Yet this kind of locker decoration is perfectly school-sanctioned. More and more schools have been approving the usage of lockers, tests, and permission slips as advertisement space for various corporations. The companies who pay for this space reach a pool of viewers who can't flip past their ads in a magazine or turn off the TV to get away from their commercials. Consequently, the participating school gets a nice sum of money. Everybody

**With the placement of concrete guidelines on in-school advertisement, it is possible for all the parties involved to profit.**

wins, supposedly.

This questionable marketing tactic was recently employed in St. Francis, Minnesota, where the school district approved the use of lockers as billboards. Corporations like Mall of America's "Underwater Adventures" aquarium, HealthPartners and the Dunwoody Institute installed ads in St. Francis High School and Cedar Creek Community School in mid-October. This venture is predicted to generate between 170,000 and 190,000 dollars for the district. The schools can certainly use the money, and it's not as if the ads are doing any overt harm to the students. And yet, I find something inherently wrong with being bombarded by advertisements in school. We see enough of them while walking along a street, in subway cars, on TV, on the Internet and in magazines. I just hope that nobody would try to break into our

homes and place Pepsi posters on our walls, which is exactly what this venture feels like. We spend almost as much time in school as we do at home, and having posters put up on our lockers feels invasive.

In-school advertising isn't only being conducted by entire school districts—teachers are getting into the market as well. One teacher in particular has been remarkably resourceful. Tom Farber, a California Calculus teacher, has been selling ad space on his tests to local businesses. A student of his might turn over a test paper to find an ad of a local tuxedo rental next to a problem about Taylor series. Farber charges 10 dollars for an ad on a quiz, 20 dollars for a chapter test, and 30 dollars for a semester final. As if there isn't enough pressure on students to concentrate during an exam, why not add an advertisement to distract and confuse them a little more?

Still, I can understand Farber's motivation and the motivation of teachers who are sure to follow his example. When teachers don't get enough money for basic supplies, they have to think creatively to gather that money, even if it puts their students' education at risk. While Farber should be praised for his ingenuity, he may have started a trend that will turn the school system into an entirely new, corrupt market for advertising companies. He may be helping the students learn with better supplies, but he is hindering the learning process with invasive ads.

However, teachers like Farber who are taking on these projects alone, not as part of a district system, should examine their options before turning to such quick money-making schemes. The non-profit organization, Donorschoose, may be a good way to get those supplies without the aid of local businesses. The program connects teachers in need of funding for supplies or special projects with donors, mediating the process of getting the money from point A to point B, as well as making sure that the donors receive feedback from the class they helped. In utilizing this program, both sides win, without any students having to pay the price of their education.

As an intern at Donorschoose, I see hundreds of cases of teachers asking for the most basic supplies. There have been requests for donations of copy paper, pencils, and workbooks. It's sad to see how little attention and funding certain schools receive, and after all, the teachers are only trying to help their students. I just wish they focused on helping in ways that didn't involve juxtaposing a tuxedo rental with a math problem.

While advertisements placed on lockers and exams have been more prevalent in high schools, elementary and middle schools have been thrust into this new market as well. Teachers are now sending kids home with permission slips that double as advertisements. Though this may be an annoying way to catch the parents' attention, I don't entirely disapprove of it. After all, schools have to make money

somehow, and this method is much less harmful than decorating entire hallways with posters of spokespeople for a particular product.

However, all critics of these new marketing techniques need to understand that schools need money now more than ever, and a school administration can't always turn down morally questionable opportunities like these. The money garnered from them could help save a drama club, an a cappella group, or a slew of eliminated electives, such as Stuyvesant's recently dropped Sophomore Writing Seminar, French Literature, and American Foreign Policy. But we should know where to draw the line. First of all, teachers must understand that placing advertisements between the pages of a test is unacceptable. And in return, students may have to reconcile themselves with seeing a few posters put up around the school, as long as they do not cover students' lockers. Also, it must be noted that younger

**I just wish they focused on helping in ways that didn't involve juxtaposing a tuxedo rental with a math problem**

children are much more susceptible to ad campaigns than high school students, and even ads placed on the backs of permission slips should be kept to a minimum and should only target parents. With the placement of concrete guidelines on in-school advertisement, it is possible for all the parties involved to profit with little harm.

We have to face the fact that marketing strategies have gradually infiltrated various aspects of our daily lives, and we can now find ads where we would have never dreamt of seeing them before. Once upon a time, people might have been scandalized to find their inbox overflowing with email ads, or their desktop covered in rapidly multiplying pop-ups. Now, we've accepted the practice as part of our daily, online existence. Perhaps, it's time to realize that marketers won't stop until they've explored every advertising opportunity, including schools. However, instead of establishing pop-up ads in exams as the norm, teachers, school administrations, and students must keep a watchful eye over marketing companies, and have the ability to turn away from easy money and say when enough is enough.

## Exception to Exceptionalism



By JAKE SIDRANSKY

In the past ten years, our nation has endured attacks on our soil, two wars, multiple economic downturns and an ever-tense political climate. We watched helplessly as the United States gradually lost its grip on world affairs, forced to share its wealth and responsibilities with other nations. This decade of decline culminated in the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which the United States ranked 30th in math, 23rd in sciences and 17th in reading. China, our greatest economic and political competitor, ranked first in every category. Evidently, we are not only struggling to keep pace with the rest of the world in the present, but also failing to prepare ourselves to do so in the future.

As we contemplate the problems facing our educational system, we must consider how we arrived in such a predicament in the first place. For a nation that has always prided itself on being the best, we seem to be content with settling for mediocrity. Our first priority should be to raise our expectations for our students. Rather than focusing on enriching the learning of more gifted students, the majority of schools teach the same low-level curriculum. While every child deserves a quality education, we have done a great disservice to our nation's most gifted students by grouping them with average and below average students and teaching at a level far below their ability. As the United States stifles the potential of its best and brightest students, much of the world, including China, employs stratified educational methods that provide adequate education for all students but ensures exemplary schooling for the most gifted students. Students are tested early on and separated based on their performance. This allows the strongest students to benefit from a more intellectual environment and provides average students with realistic career paths in the future.

It is fairly obvious that the New York City school system is a rare example of a stratified educational system in the United States, although systems such as ours used to be the norm across much of the country. Over the last few decades, the modern educational model, in which all students are treated equally, has been replaced since the latter was consid-

ered elitist and controversial. China employs a high school application system very similar to that of the specialized high schools, but on a much larger scale. Students take an examination called the "Zhongkao" and are subsequently placed in their most preferred school that they are accepted to. Students with lower scores are directed towards vocational schools, which replace academic education with lessons in the skills required to perform a particular job. Finland, Canada, and Japan, all of which

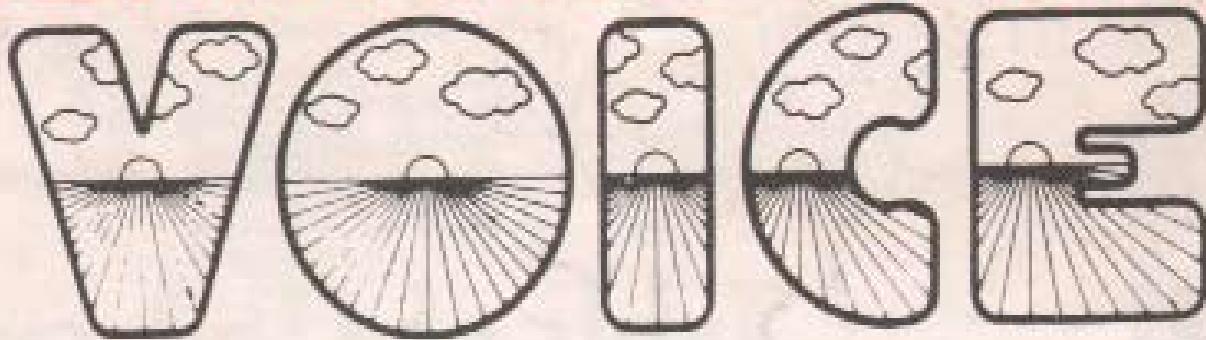
**We are not only struggling to keep pace with the world in the present, but also failing to prepare ourselves to do so in the future.**

outscored the United States on the PISA examinations, use this type of system, yet it is virtually non-existent in here. A similar educational approach would benefit the United States immensely. It would improve the academic performance of students in traditional schools by surrounding them with their intellectual peers and raising expectations. Additionally, public vocational schooling would provide our nation with the means to rebuild our antiquated and crumbling infrastructure and increase our involvement in developing markets such as clean energy and agricultural science. If we fail to adopt such a system, we will continue to find ourselves both intellectually and technologically outmatched.

The PISA examinations mark a watershed moment in our nation's history. Their significance is undeniable, as is the need for a solution to our education problem. This problem is a matter of national importance, and must be treated as such if we hope to rise above mediocrity and provide every student with a quality education that realistically meets their intellectual needs in order to protect our country's future.

*From the Archives:*  
**From the Voice of September 1982**

# FABBRICANTE RESIGNS



SUPPLEMENT

TWENTYFIVE CENTS

SEPTEMBER 1982

# Teacher Evaluation Survey

## The Questions

- 1) How interesting does the teacher make the subject? Some ways to generate interest are innovating, communicating the importance of the subject, showing enthusiasm, and discussing applications of the syllabus.
- 2) Evaluate the homework. Consider how helpful it was to your understanding of the subject, and how interesting it was.
- 3) How well does the teacher know the subject and is this knowledge relayed to the class?
- 4) Responsiveness to individual students: how willing is the teacher to spend time in or out of class to help individuals?
- 5) To what extent does the teacher treat the students with respect?
- 6) How well does the final mark given you by the teacher reflect the amount of work you put into the course, your class participation, and your knowledge of the subject?
- 7) Evaluate the teacher's influence on the classroom atmosphere. Is class participation encouraged? Is the class a pleasant and comfortable experience? Is there a feeling of mutual respect? Is the class relaxed?
- 8) What overall rating do you give the teacher? Include the above aspects and any others you think are important.
- 9) What mark did the teacher give you?

## The Results Inside...

ADVERTISEMENT

# Want to get into Harvard?

**Grades, extracurriculars, and awards aren't enough.**



**You need the perfect application.**

## First, why do you need help?

Chances are, you've already spent 100s of hours in activities and \$1000s of dollars on tutoring. You've got decent grades and scores.

### BIG DEAL.

So do 20,000 other students in the country.

**How are you going to separate yourself from them?**

It happens every year, at Stuyvesant and across the country. Students write **mediocre applications** that get tossed into the **Reject pile** after thirty seconds. Four years of work - wasted.

**DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU.**

## Why choose us?

In 2009-2010, editors of Ivy Writing helped applicants get into the following schools (and many more not listed here):

### Undergraduate

- Harvard
- Princeton
- Stanford
- Yale
- MIT
- Penn
- Brown
- Caltech
- Cornell
- Columbia
- Dartmouth
- Duke
- Northwestern
- UC Berkeley/UCLA

### MBA

- UPenn-Wharton
- U Chicago-Booth
- MIT-Sloan
- Harvard Business School

### Law School

- Yale
- Harvard
- Columbia
- U Chicago
- NYU

### Medical School

- Harvard Medical School
- Johns Hopkins
- Wash U in St Louis

## What our clients say:

"I started off not really knowing what to write or what schools wanted to see. My editor Nick, a Harvard PhD, took my rough ideas and gave me **crystal clear direction**. We created a fun, unique Common App essay together."

I next worked with him on supplementals for 12 schools. I got into my top choice, and others. Definitely could not have done it without Ivy Writing."

-T. Kim, Stanford 2014  
Los Angeles

"Ivy Writing made me feel like I had a direct conversation with the **Dean of Admissions**. Some things I thought they wanted to see were absolutely wrong, and Ivy guided me in a **new, unexpected direction**.

It's now obvious to me how my first draft would land me in the reject pile, and why my final application got me **my success**."

-Jerry L., Princeton 2014  
Boston



## Who is Ivy Writing?

All our editors are from the Ivy League - most from Harvard.

We know what the perfect application is, because we've written them ourselves.



### Founder of Ivy Writing

**Allen Cheng** attended Arcadia High School, where he earned a full SAT score and 5's on 13 AP exams. He represented the United States at the International Chemistry Olympiad. Most importantly, his passion for writing and crafting the perfect application got him into **EVERY college he applied to**, including Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and MIT.

Allen entered Harvard College in 2005 with a full scholarship. In four years, he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemistry, graduating *summa cum laude* (top 5% of his class), Phi Beta Kappa, and as one of **America's Top 20 College Students** in USA Today's All-USA Academic Team.

He repeated his success when he earned admission to MD-PhD programs in the nation's top medical schools. He is now completing his MD-PhD at Harvard Medical School with a full scholarship.

### Our Team of Editors

The editors are a first-rate group from the top universities in the United States. **Most are current or former students of Harvard University**. They are selected through a competitive application process for their specific expertise and consulting ability. Having gained admission to the most competitive institutions, the editors are experts in undergraduate and graduate admissions.

**Whether your interests are in science, medicine, writing, law, business, or I-don't-know-yet, we have an editor who understands you perfectly.**

# Arts and Entertainment

## Over 100 Years of the Record

By BEN VANDEN HEUVEL

The record industry has spanned over one hundred years and sold over four million recorded songs for nearly a trillion dollars in revenue. Beginning with 78 rpm vinyl records pressed by Columbia Records and the Victor Talking Machine Company at the start of the 20th century, the business has transformed through the decades. To follow the journey of the music industry to the digital music world of today, we must look back to its beginning, the phonograph of Thomas Edison.



### 1900-1930: Edison's Phonograph and the First Recordings

With the 1877 invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison, music was able to expand its influence from concert stages to shop parlors. It was around 1900 that companies like Columbia and Victor began recording popular hits of the day, such as ragtime composer Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer," and George M. Cohan's "Give my Regards to Broadway," for commercial sale. However, these original recordings could not be mass produced.

A decade later, a solution presented itself in the form of polyvinyl-chloride records. Created by German inventor Emile Berliner, these high-quality records mass produced popular hits such as Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band." America was awestruck as its favorite tunes blared out of shop windows.

Fifteen years later, the Orthophonic phonograph further improved upon the quality of the music. American Composer John Philip Sousa, famous at the time for his marching band music, said at the premier of the invention, "This is the first time I have ever heard music with any soul to it produced by a machine."

### 1930-1970: The Home Becomes the Concert Hall

The age of swing and jazz was also the beginning of the presence of music in American households. Recording Company of America (RCA) launched the compact 33 1/3 rpm records, which can be played on smaller phonographs, and soon after, the 45rpm single records, which provided a more efficient medium to record single tracks. By the '40s, with the rise of jazz band and be-bop came the mass distribution of records for home use. The music industry, now a multi-million dollar business, distributed the music of popular swing, jazz band and be-bop artists like Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Artie Shaw and Cab Calloway.

The growing recording industry helped promote the popularity of artists such as Elvis Presley, Hank Williams and Johnny Cash during the '50s. By 1961, the production of 78 rpm completely ceased, and the world's record industry began to see sales numbers into the billions, fueled by an explosion of popular bands, notably The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

## Not Your Average Movie Theaters

By EMRE TETIK  
and JOSHUA BOGATIN

If you ask the average moviegoer what he'll be seeing over the weekend, nine out of ten times his answer will be a generic mainstream film that, while offering a cheap thrill, does little to raise the bar or exceed the already low standards held for movies today. It is unlikely for one to mention a film's artistic merit or historical significance, even though there

price of five dollars a ticket. MOMA holds film exhibits on a certain theme that play over a period of several weeks, during which works of a common director, time period, or artistic movement are screened.

They are currently hosting a film exhibit that covers the works of prolific and acclaimed Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci. Creating masterful works that span the last five decades, he is well known for his intimate, and often controversial, exploration of emotionally charged erotic relationships.

Passion, romance, and catharsis are often the themes that find their way into Bertolucci's most famous movies, such as "Last Tango in Paris" (1972) and "The Dreamers" (2003), although his large and diverse body of work exhibits his ability to tackle a number of topics. In "The Conformist" (1970) he deals with the human need to conform in a fascist society; in the award-winning "The Last Emperor" (1987), he recounts the life of Chinese emperor Puyi; and in "Little Buddha" (1994), he dramatizes Buddhist messages and ideologies. Also noted for his breathtaking visual style, his films are often lush and dramatic in color scheme.

Another haven for good movies is the Film Forum. Located downtown at 209 West Houston Street, Film Forum specializes in the obscure and is the perfect place to go for those looking for movies outside the norm.

The theater has three movie screens with at least one constantly reeling classics while the other two run movies that are rarely seen outside of Film Forum if at all. Unlike other theaters, Film Forum is non-profit, which allows it to pick movies based on their quality instead of how much money they'll rake in. The occasionally outlandish yet pleasant selection of movies provide an entertaining experience and the means to experiment with movies that you won't be able to see elsewhere.

For those searching for more reasons to fall in love with the Film Forum look no further than the upcoming

Fritz Lang program that the theater will start running at the end of January. The program focuses on movies that the German director made in America and encompasses a wide array of classic movies that any film enthusiast can appreciate. The movies are mostly from the 40's and 50's and, while at first glance seeming dated, provide a breath of fresh air. Lang focuses on substance over style and allows the story and actors to play out instead of emphasizing fancy camerawork.

One of his must-sees is "Manhunt" (1941), which is set in WWII and follows a hunter who goes after the biggest game of all, the Fuehrer himself. The movie will be playing on February 4th and 5th in a two for one double feature with "Ministry Of Fear" (1944), a thriller about a man who is mistaken for a WWII spy. Other acclaimed works include "The

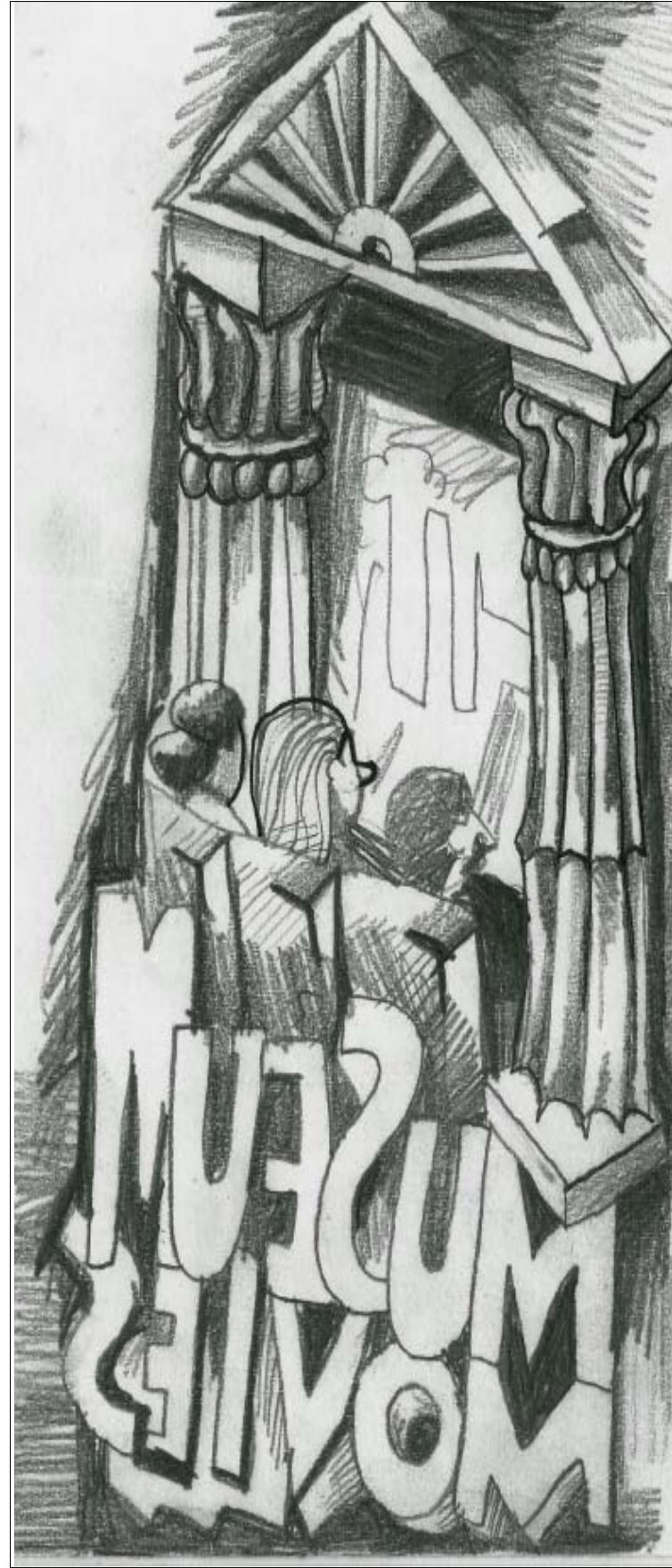
**The occasionally outlandish yet pleasant selection of movies provides an entertaining experience and the means to experiment with movies that you won't be able to see elsewhere.**

**There are many theaters in New York that play revivals of old gems obscure to the mainstream eye.**

"Big Heat" (1953), a detective movie that's become one of the staples of the American noir genre; "Rancho Notorious" (1952), a brutal revenge fantasy set in the Wild West; and "Secret Beyond The Door" (1948), a psychological thriller/melodrama about a woman who may be married to a serial killer.

Moviegoers these days

are many theaters in New York that play revivals of old gems obscure to the mainstream eye. One such place is the Museum of Modern Art, or MOMA, located at 11 East 53rd Street. Besides providing New Yorkers with its striking art collection, its independent theater offers movie buffs a diverse collection of films that range from silent European classics from the 1920s to more recent art-house movies, at the cheap



should stray from growing too dependent on contemporary films. For those seeking a more meaningful movie experience, the Film Forum and MOMA are just two of the many theaters in New York City that play classic movies.

# Arts and Entertainment

## Industry: From Phonograph to MP3

### 1970-1990: Music on the Go

In 1978, music was made portable, and therefore, more accessible. Sony Corporation improved upon the 1972 Philips Laserdiscs and created the Compact Disc, or CD. It boasted better sound quality and a smaller size, which was more convenient than the vinyls had been. Though it was at first slow to catch on—the music of major '70s artists such as Bob Dylan, Elton John, and Michael Jackson, was still distributed on vinyls—the CD's popularity skyrocketed in the 80s. Its small size and large storage capacity was hugely popular with consumers, soon replacing vinyl altogether. During the 90s, the CD-dominated music industry reached \$38.6 billion in worldwide revenue, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. At the same time, scientists at AT&T-Bell Labs were working on an even bigger invention: the mp3.

### 2000: Birth of the mp3

The creation of the mp3 file format made digital music a not so distant dream. By 2000, digital downloads of music became widespread, starting with mass file-sharing networks such as Napster. Even after these sites were shut down due to copyright infringement claims, legal music download sites such as iTunes blossomed. It had sold 6 billion downloads by 2008, while similar music download sites continued to emerge. The digital industry steadily grew, quickly rivaling the sale of physical records.

### 2010 and the Future

Despite the rapid growth of online music distribution—Apple Marketing Vice President Phil Schiller announced iTunes has sold 10 billion downloads since its launch in 2003—no one could have foreseen the pitfalls of this digital age. While online profits have increased—Forrester Research predicts digital sales will overtake the sale of physical recordings by 2012—so has the rate of piracy. In fact, Forrester Research expects music revenue to drop to as low as \$9.2 billion by 2013, less than a third of the size of the industry of 2010. For a century, the music industry has grown and flourished with the breakthroughs of many brilliant minds. But now, the music industry is marred by the product of its own brilliant advancements and lies on the brink of danger. We can only hope that the same brilliant minds who helped music evolve into a multi-billion dollar industry can solve the problems that threaten the industry and preserve the wonderful music we so enjoy.

## Video Games: Leaders of a New Art Age



By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

The elegance as one slides a brush in a decisive stroke, the sheer clarity as one manipulates the ink – these skills produce a beautiful black and white illustration. But this creation is not on the typical parchment or paper, but rather, on digitally colored pixels on a screen. These brush strokes form the crux of the game "Okami," where the player uses a controller to create calligraphy.

As contemporary art evolves,

it branches off into many genres, including the world of video games. Though seemingly for entertainment purposes only, video games are a genuine art form, born from personal expression and creative impulse, much like murals, ballet or poetry.

Most video games fall under one of two categories: those with engaging graphics that enhance game play, and those that encourage artistic expression. The first employs detailed scenery, action and characters, providing an artistic environment to the game's

goals. The second category, while often not as complex in design, serves as a medium for the player's own artistic development.

Artistic graphics can be seen in games like "Shadow of the Colossus," where intricate animation provides for engaging game play. This action-adventure installment involves a man attempting to kill sixteen gargantuan colossi. The appeal of the game lies in the thrilling presentation of the massive colossi, towering over the player, hundreds of times his size. They are machina-

tions – endowed with thick black fur and stone armor acting as impenetrable shields – stomping

**These games may not reflect a complex beauty in their design, but serve as a medium for artistic development.**

around the otherwise silent surroundings. The player must scale the beasts, figure out their weaknesses and destroy them. As players climb the thrashing colossi, they can marvel at the design of the creature from every angle.

Similarly, graphic design is interwoven with game play in "The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion." Players experience a fictional, medieval world, whose storyline they determine. The art lies in the rendering of the landscape and architecture in the game, most notably through the stained-glass churches and straw-roofed manors. The lure of these single player role-playing games is the false reality they create through realistic animation and heart-pounding action. Without the pictorial graphics, the games would lose the appeal that allows gamers to play for hours.

The second category of gaming uses the thrill of competition to encourage artistic expression. Like the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu, players of "Okami" must utilize calligraphy strokes, with the controller as a brush, to cut down trees, reconstruct broken bridges and revitalize dead land with thriving flora. To do so, players draw a certain pattern onto the screen. The precision and control required to activate these commands mirror the difficulty in creating real calligraphy.

In addition to pictographic design, some games involve music and dance. The classic game "Dance Dance Revolution" allow players to express themselves through body movement. In the game, players must hit (with their hands or feet, depending on the version of the game) certain arrows, following the rhythm of a song. The goal of pressing each of the arrows at the right time drives the players to dance to the music, teaching them to recognize and synchronize with the beat. Players can also physically express their creativity through crazy arm motions.

Whether you're toppling giant monsters, invigorating nature through the stroke of a brush, or whipping your hair back and forth during fast paced footwork, video games can be classified as art for their creativity and expressive storytelling. Just as it took a while for contemporary art to catch on, so it will take a while for video games to be accepted

**Though seemingly for entertainment purposes only, video games are a genuine art form, born from personal expression and creative impulse, much like murals, ballets or poetry.**

as an art form. Its electronic medium is certainly unorthodox, but these virtual games reflect a new and changing age in art.

# Arts and Entertainment

## Past the Pixels: The Boundless Realm of Videogame Soundtracks

By JAMES KOGAN  
and NINA WADE

The video game is still a largely evolving, creative medium. Dating back to some of the earliest games, soundtracks have been essential to game play and help promote composers who are now recognized by the legacy of their music. The still memorable themes of "Tetris" and "Super Mario Bros" dem-

**Tying into the movie's association with rock bands, a creative and slamdance worthy soundtrack was a must.**

onstrate their cultural imprint. Today, skillfully composed and produced soundtracks continue to enrich the gaming experience. Here are a few noteworthy ones:

**"The World Ends with You"**  
(Nintendo DS)

Although this is yet another

role-playing game by Final Fantasy creator Square Enix, it is radically different from the previous games. Instead of journeys through fantasy-based landscapes, "The World Ends with You" sends the protagonist through the many layers of Japan's teenage culture. It focuses heavily on fashion, food and music, as well as teenage angst and friendships. The soundtrack follows these themes as well, sounding more like a selection of Top Tracks rather than a video game score. Ranging in sound from Japanese electronica and dance to hip-hop and rock, the music includes full lyrics, featuring the work of many Japanese artists. The credits' ballad, "Lullaby for You," by Japanese pop singer Jyongri, captures the tear-jerking close to this emotion-driven game.

**"Scott Pilgrim Vs. the World"**  
(XBOX 360, PS3)

Based on the recently released movie, "Scott Pilgrim Vs. the World," this game's objectives include navigating linear levels and fighting everyone in your path in order to save the love of your life, American Amazon.ca delivery girl, Ramona Flowers. Tying into the movie's association with rock bands, a creative and slamdance-worthy soundtrack was a must. Written by Anamanaguchi, a NYC chiptune band that composes music with the help of Nintendo 64s and Gameboys, the driven and nostalgically retro-sounding collection of

songs exhilarates the game play of this action-packed "beat 'em up" game. While brooding and eerie during the fights against the bosses, the score maintains an upbeat rock theme while capturing the essential pixelated nerd feel that the game stays true to.

**"Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney"** (Game Boy Advance)

The Ace Attorney game series, titled "Gyakuten Saiban" in Japanese, is a collection of ultra-suspenseful videogames that revolve around your character, a detective, and his interactions in the courtroom and with related witnesses. Complementing the games is a collection of deft compositions, each with its cue in the storyline. Five albums have been released with each of the game's soundtracks. However, some of the more interesting musical variations to look out for are the "Gyakuten Meets Jazz Soul" album, a collection of beautiful interpretations of the score performed by the Taiwanese Metamorphosis Jazztet. Featuring romantic dark-coffee ballads and precise trumpet and sax jams, the soundtrack sets the stage for the Noir-film tension that the games present. Another album, "Gyakuten Meets Orchestra," showcases magnificent symphonic arrangements, featuring the Nintendo-recruited Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra breathing a grand volume into the video game's original layered 8-bit compositions.



tion of pre-2000's culture into the current skater-punk scene.

**"The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker"** (Nintendo Gamecube)

A collection of games loved by many aspiring skateboarders and normal folk alike, the Tony Hawk skating games were an installment that constantly featured underground punk rock and hardcore bands, opening them to a larger public. Soundtracks like these weaned angry tweens on small doses of rebellion and punk culture. The "American Wasteland" soundtrack album is a unique pick of the songs from the game, specifically emphasizing old-school punk songs covered by new-school bands. Featuring artists like Rise Against covering Black Flag and Thrice covering Minor Threat, the result was the game's injection of pre-2000's culture into the current skater-punk scene.

## Moving Past the Frames



The projector for Andy Warhol's "Moving Images" exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

By OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

Truth be told, a trip to the museum can be boring at times. There are only so many antiques, paintings and artifacts that the average brain wishes to absorb. Fortunately, the new exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) transcends the norm by providing a unique take on films. Boasting a variety of subjects, such as seductive women, hair-covered faces and two men kissing, Andy Warhol's "Moving Images" exhibit captures viewers through beautiful black and white motion films.

Andy Warhol, known for popularizing the pop culture movement in the late 1950s through his famous Marilyn Monroe prints, also dabbled in the art of the motion picture. His collection, on display at the MoMA until March 21, includes brief black and white portraits that replay prerecorded films of everyday people.

The display begins with a brief biography of Warhol's life and then transitions into a dozen of his acclaimed works. The images are presented neatly in a row, one after another, adding a subtle uniform element to an otherwise unpredictable gallery. Each image builds on the 1960s avant-garde scene, pushing the boundaries of

what is accepted as the norm. The gallery leads to a cozy 50-seat theater, and the most provocative of Warhol's nearly 500 silent black and white films, where one can watch different couples vigorously make-out.

"Kiss," Warhol's 54 minute anthology of kissing couples, is his most notable work and plays continuously at the exhibit every other Friday. The film rotates couples, exhibiting the various kinds of romance and interpretations of passion, whether it is hesitant or raunchy. Another notable work, out of the 13 currently on display, is of actress Kyoko Kishiday, who smiles vibrantly. Warhol catches his models in the midst of their daily lives, as seen by Susan Sontag's casual teeth brushing. Warhol splendidly captures the magic and allure in each of his subjects' faces and fascinates viewers through his simplistic stance on art.

The exhibit, while short, does an excellent job of presenting a less popular aspect of Warhol's many contributions to art. It is worthwhile for both diehard Warhol enthusiasts and those who can appreciate thought-churning, eye candy. And while you're there, feel free to check out Warhol's other works on the fourth floor—it may just make you "pop" with pleasure.

## ADVERTISEMENTS



**BROOKLYN DENTIST**  
**DR. JEFFREY TENENBAUM**

(DDS)

Open Weekends Till 11 PM

**WE ACCEPT ALL TYPES OF INSURANCE**

**AND MEDICAID**

53 Church Avenue (Near McDonald Ave)

Telephone: 718 871- 4440

NEW YORK  
**LIVING**  
SOLUTIONS

**MICHAEL M. CHAN**  
LICENSED REAL ESTATE AGENT

T 212 227 0021

F 212 227 1120

C 718 702 5946

MCHAN@NYLS.NET

WWW.NYLIVINGSOLUTIONS.COM

DOWNTOWN OFFICE

100 JOHN STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10038

ADVERTISEMENT

# It's only \$2 to read an essay that crashed the gates of the Ivy Leagues.

*Buy one in the next  
week and get entered  
to win a FREE iPad!*



This is a way to figure out how people with your demographic and academic credentials structured and approached their essay writing process and successfully stormed the gates of **America's best colleges**.

→ The Essay Exchange

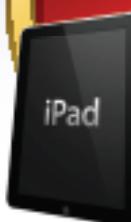
**All of the essays are  
successful essays from  
America's top colleges.**

Founded by Harvard Business School and  
Harvard Kennedy School graduates.

**HURRY**

For a limited time,  
get entered to win a

**FREE  
iPad.**



**WWW.ESSAYEXCHANGE.ORG**

# Sports

## SPORTS CALENDAR

**Friday, January 21**

**Boys' Basketball**  
Runnin' Rebels  
vs.  
Washington Irving HS  
  
4:30 pm  
3rd Floor Gym

**Tuesday, February 1**

**Girls' Gymnastics**  
Felines  
vs.  
Bronx HS of Science  
  
4:45 pm  
3rd Floor Gym

**Wednesday, February 2**

**Boys' Gymnastics**  
Lemurs  
vs.  
Fiorello H. Laguardia HS  
  
4:30 pm  
3rd Floor Gym

**Friday, February 4**

**Boys' JV Basketball**  
Runnin' Rebels  
vs.  
West 50th Street Campus  
HS  
  
4:30 pm  
6th Floor Gym

**Saturday, February 12**

**Boys' Indoor Track**  
Manhattan Borough  
Championships  
1:30 pm  
Armory on 168th Street  
  
**Girls' Indoor Track**  
Manhattan Borough  
Championships  
1:30 pm  
Armory on 168th Street

### ADVERTISEMENTS

**HIGH IMPACT  
LOW STRESS**

**TUTORING**

NEW YORK ACADEMICS



We are experienced, and enthusiastic educators who help students with:

- **Math • Physics • Chemistry**
- **Biology • English • History**
- **SAT Prep • SAT Subject Tests • AP Exams**

Mention this ad and get \$15 off your first lesson!

[www.tutornewyorkcity.com](http://www.tutornewyorkcity.com) (347)526-1842 [tutor@tutornewyorkcity.com](mailto:tutor@tutornewyorkcity.com)

**FREE ESTIMATE**



**New York General Construction**

General Contractor

WATERPROOFING  
ROOFING (ALL TYPES)  
INTERIOR RENNOVATION  
PAINTING, TILING

CARPENTRY  
SIDEWALK  
BRICK WORK  
STUCCO

**WE DO ALL KINDS OF EXTERIOR AND  
INTERIOR WORK**

**TELEPHONE: 718 785 -7802**

**EDUCAID**

**EXPERT PRIVATE  
TUTORING**

AT YOUR HOME - 7 DAYS / YEAR ROUND



DON'T JUST  
TAKE EXAMS  
- ACE THEM!

- Talented, patient, Ivy League tutors who want YOU to succeed !
- All Subjects / Exams : Regents / SAT -1 / SAT -2 / AP / IB
- Algebra / Geometry / Trig / Pre-Calc / Calc / Linear Algebra
- Computer Science / Statistics
- Biology / Chemistry / Physics
- Spanish / French / Italian & more
- English, (Grammar, Essays, Literature)
- History

**(212) 766-5002**

**(718) 747-0173**

[www.EducaidTutoring.com](http://www.EducaidTutoring.com)

# Sports

## Boys' Wrestling

### Stuyvesant Spartans: Cutting Weight... Cutting Loses

*continued from page 20*

"With matches on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays are the only days you can eat normally during the season," senior Bing Wang said. "The biggest weight cut on the team was by senior Andrew Kim. In order to make weight, he cut 11 pounds in one day. He went from 163 to 152."

In many cases, the weight cut is necessary: "The way our lineup works, everyone has a weight class they should be wrestling in. All of us have to make that weight class or else we're doubling up in some cases, and giving up forfeits in other weight classes," said Boccio.

When some of the losses are by less than six points, one forfeit could make the difference between a win and a loss. In addition, cutting weight has its advantages: by shedding the water stored in your body, you can compete with smaller wrestlers, where you will have more strength per pound. "Sometimes, [cutting weight] even helps with my cardio, because it forces me to run on the treadmill or go on the bike, so I am better prepared for the match," said Shah.

Cutting water weight, however, has its health risks, which include dehydration, impaired muscle recovery, cardiac complications and, in some cases, even death. "It takes some of the fun out of wrestling,"

Murray said. "At this academic environment, [cutting weight] does take something out of you, so I try to encourage my wrestlers not to try to lose large amounts."

Some members of the Spartans admitted to having used vinyl suits, and garbage bag shirts, which make one sweat faster. Such apparel is now banned for student safety. On the Spartans, there have been no health problems as of yet. "Every person cutting weight has experience doing it. They already know how to cut weight, how much weight they can cut and still feel okay and how much it is going to affect them in their match," said Shah.

Despite the dangers and hardships of cutting weight, the Spartans finished off their most successful season yet with the match against New Drop. They will advance to the playoffs as the second place team in their division for the first time in the team's history to face Midwood High School. With the hard work and strong leadership that has brought them this far, the Spartans look to go far. "We had a tough start, but I have to say, I am really pleased with how this season has turned out," said Murray. "We are doing well, but we have to really push these last three or four weeks here."

## Boys' Swimming

### Greyducks Shrug Off Championship Hangover

*continued from page 20*

and co-captains Andy Chen and Billy Barnes, and junior co-captain Konrad Surkont, to relax for the remainder of the year. But doing the easy thing is not what city champions do.

This is not to say that the Greyducks did not have their time of celebration. "Coach [Mark Mendes] said we had city championship's hangover because we were getting off to a slow start," Barnes said. "We might not have been practicing as hard or taking things as seriously at the beginning of the season."

However, much to the captains' delight, the Greyducks have been able to turn their season around. "Now, as the season gets into full swing, we have been going a lot harder. We are reaching top form right now," Barnes said.

The stats back him up. On Monday, January 17, the Greyducks returned to winning form by defeating their rival, Bronx Science High School, in the Distance Medley 4000 meter varsity relay at the PSAL Martin Luther King Relays.

The Greyducks' top relay team consisting of Barnes, Surkont, sophomore Jack Stevenson and junior Genghis Chau finished in 10 minutes and 47 seconds, five seconds ahead of Bronx Science's top relay team.

In addition to their success in team events, the Greyducks have received great individual efforts throughout the season. Runners such as juniors Eric Chen and Mark Schramm are

having their best seasons since joining the team. "[Chen] likes running the 50 [meter race] and the 100 [meter race], but [Mendes] wants him to be a 400 [meter] runner," Barnes said.

Though Eric Chen did not break 60 seconds in the 400 meter run at the Jim McKay Memorial Invitational, he ran a sub-60 second time in his leg of the 1600 meter sprint medley at the Martin Luther King Relays.

One of the things that makes indoor track so difficult is the need to help new members of the team adapt to the Greyducks training regimen. The team can be seen running down the halls and up the stairs in Stuyvesant twice a week. Another two days a week, they practice at the indoor track at the Armory on 168th street. Although many indoor runners were a part of the city champion cross country team, there are still a handful of freshman and sophomores who are new to the team. "[The captains] try to make sure that kids come to every practice and find out that track can be a lot of fun," Surkont said. "We are hoping they transform into dedicated team members."

It is the work of Surkont, along with his fellow captains and the rest of the team that allows the Greyducks to be successful in the indoor season after their slow start. As Mendes knows, his three captains have been vital in the team's achievements already this year. "They lead by example," he said. "The team looks up to them."

## Diary of a Woopie Member

*continued from page 20*

fashion, five minutes into the game and as loud as possible. Caught up in the moment and yelling at the crowd, I didn't notice a tall gentleman standing in my way. Still sprinting and yelling, I unceremoniously crashed into the other team's head coach. When I recovered and finally got up in the stands, I couldn't help but notice how empty the bleachers were. As I realized that we could quite possibly be spending the next two hours standing half naked in an empty gym, the excitement slowly began to fade. What had I gotten myself into?

But as the game progressed, the gym began to fill up. The Rebels, off to a slow start, seemed to get more into the game as the crowd grew. At a point in the second quarter, I looked over and saw that, not only were the stands full, but the entrances to the gym were packed with people who had not managed to get seats. The

Woo Pit was rocking again, and it was visibly having an effect on the other team. At the end of the second quarter one of the Bulldogs players, listening to Woopie's premature countdown (big mistake), desperately heaved the ball up with three seconds left, believing that there was no time left on the clock. With the exception of Raymond Hernandez whose six three-pointers and 28 points led the team, the Bulldogs had little success in the Woo Pit, as Stuyvesant went on to win the game 61–37.

The Rebels' win was marked by several events that made the game especially exciting for everyone in attendance. Junior Quin Hood fired up the crowd with a one-handed dunk on a fast break, the first dunk in a regular season game by any Stuyvesant basketball player. Led by Woopie, the crowd sang the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air theme song to the annoyance of one of the Bulldogs' players, who happened to be sporting

a high-top fade haircut. Senior Benjamin Garner got the fans involved by running out onto the court during half time and singlehandedly starting "the wave," urging the crowd to undulate in sync with the vibrations of his considerable gut.

But aside from all this, there was something else that made the game feel special. Just like two years ago, Woopie was able to get a large portion of the student body interested in an athletic event. Once again, the gym was filled with students who cared enough about a Stuyvesant sports team to come out and cheer it on, and managed to have a good time in the process. Just as it had been two years ago, the Stuyvesant community was brought a little bit closer together by something as simple as a basketball game. And really, as I have come to realize from my experience as a member, that's what Woopie is all about.

## Girls' Indoor Track

### Mama Greyduck Markova Leads Girls' Track Team to Success

By LAVINI FILIMON

Despite blistering, cold winds and streets drowned in snow during this winter season, the Greyducks, Stuyvesant's girls' indoor track team, has been surviving and even thriving. Though the team lost both Christine Ha ('10) and Vanessa Ventola ('10), the Greyducks finished third at the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) Jim McKay Memorial Invitational on Saturday, December 4. The team again found success at the PSAL Holiday Classic on Sunday, December 26. Seniors and co-captains, Anna Tsenter and Vanessa Yuan finished fifth and eighth, respectively, in the 1500 meter run. Junior Hema Lochan placed third in the 3000 meter run as well.

Such successes can be attributed to first-year coach Anna Markova. "We are definitely doing things differently than last year," Yuan said. "[Markova] was a track and field athlete herself, and her workouts are more structured." Behind Markova's own experience in track and field events, workouts now incorporate more exercises to increase both endurance and speed.

"[Markova] is really working hard to create real athletes out of us by teaching us how to hone the right athletic skills through the use of proper athletic clothing and proper warm-up techniques," Tsenter added.

Markova is dedicated to improving the team as a whole and has begun training the girls in field events such as long jump, triple jump and shot put, areas in which the team has not had success over the past couple of seasons. "[Markova] is awesome for integrating the entire team to make sure we act as a team and race as a team," said Tsenter, who joined the team during her sophomore year. "I see her as someone who will finally be our long-term coach so that after graduation, we can rely on her to keep the team going strong and improving."

Several girls have proven to be talented in the field events



Members of the Greyducks, the Girls' Indoor Track team condition on the first floor during practice.

after showing promising results in the first few meets of the season. Sophomore Alicia Vargas Morawetz, who is new to the long jump event, took third place at the Jim McKay Invitational with a long jump of 12 feet 10.25 inches and sixth place at the PSAL Day of Distance after jumping 12 feet 8 inches. At the Greyduck's most recent meet, the PSAL Martin Luther King Relays on Monday, January 17, Morawetz finished 19th but jumped 13 feet, a personal best.

Markova has provided more than just the advice of a coach. Her presence has helped the team's chemistry, an integral part in the recent success of the Greyducks. "She is friendly and she tries to connect with the team," said Yuan, who also joined the team sophomore year. "For example, it was [recently] the birthday of three girls on the team and we were at a meet. Once I told her that we had three birthday girls that day, she immediately ran to the snack shop downstairs to buy them small gifts."

Markova's motivation has influenced the performance of the girls. Senior Katie Lembrikova and junior Kimberly Iboy finished first and second, respectively, in the 1500 meter racewalk at the Jim McKay Invitational. Lembrikova, who has

Jeany Zhao / The Spectator

# THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

## Boys' Swimming

### Pirates Look to Repeat



By MAHTAB ALAM

Last February, the Pirates, Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team, returned to its former glory, ending a two-year drought in which they were unsuccessful in winning the Public Schools' Athletic League (PSAL) City Championship. This season, they are setting their sights on reaching the same goal once again.

The Pirates have a history of success and dominance in PSAL boys' swimming. They have strung together consecutive undefeated seasons dating back to 2000. In addition, they were the PSAL champions for seven straight years from 2000 to 2006. In 2007, they tied Brooklyn Technical High School in the finals. This decline from complete dominance foreshadowed the Pirates' loss to Brooklyn Tech in the semifinals of 2008 and to Fort Hamilton in the finals of 2009. The Pirates finally returned to championship form last season, avenging the previous season's loss by dismantling Fort Hamilton in the 2010 championship by a score of 64-38.

The Pirates are aware that their streak of regular-season success means little coming into each meet. "We can't rely on our achievements from previous years to make us win this year," coach and physical education teacher Peter Bologna said. "We have to earn it." This mindset has paid off thus far as the Pirates cruised to a 9-0

record with two meets remaining in the season. Each win has come by convincingly by an average score of 26 points per match so far.

This year's goals for the Pirates are much like those of past years, with an ultimate mission of becoming PSAL champions. Additionally, they aim to compete in the upcoming PSAL Open Swimming and Diving Championships in February, which match up some of the most talented high school swimmers from around the city. This title of Open Champions is one that Stuyvesant has defended since 1995.

Many of the swimmers also have personal goals set for themselves to improve during their quest to the top. "One of our goals is to win Opens Championships, but especially for everyone to be able to do their best times, to develop a good work ethic as well and perhaps win finals and cities," senior and captain Stefan Garcia said.

One of the major sources of success for the Pirates this year has been a group of talented underclassmen. Of the 28 swimmers on the team, just four are seniors. The difference this year is that the leadership and guidance is not as prevalent as in past years, with no clear pecking order. Even so, freshman Kevin Lee said, "The leadership on the team is very good. Stefan [Garcia] as captain and Alex [Ng] as captain, they're all really good leaders."

Similarly, Garcia expressed

confidence in the skill level of the rookies and returning underclassmen. "We have many talented new swimmers," he said. Juniors En-Wei Hu-Van Wright and Noam Altman-Kurosaki both made the state championships last year. Altman-Kurosaki is the team's sole diver and holds the school record for both the six and eleven dive events. He has also placed first in all five diving events he participated in this season. Wright holds three school records as well, including the 100 yard butterfly record he set earlier this season. Wright has also placed first in eight of his twelve events.

The Pirates feel that Coach Bologna has been a key factor in their accomplishments. "One of [the reasons we've had success] has to be our coach; he comes up with great workouts," Garcia said.

Bologna, entering his seventh year as coach, says he tries to train in both technique and endurance, keeping the swimmers motivated by varying workouts. "I try every day to instill in them that you have to have integrity, you have to have pride in what you do each and every day and you swim every day to be an active member of the team," Bologna said.

However, both the coach and the swimmers agree that much of the success originates from the hard work that the team puts in every day. Having a pool to practice in after school is an obvious advantage, eliminating much of the hassle that many other schools are forced to go through. "But we still need talented swimmers," Bologna said. Their work ethic, in addition to some of the outside club swimming that some of the swimmers do, is what Bologna feels has allowed the Pirates to be as successful as they've been.

"We practice really hard every day. Some other teams only have a few good swimmers," sophomore Edmund Zhan said. "Everyone on our team is very good. We have depth."

The Pirates have found a balance of camaraderie and concentration that has allowed them to prosper during meets and create bonds with each other as well. "In the water they know they need to be serious and swim the right way for each and every workout that's set out for them," Bologna said. "But once the workout is over they have a really good time with each other. It's like an extended family."

### Diary of a Woopie Member



By SAM RABKIN

The creation of Woopie two years ago sparked a new interest in Stuyvesant athletics, mainly for the boys' varsity basketball team, the Runnin' Rebels. Once the members of Woopie started appearing regularly at the games, more and more students began showing up. As body paint

and inflatable thundersticks became commonplace, the once almost-empty third floor gym soon became packed on Friday night home games. During the week, the famous Woopie t-shirts could be seen throughout the building; the school spirit in Stuyvesant had reached a peak. The games gave everyone the opportunity to let loose, to forget about tests and homework and simply enjoy cheering on the Rebels.

This year I have had the opportunity to participate in Woopie. As one of the members of the club, I have found out what it's like to be part of something unlike anything else at Stuyvesant. The experience, having its share of ups and downs, has been an interesting one to say the least.

The season had a rocky start, with the third floor gym being out of commission for the first months of the basketball season. Stuy's Woo Pit,

the home court of the Rebels, was unavailable for two months due to a bubble in the floor that had to be repaired. Meanwhile, the varsity basketball games were moved to the sixth floor gym, which has little space for fans to watch the games, let alone for people to run around, covered in paint and screaming their lungs off. Woopie would have to wait until after winter break.

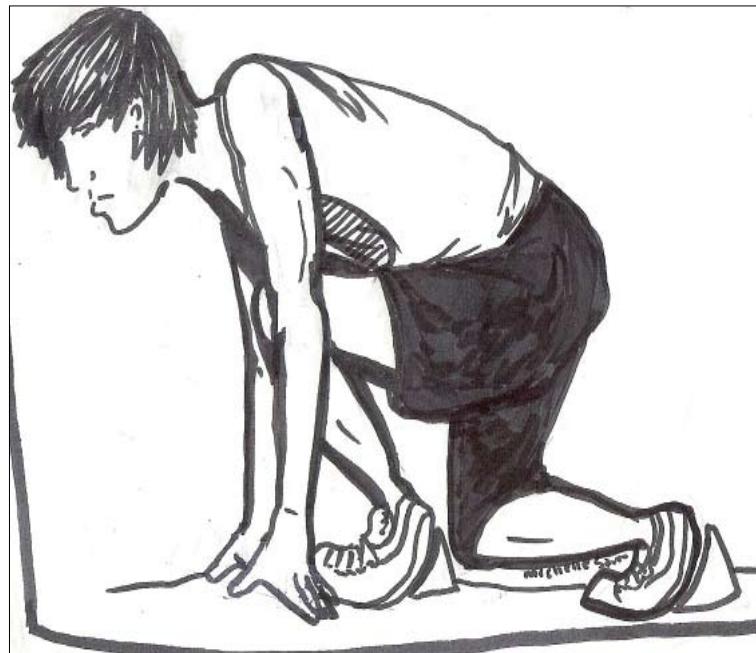
Finally, on Friday, January 7, the Rebels faced off against the High School of Art and Design Bulldogs in the newly renovated gym. And so, Woopie finally got its chance to shine. After a quick workout in the weight room (a necessary prerequisite for any shirtless activity), ten of the members each got a letter of "STUYVESANT" painted on his chest.

We entered the gym in classic, obnoxious Woopie

*continued on page 19*

## Boys' Indoor Track

### Greyducks Shrug Off Championship Hangover



By JORDAN FRANK

After winning the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) City Championship in cross country, it would be easy for Stuyvesant's boys' track team, the Greyducks, to overlook their

indoor season. It would be easy for the team to be content with their success this year, and not put effort into the remaining indoor and outdoor seasons. It would be easy for seniors

*continued on page 19*

## Boys' Wrestling

### Stuyvesant Spartans: Cutting Weight...Cutting Loses



The Stuyvesant High School Spartans defeated the Susan Wagner Falcons 59 - 21 on Tuesday, January 4.

By CLAY GIBSON

In wrestling, there is a saying that "you are only as good as your last fight"—in which case, the Stuyvesant Spartans are doing exceedingly well. After a 48 to 36 win over New Dorp High School on Thursday, January 6, the Spartans finished their regular season with a record of 7-3, ending with four straight victories. The three losses, which came earlier in the season, were all close, with the Spartans losing by less than ten points in each match. The wins, on the other hand, have been by an average margin of 21 points—dominance that undoubtedly shows the team's continuous development in practice and on the mat.

The Spartans, who went 5-5 last year, have made major changes over the summer and throughout the season. Thirteen of the fifteen starters are seniors. Of the returning members of the team, "a lot went to wrestling camp over the summer and there have been serious improvements," senior and co-captain Monil Shah said. This season, the team is more skilled, stronger and better con-

ditioned. According to Shah, the team practices on the 6th floor after school from Monday to Friday. On the weekends, some members of the Spartans train privately.

In addition, the three senior co-captains, Matthew Boccio, Shah, and Krzysztof Mieczel have given the team new life. "They got a lot of people working out in pre-season conditioning, and in practice they've shown tremendous leadership. It has been very important to this team. They are basically the heart of the team," coach Richard Murray said.

Despite the team's success this season, the Spartans have faced adversity. "The team's biggest weakness is making weight," said Shah. Wrestlers often attempt to cut weight before the weigh-ins in order to compete in a lighter weight class. Before matches, wrestlers will often stop eating and drinking days before, while loading themselves with sweatshirts and jackets. They often run stairs during their free periods in order to sweat out some extra weight.

*continued on page 19*