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Rubinstein Presents Mathematical Masterpieces



Math teacher Gary Rubinstein has been selected to make a presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

Mathematics teacher Gary Rubinstein gave a presentation about how teachers can incorporate the history of mathematics into high school courses at the 88th National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) annual meeting on Saturday, April 24. The exposition was held in the San Diego Convention Center in San

Diego, California. "I was so grateful that I could attend for three days," Rubinstein said, "I got to meet a lot of teachers and authors from around the country."

This year, over 10,000 math teachers from all over the country attended the annual meeting, 300 of whom gave presentations. In

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By TEO GELLES

This year, a total of nine Stuyvesant students took, and qualified for, the United States Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO) and United States Mathematical Junior Olympiad (USAJMO) exams—eight took the USAMO and one took the USAJMO. The tests were administered on Tuesday, April 27, and Wednesday, April 28, at Stuyvesant High School.

The number of Stuyvesant students who qualified for this year's exams is comparable to those of similarly prestigious high schools across the nation—eight students qualified from Thomas Jefferson High School in Alexandria, Virginia, and nine qualified from New Hampshire's Phillips Exeter Academy.

The USAMO and USAJMO are highly challenging high school mathematical exams which are administered by The Mathematical Association of America. To qualify for the exams, a student must score high enough on both the American Mathematics Contest (AMC) and American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME). The AMC is given twice a year in two different iterations, the AMC 10 for students in tenth grade or lower, and the AMC 12 for juniors

and seniors. The AIME is also given twice annually, with the AIME I administered on March 16 and the AIME II on March 31.

The USAMO is a two-day, nine-hour exam that requires students to write essays and mathematical proofs. "It's two days and six questions of really hard math," junior and USAMO participant Lijin Chen said.

"It's a pretty trying experience. It's not easy to sit in a room for four and a half hours each day and do productive work," junior and USAMO participant Daniel Mendelsohn said.

Students who score highly on the exam are invited to the Mathematical Olympiad Summer Program (MOSP) during the month of June, while six of the highest-scoring students on the USAMO go on to form the United States national team at the International Mathematical Olympiad, held in July. The USAMO has been administered since the 1950s, but this year saw major changes to the structure of the competition. The USAMO was previously the only exam administered in which participating students could be invited to the MOSP, but this year the USAJMO exam was added to the list of feeder competitions.

According to the AMC website, the USAJMO "better meets

the level of young students," and "bridges the gap between the AIME and the USAMO." Students qualify for the USAJMO based on the AMC 10, as opposed to the AMC 12, which is required for USAMO entry.

Math teacher and Math Team Coach James Cocoros has positive feelings regarding Stuyvesant's participation in the USAMO. "For the past three years, including this year, we've sent eight, 10 and nine kids. So we usually do pretty well," he said.

"My goal was to get to the USAMO because even qualifying is a great honor," Mendelsohn said. "It's the main goal of many Mathletes."

According to participants, Cocoros prepared his students well for the exam. "After the AIME he focused exclusively on the USAJMO in his senior and junior math classes, covering general techniques, specific theorems that may have been useful and going over past exams," Mendelsohn said.

Other members of the math faculty were proud of the USAMO participants. "I think it's great for them and Stuyvesant," math teacher Oana Pascu said. "We always do well, and it's thanks to the students that we do so well."

Judge Denny Chin: Stuyvesant Alumnus and Only Asian American Judge on the US Court of Appeals

By NICOLE ZHAO

Judge Denny Chin's ('71) story began like that of many students who have passed through Stuyvesant's doors. Born in Hong Kong, he immigrated with his family to the United States when he was two years old and lived in New York in midtown Manhattan. His father worked as a cook at Chinese restaurants and his mother a seamstress in Chinese garment factories. After being accepted into, and then graduating, Stuyvesant as part of the last all-male class, he attended college at Princeton University and law school at Fordham University.

Although many Stuyvesant students can relate to his beginnings, his current success is far from ordinary. On Thursday, April 22, Judge Chin was confirmed a seat on the United States (US) Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by a 98-0 vote by the US Senate. He is currently the only active Asian American judge on the US Court of Appeals and the first to be appointed outside of the Ninth Circuit.

President Barack Obama nominated Judge Chin to the Second Circuit, which is known for its decisions in financial and white-collar cases, in October 2009. Before his seat on the federal appellate court was confirmed, Judge Chin was a Federal District Court judge for the Southern District of New York, which consists of

the counties Manhattan, Bronx, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Orange, Dutchess and Sullivan.

As a district judge, Chin presided over many well-known cases, including US v. Madoff, in which he sentenced Bernie L. Madoff to 150 years in prison for committing securities fraud via a Ponzi scheme. As a judge on the federal appellate court, Chin is now responsible for reviewing the decisions of trial judges with other federal appellate judges.

The Spectator spoke to Judge Chin about his memories of Stuyvesant, his path to success and the importance of diversity in the justice system:

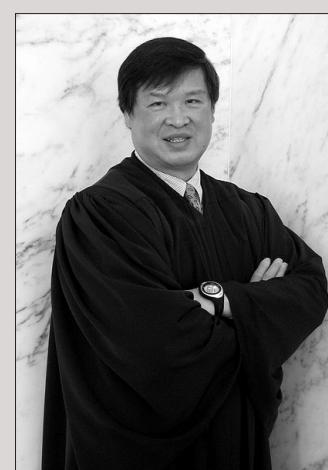
The Spectator (TS): What first got you interested in law?

Judge Denny Chin (DC): I went to law school because I wasn't sure what to do with myself when I was in college. I was in Princeton and I was a Psychology major. [...] I decided I didn't want [to pursue a career in Psychology].

TS: You just decided that you wanted to go to law school?

DC: Yes, I wasn't sure whether I would like it, but I loved it once I got there, and I realized pretty quickly that I had made the right decision.

TS: What did you love about it?



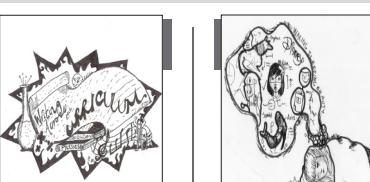
Courtesy of www.asianamericansforobama.com

DC: I liked that it was challenging. I enjoyed the writing. I enjoyed the constitutional law. I enjoyed the contracts.

TS: Why do you think you were undecided about what career to pursue out of college?

DC: Like many teenagers, there was a lot that I had not yet experienced, and I just didn't know. I think most teenagers, and people in their early twenties, probably change their minds a lot about what they want to do.

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Features

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Writing, Not Always Learning Across the Curriculum

An in-depth look into Writing Across the Curriculum.

Air Conditioning Inoperable For Weeks To Come

By CHESTER DUBOV

The Stuyvesant High School building has been without heat or central air conditioning for several weeks, a condition that will persist for an as-of-yet, undetermined period of time. The cause? A new air conditioning unit currently being installed in the sixth floor gym.

Because the installation of the units necessitates that additional coolant piping be welded onto the existing system, all climate control in the building must be rendered inoperable for the duration of the welding. "We had to drain the system down because, at the sixth floor level, they [the workers] have to splice two T-pipes," Chief Engineer Tom Bulger said. "They're running new pipes right now."

The installation was originally scheduled to take place at the beginning of spring so the temperature in school would be comfortable without the aid of climate control. "I suggested that the installation be done during April," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "I can't exactly say where the delay was."

According to Bulger, the delays were caused by last minute changes to the installation plan, made by the engineer supervising the project. "The engineer changed up the plan on them [the workers]," Bulger said. "They're supposed to start cutting pipes Wednesday night."

The administration has want-

ed to install air conditioning in the gymnasium for years. "Two years ago I asked Battery Park City to do a study for me to see how much it would cost to bring air conditioning into the gyms," Teitel said. "Every year we use the sixth floor gym to administer AP tests, and Ms. Damesek and I have always been concerned about what would happen if the tests fell on really hot days."

Teitel was successful in securing funding for the project, despite the across-the-board budget cuts afflicting the Department of Education. "Battery Park City is footing the bill," Teitel said.

During the first week in May, students and faculty members alike had to experience eighty-degree weather without any air conditioning. "I was hot and sweaty," junior Matteo Battistini said.

Despite the fact that the installation of the units has rendered the building's air conditioning system inoperable, students and teachers are pleased by the prospect of having climate control in the gymnasium. "I think air conditioning in the gym will be awesome," Battistini said. "The sixth floor gym is always really hot."

"Certainly it [air conditioning] will increase the comfort level in classes during the hot seasons," physical education teacher Vasken Choubaralian said. "It's [the loss of air conditioning] a small sacrifice for a large gain."

Arts & Entertainment

Article on page 11.

Forty Years Can Give You Such a Crick in the Neck

An eye-opening look at Sleeping Beauty.

News

Rubinstein Presents Mathematical Masterpieces

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the exhibition hall, teachers had the opportunity to see and discuss the latest innovations in mathematics technology, such as new products and computer programs that could facilitate the teaching of math. Each day of the conference was composed of different sessions—general interest, Pre-Kindergarten to second grade, third to fifth grade, sixth to eighth grade and high school—with up to 40 presentations occurring simultaneously per session. While the general trend of topics ranged from problem solving to communication, specific presentations for the high school education set included reasoning, analyzing statistics, fractal functions and the use of a computer algebra system to engage students. The teachers strived to implement technology and new ideas in the classroom to make learning more enjoyable for students.

In Rubinstein's hour-long presentation, entitled "Mathematical

"Math is an art to be appreciated and not just something to skim over."
—Gary Rubinstein, mathematics teacher

Masterpieces," he took his audience of 400 people through a guided tour of the various historical proofs of Euclid, Archimedes, Ptolemy, Euler and other mathematicians. He then discussed why he believes the history of mathematics is important and how it can be incorporated into high school-level mathematics courses.

"If you can't understand how the primitives work, it reveals that you may not be able to understand certain types of math as well as you thought you might," Rubinstein said. "Sometimes I'll look at an old proof and I find that if I don't understand that, then I don't understand some of the newer material either."

Rubinstein attributes the development of his proposal to numerous influences. As a high school student, he did not know much about the proofs of famous mathematicians. He said that his teacher "taught the acute ways of getting the right answer, but we never understood why it worked. Occasionally people made historical references, and that really interested me." When he attended college at Tufts University in 1990, Rubinstein took a course in the history of mathematics and was inspired.

"Voltaire once said that there is far more imagination in the head of Archimedes than that of Homer. I think this is true. Math is an art to be appreciated and not just something to skim over," Rubinstein said. "A proof that is great really moves me." According to Rubinstein, it took him many years

to come up with good examples to refer to for his presentation. He found that many historical proofs could be applied to Geometry, Algebra and Pre-calculus concepts. In his presentation, he described how Archimedes' derivation of pi and the area of a sphere could be used in a geometry classroom; why the unit circle can justify all the trigonometric identities; why imaginary numbers relate to cubic equations; and how the DesCartes method can be utilized to solve quadratic equations.

Rubinstein brought his findings together and presented them to the Stuyvesant High School staff in 2007. After math teacher Bernard Feigenbaum informed Rubinstein that the presentation greatly affected him, Rubinstein decided that he would like to share his presentation with other teachers. When Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara announced that the faculties of specialized high school mathematics teachers were to meet at Bronx Science High School, Rubinstein volunteered to give his presentation. According to Rubinstein, it did not alter teaching methods by much, but was well received.

In 2008, he submitted his proposal for the NCTM 2009 Annual Meeting, but was rejected because there were already two presentations with a similar topic. He resubmitted his proposal on Friday, May 1, 2009, and was accepted by the Conference Services Department for the 2010 meeting.

A great deal of Rubinstein's presentation consisted of comparing a textbook with his own lesson plans, to show where a teacher could incorporate certain historical aspects using specific proofs and methods.

"It got people thinking, 'Why do we teach math and what is its purpose?' and that's why it was so well received," Rubinstein said. "I showed how, with a lot of things we teach, there are so many opportunities to show students where these math concepts came from."

Rubinstein introduces these kinds of proofs and methods to his own classes in the hope that the historical point of view will facilitate his students' learning of certain topics. "When we did probability, he introduced the Monty Hall Problem to us." The Monty Hall Problem comes from the old game show "Let's Make a Deal," and involves a choice based on three options. "He showed us a movie clip that made a reference to it, organized a game involving charts and dice and then we had a small debate," sophomore Kathleen Escoto said. "We really got into what we were doing and why it worked, so that definitely helped me understand the topic."

Junior Sejal Kahn agreed. "Before [Mr. Rubinstein] starts a topic, he goes through the history of it and talks about the different mathematicians and methods. The incorporation of history in the lesson helped me learn the concept," Kahn said. "His teaching methods are pretty effective because I still remember concepts he taught months ago even though I haven't practiced them."

"I believe the history of math makes everything more human," Rubinstein said. "Sometimes people are too focused on how math is useful in the real world. But the fact is, if it makes you think, then it is still important."

Stuyvesant Students Place Second at National ExploraVision Competition

By ALEKS MERKOVICH

Sophomores Angela Fan, Donna Lee, Mimi Yen and Michelle Zhang placed second in the 2010 Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) ExploraVision Awards national competition. Toshiba representatives came to Stuyvesant to inform them of their success on Wednesday, April 28.

This competition had students at all grade levels competing for two top spots in their grade bracket. The competition requires student to create a proposal for an invention that could be created using future technology.

All students in Honors Chemistry (SC1H) were mandated to submit a project to ExploraVision. After winning the regional competition, students were required to create a Web site that described their project, the already existing technology they improved upon and the impacts of their project. They also had to include a video presentation in their submission.

Stuyvesant students placed second with their "I-CEE: IKVAV-Scaffold Center-Surround Eyesight Enhancement" proposal, which includes a design of a microchip that is surgically implanted onto the fovea of the retina to allow people with macular degeneration or retinitis pigmentosa to see clearly in color. I-CEE includes a color filter and a layer of photovoltaic cells that mimic the photoreceptors in the back of the eye and work in conjunction with the eye's preexisting vision machinery to send electrical impulses to the brain to produce a final clear image.

First place went to University Laboratory High School of Illinois, last year's winner, who submitted their "NIBEye: Neural Interfaced Bionic Eye" proposal, which involved the creation of a biocompatible prosthetic eye connected to the brain.

According to the Stuyvesant team, the other team's project dealt with a similar topic, but was quite different from theirs. "We



Sophomores (left to right) Mimi Yen, Donna Lee, Angela Fan and Michelle Zhang are the second place winners of the 2010 national Toshiba competition.

Dennis Kim / The Spectator

basically wanted biological integration into the body whereas theirs was more engineering, like creating an actual eye out of metal with the metal and cornea and everything. But we just went for a microchip and we wanted to preserve most of the biological pathways that were already present," Yen said. "We didn't want anything that invasive."

Stuyvesant team members found the first place team's presentation to be extremely impressive. "They had a really nice Web site because the graphics were really good and [in] their video they used 3-D animation, which we tried to do, but we just didn't have the experience or the time to do it, so we use flash animation," Yen said.

Zhang attributes this to the other school's superior facilities. "They were the high school that was linked to a university so they had the resources to do it and the people to teach them how to do it," she said. Yen added that the fact that the other school had a research program specifically designed for Toshiba participants gave their students an advantage over Stuyvesant members.

Each student won a U.S. EE Savings Bond worth 5,000 dollars at maturity and an expense-paid

trip to Washington D.C. in June for the ExploraVision Awards Weekend from Wednesday, June 9, to Saturday, June 12. During the Awards Weekend, the team will have the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill, present their projects to members of the press and attend an awards banquet. In addition, the group gets a discount on Toshiba products, such as laptops and televisions, and certificates for participating. After they won the regional competition, the team members received a Toshiba laptop to use in the design of their Web site, but the laptop was later donated to the school.

Their mentor and coach—biology teacher Dr. Jonathan Gasterl and chemistry teacher Dr. Zhen-Chuan Li, respectively—were also awarded a discount on Toshiba products, an expense-paid trip to Washington D.C. for the Awards Weekend, a certificate for participation and a one-year NSTA membership.

While team members say the project was hard work, they are ecstatic they made it as far as they did. "The first place winners are probably very deserving and I congratulate them," Fan said. "It was a really fun experience. It took a lot of time, but it was totally worth it."

Four Students Qualify for National Bio-Olympiad

By BEN GARNER

Four Stuyvesant students qualified for the eighth Annual United States of America Biology Olympiad (USABO) National Finals on Friday, April 16, via an afterschool exam administered by biology teacher Roz Bierig. The students, mentored by Bierig, will travel to Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, to prepare for and take the national Bio-Olympiad exam from Sunday, June 6, to Friday, June 18.

The Bio-Olympiad exam covers a wide range of biology topics, at a highly advanced level. According to the USABO website, the Bio-Olympiad exam tests students on topics such as "cellular biology, microbiology, biotechnology, plant anatomy & physiology, animal anatomy & physiology, ethology, genetics & evolution, ecology and biosystematics."

"This material is beyond the scope of graduate level biology," Bierig said.

Students who participate in the Bio-Olympiad were taught after school by Bierig and received special, college level textbooks. During this mentoring time, students met together in groups to review, study and dissect specimens.

"Ms. Bierig is great," senior and former USABO National Finalist David Huang said. "Whatever sub-

jects I'm weak in, she provides me with materials to study."

Juniors Brendan Huang, Joseph Park, and seniors Huang—qualifying for a second time—and Yang Li qualified for this year's National Finals. Li, however, will be unable to compete in June.

In total, only twenty students from across the nation qualified for the USABO National Finals out of the 11,000 who took the USABO Open Exam and Semifinal Exam. The Open Exam is an afterschool, 50 minute, teacher-administered multiple choice test, while the Semifinal exam is a three hour, after-school test consisting of both multiple choice and free response questions. This year, Stuyvesant had a record 19 students who qualified for the Semifinal Exam, after scoring highly on the Open Exam.

At Purdue, the 20 finalists will undergo a rigorous two week preparation program, consisting of biology tutorials and labs, which will be taught by top biologists from around the country. "We will be having lectures every day and doing practices with dissections," Huang said. "A lot of time we learn stuff that's not covered in [Advanced Placement Biology] textbooks."

At the conclusion of the two weeks of training, the finalists will be administered the National Fi-

nals exam. "The exam is broken up into two parts," Huang said. "There is a practical and a theoretical section. In the practical part there is a botany section, a molecular bio section and a miscellaneous section. In the theoretical part, they can ask us whatever they want."

The four highest scoring students on the exam will go on to represent the United States of America in the International Bio-Olympiad. These students will remain at Purdue to undergo further preparation for the international competition.

The International Bio-Olympiad is a prestigious competition, drawing competitors from top secondary schools around the world. While students from Russia, The United States and China typically perform well, the winner of last year's international competition—held in Japan—was Yangzi Dong of Singapore.

This year's international Bio-Olympiad will be held in Changwon, Korea from Sunday, July 11, to Sunday, July 18. Stuyvesant has never had an international participant in the competition, but the finalists remain hopeful that this year will prove fruitful. "I'm hoping I can earn a place at Internationals," Huang said.

"I would pay my way to Korea if a student qualified," Bierig said.

Moore Accepted Into Summer Seminar Program on Harlem Renaissance

By ALEX WANG

After submitting an application and recommendations from her colleagues, English teacher Emily Moore was accepted into the Summer Seminars for Middle and High School Teachers at the Cullman Center Institute for Teachers at The New York Public Library. She received her acceptance to the program on Wednesday, April 14.

In each seminar program, 14 teachers, librarians or administrators are given the opportunity to learn about, and utilize, the resources of the Special Collections of The New York Public Library located at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue for their own research. On each day of the seminar, a three-and-a-half-hour class is taught by a Cullman Center scholar or writer in the morning. In the afternoon, participants are given an office to work on a research project. Library staff deliver all necessary books to the participants. Amenities for participants include a 300 dollar stipend, required books and materials, a private office and breakfasts and lunches.

Moore will participate in a seminar titled The Harlem Renaissance, lasting from Monday, August 2 to Friday, August 6. The

seminar will seek to understand the achievements of the Harlem Renaissance in literature, music and painting. The seminar is one of three offered this summer; the other two are on creative writing.

Moore ranked the Harlem Renaissance seminar as her first choice because "it's a subject that I teach in my poetry classes and then also, it's a subject of personal interest to me," she said.

Moore is interested in the period because of the musical and literary traditions it produced. "I love the Harlem Renaissance [because] it's this real flowering of art and culture," Moore said. "It has these incredible musical traditions, like Duke Ellington and the blues, [as well as] these wonderful poetic traditions which are relevant to my class and novels."

According to Moore, she particularly enjoys reading novels by Zora Neale Hurston, a Harlem Renaissance writer best known for her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

As part of her application for the fellowship, Moore was required to send recommendations, which were written for her by English teacher Annie Thoms and Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman.

According to Moore, the application also asked "teachers to write about their favorite unit that they teach and why [...] to get a sense of how teachers teach in the classroom, so I wrote about teaching Walt Whitman to my poetry students and how I often make my poetry students stand up on their chairs and scream out 'Walt Whitman,'" she said.

Many English teachers have also received the fellowship in the past, including Sophie Oberfield, Jonathan Weil and Thoms. "They loved it and they recommended that I apply," Moore said.

Oberfield, having participated in the seminars twice, enjoyed the program and is now part of a committee to design one-day Teacher Workshops at the center that are modeled after the Summer Seminars. "Both of the times, it was really refreshing intellectually. [...] It was neat to talk about English teaching but it was also great to kind of be in class again and be a student again," she said. "I've been a very big cheerleader trying to get my colleagues to apply for the program."

Moore believes in incorporating her new experiences into the classroom setting. "I feel like, as a teacher, the best thing you can do



English teacher Emily Moore has been awarded a NYC Public Library Cullman Center Fellowship.

Peter Wysinski / The Spectator

for yourself and your students is to keep learning, keep experiencing new material and keep finding new work to put into your classroom," she said.

Grossman attested to her success in doing so. "I know [...] from experience that Ms. Moore always brings what she's learned in her own professional development back into the classroom," Gross-

man said.

Students were glad to hear that Moore was bringing new ideas into the classroom.

"Ms. Moore always finds the most intriguing pieces to share with the class. It will just be like diving straight into the golden period of African American literature," junior Disi Chen said.

Judge Denny Chin: Stuyvesant Alumnus and Only Asian American Judge on the US Court of Appeals

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TS: How did your parents feel about your interest in pursuing a career in law?

DC: My parents did not speak English, and it was not something I discussed at length with them. [...] They didn't support it. [...] And now they are very proud of me.

TS: What do you like about being a judge?

DC: I like the action of the courtroom. I like participating in the administration of justice. I like trying to figure out what the right answer is. [...] I like trying to help improve society. I enjoy the intellectual challenge.

TS: Can you tell me about your experience at Stuyvesant, and what shaped your time there?

DC: I was at Stuyvesant in the old building on the East Side. I started in the tenth grade. My class was the last all-male class. There were girls in my school, but not in my year. I was on the football team. [...] I thought I was well prepared at Stuyvesant. Stuyvesant helped me get into Princeton. Stuyvesant helped me to prepare for college. [...] I have warm feelings about Stuyvesant.

TS: What did you like and dislike about Stuyvesant?

DC: I disliked the traveling. I'd have to take two trains to get there.

[According to his foreword for the book "Stuyvesant High School: The First 100 Years 1904-2004" by Susan Meyer, "Each morning I would get on the 'A' train and ride down to 14th Street, where I'd switch to the 'L' to go cross-town to Stuyvesant. I played football, and during the football season the commute was worse. I'd have to take a bus to the practice field in East River Park on 6th Street along the FDR Drive. Going home, I'd take the bus to the 'L' and then eventually switch back to the 'A.' The building was kind of old. I liked the teachers and the other students. I felt I learned a lot. I felt challenged. I learned some good habits.

TS: What did you like about being on the football team?

DC: It's always a good experience to be a part of a team. You don't just want to do well for you. You want to do well for your teammates, for your school. And I think athletics help to build character. I think it also helped you maintain balance. [...] You had to go to practice, then you had to go home and do homework. You couldn't procrastinate.

TS: What is your fondest memory of Stuyvesant?

DC: I would have to say the football team. I had some good English courses. Do you want to hear a bad memory? In my senior year, during my last semester, I got a 23 on my Advanced Calculus final because I didn't study enough. I thought I wouldn't graduate. I was going to

Princeton so this was a problem. But the teacher let me retake the exam and my friend tutored me for a while, and I ended up with a B for the course.

TS: You are currently the sole Asian American to hold an active judgeship on the US Court of Appeals. What do you think is the significance of this, if you believe there is any?

DC: I think Asian Americans are grossly underrepresented on the federal bench. We've been making a lot of progress. President [Barack] Obama has nominated nine Asian Americans for the federal bench and before that, there were only eight. [...] I sometimes play basketball in the park in Chinatown, and the senior citizens come up and congratulate me, so I know it means a lot to a lot of people.

TS: Why, in your opinion, is diversity important in the career field of justice and law?

DC: Diversity is important because it will improve the quality of justice. I don't believe that an Asian American judge and a white judge or an African American judge should reach different decisions, but I think together they will come up with better decisions. In other words, they can learn from each other. If we bring different perspectives to the judges' chambers, then we can make better decisions. And it's not just important to have diversity in race. It's important to have people with criminal law ex-

perience, it's important to have people with civil law experience, it's important to have academics, it's important to have trial judges. When you put them all together, they are more likely to reach the right result. They are more likely to reach the just result.

TS: Do you believe it is still true that Asian Americans are a minority in the career field of law and the justice system?

DC: Yes, in the sense that the numbers are low. [...] I don't believe in quota systems, but you would hope that the bench would fairly represent society. If Asian Americans are five or six percent of the population, you would hope to see more than one federal appellate judge. In the Southern District of New York, [...] there are 60 judicial officers—that is, district judges, magistrate judges, and district officers—and right now there are zero Asian Americans. And this is an area that includes Manhattan and Chinatown.

TS: Why do you think that is?

DC: That's a complicated question. There are probably a number of contributing factors. [...] There haven't been a lot of Asian Americans that would want to go into litigation. [...] It's only in recent years that there are Asian Americans in law school. When I was in law school, there were very few Asian Americans there. And that's why I think things are getting better right now. Some of [the reason

Asian Americans are a minority on the bench] is politics, some of it is political power, voting—Asian Americans have to vote more—among other things.

TS: You said earlier that you didn't know much about career options and what to pursue. Why not?

DC: My parents were not well educated. My father was a cook in a Chinese restaurant. My mother was a seamstress in the Chinese garment factories. My grandfather was a waiter in Chinese restaurants. I didn't know businesspeople, I didn't know lawyers, I just didn't know.

TS: So what would be your advice to someone, such as a Stuyvesant student, who shares the same background as you and wishes to pursue law?

DC: Work hard. Don't limit yourself. Strive for the best and take advantage of mentors. There are many role models now. There are many successful Asian Americans. There are many successful Stuyvesant students—not just Asian Americans. Don't be afraid to talk to people and get some advice. Stuyvesant has a wonderful reputation. I still have Stuyvesant on my resume. Most people my age don't put their high school on their resume. I do. Because it is special, and the people who come out of there are special. Keep doing the same things that helped you succeed in Stuyvesant.

CEO and President of Toshiba Visit Physics Classes

By YEIN KIM

Toshiba United States Chief Executive Officer Yoshihide Fuji and Toshiba America Foundation President John Anderson visited freshman Physics Research (SP2R5) and Modern Physics classes (SP7PMP) on Wednesday, April 21 to see how students work in the classroom setting, and to talk to them.

"We gave them a tour of the school and the labs as well as the research classes," Assistant Principal Chemistry and Physics Scott

Thomas said. "They met with several teachers and Dr. [Jonathan] Gastel, who is head of the research department."

The science research classes applied for a grant from the Toshiba America Foundation, requesting money for specific equipment to be used in class experiments.

"The grant was used to buy a vacuum chamber, a 3-D printer and a scanning tunneling microscope, to be used by science research classes," Thomas said.

"With this equipment, students can do all sorts of experiments, like magnify something up

to 10,000 times [with the microscope]," physics teacher Ulugbek Akhmedov said.

"They came in and watched two groups give presentations," Akhmedov said. "After, the students had a discussion with them about being a future physics researcher that lasted 10 minutes after class finished. They were very impressed by the students."

Fuji and Anderson then visited the Modern Physics classes. "Four groups gave PowerPoint presentations. They were based on elastic imaging and fluorescence imaging. They were really happy with the

presentations. My students were very happy and proud that their work is not only appreciated at the school but at people who are on the top," physics teacher Jamal Ali said. "I want to emphasize that my students are working really very hard, and they're doing work that at a college level."

During the visit, Fuji and Anderson stressed how important it was, not just to excel in physics research, but also to be a well-rounded student. "They said that reading [science fiction] will stimulate your imagination," freshman Jessica Chen said.

"They encouraged the students to go beyond just physics and into their other school subjects," Akhmedov said.

Students regarded the visit favorably. "They were really interesting," Chen said. "They said that it's nice to see students interested in science. I guess they were pretty impressed. They told us about how their technology is becoming eco-friendly and what it would be like to a physics researcher. It was nice to get advice from experienced scientists."

News

Invisible Children Uncovered: Students Learn of the Perils of Ugandan Child Soldiers

By MAYA AVERBUCH
with additional reporting by
CAMERON FEI SUN

"For ten years, my day has started and ended the same way, I walk rain or shine. I will keep walking until there is peace. Like thousands of children, I am not free to sleep at home. We fear being abducted by the rebel army," said Ofonyo Innocent, a former Ugandan child soldier featured in the organization Invisible Children's "White is for Innocent" video.

Innocent and other members of Invisible Children came to Stuyvesant on Thursday, April 29, to speak to students and show them documentaries about the plight of war-affected children in Uganda. The presentation at Stuyvesant was part of the organization's semiannual trans-American tour. All teachers were given the opportunity to bring their classes to see the presentations in Lecture Hall A of the Murray Kahn Theatre during periods four through seven. In addition, Innocent spoke to a few classes in between presentations because there was not enough room in the lecture hall for all students interested in viewing the presentation. After the presentation, audience members were encouraged to buy Invisible Children merchandise or sponsor a child's education in Africa for 35 dollars a month.

According to the Invisible Children Web site, the organization "rebuild[s] schools devastated by war, benefiting over 8,400 Ugandan youth in the areas of water and sanitation, books and equipment, refurbishment of structures, teacher support and technology and power." In addition, the organization provides 690 scholarships to secondary students and 180 full-ride scholarships to universities.

on the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) forced enlistment of child soldiers to facilitate its overthrow of the Ugandan government.

"If it wasn't [children], if it was just a regular war with adults fighting it then it would be more political because the problem with this war that makes it so unique and difficult is that these kids are really innocent because they're being forced to kill and they don't have much of a choice," Stuyvesant Invisible Children Club President Lucy Marcus said.

In an attempt to move citizens to safety, the Ugandan government relocated thousands of people to camps, where many have grown up in the midst of extreme poverty and rampant disease.

According to the Invisible Children Web site, the organization "rebuild[s] schools devastated by war, benefiting over 8,400 Ugandan youth in the areas of water and sanitation, books and equipment, refurbishment of structures, teacher support and technology and power." In addition, the organization provides 690 scholarships to secondary students and 180 full-ride scholarships to universities.

The organization has a program called Schools for Schools, which coordinates fundraising efforts with schools across America. The Stuyvesant Invisible Children club was created two years ago as part of this program by then-sophomores Cody Levine, Emma Rosenbluth and Marcus. According to Levine, they first learned about the cause when social studies teacher and current Invisible Children faculty advisor Lisa-Jane

Shuman showed them the "Invisible Children: Rough Cut" documentary.

"I try to expose students to world issues that they, students, as our future, can perhaps do something about. And I think it is important for all of us, students and adults alike, to remember there are things bigger than ourselves and situations much more dire throughout the world," Shuman said.

Since the club's creation, the members have organized three fundraisers—one through the Student Union and two private fundraisers outside the school—to help raise money for Invisible Children. Their fundraisers have included the sale of baked goods, raffle tickets, Invisible Children merchandise and talent show tickets. According to Levine, their first fundraiser raised about 1,200 dollars, and the following fundraisers were just as successful.

According to Levine, Thursday's presentation was extremely successful as well. So many students were interested in viewing it that many had to be turned away. Fortunately, Innocent managed to speak to several classes in classrooms between presentations. Levine estimates that about 20 classes, including those Innocent visited outside the lecture hall, managed to view the presentation and many students donated.

Many teachers found the experience to be worthwhile. "Studying history without taking into account the moral questions and problems of today [...] is missing the point," social studies teacher Avram Jezer said. "It [the

presentation] was very powerful. We had several students with tears in their eyes by the end of it." After the presentation, each of Jezer's classes decided to collect 35 dollars to sponsor a student in need of education in Africa for one month.

Sophomore Morgan Higgins agreed that that presentation encouraged her to make a difference. "Just knowing more about it makes it seem more important," said Higgins, who also plans to sponsor a child. "Kids are going through such horrible times, and this just shouldn't be happening."

Teachers also found creative ways to incorporate the presentation into their class lessons. "There's so much negative accumulation against Wall Street and business that I think any sensitivity and awareness to the needs of emerging nations and humanitarian issues [...] is very important for a good leader to pay attention to, and I think there is a necessity of good leadership in business," said social studies teacher George Kennedy, who brought his Wall Street with Merrill Lynch (HF5-PWS) class to the presentation. He added that he hoped to use the presentation as a segue into a discussion on how to scrutinize various charitable institutions based on how much of the proceeds actually go to help a given cause.

Many students were profoundly affected by the presentation. "It was very moving, [especially] the video showing how the kids have to walk almost in the dark by the end of their journey

for a long way to get to camps or areas where they'll be safe for the night," junior Harris Dupree said. However, Dupree said he was perturbed by the humorous tone members of the organization took at the beginning to try to entertain students. "It's a very serious subject and the beginning was too light for me, too humorous. It [...] took away from the gravity of the issue."

Other students were inspired by Innocent's story. With the help of an Invisible Children scholarship, he is now a freshman in college and is running for Ugandan parliament in 2016, his first step towards achieving his goal of becoming president. "He seemed intelligent and brave. I hope he becomes president," sophomore Izzy Hechkooff said.

Levine is grateful for the opportunity to get Stuyvesant students involved with Invisible Children. "Since Invisible Children has started back in 2002, night commuting has ended, there are currently 35 arrest warrants out for the rebel army's leader, Joseph Kony, [and] our own government has begun to get involved where we've had members of Congress trying to enact peace to this region of the world," Levine said. "Invisible Children, as an organization, has almost single-handedly stopped the induction of children into the army to become child soldiers, has helped fight disease, has helped build schools and has changed lives."

He hopes the organization will return to Stuyvesant to solicit the help of students in the future.

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Features

In With The New (And Some Of The Old)

By CONNOR JUSTICE

Despite the recent budget cuts that have sucked fun and creative classes from the curriculums of countless schools across the state, the Stuyvesant administration has managed to offer several new and exciting classes for students in the 2010 fall term. Some of these are classes that have been offered before and are being reinstated, while others are brand new. While these classes are exciting, and will join the ranks of numerous other great classes already offered, they are by no means the only worthwhile classes in the school. These are some of the interesting classes, new and old, that Stuyvesant students can choose from for the coming term.

Biology

One interesting class being offered by the Biology department is Medical Diagnosis, a class for Juniors and Seniors taught by Biology teacher Jerry Citron. According to Assistant Principal Biology Elizabeth Fong, the class will be taught in a similar manner to a medical school class and students in the class will "learn about medical conditions" and "watch DVD's of surgeries."

Chemistry

Another new class offered for the coming term is Chemistry Applications. Created by Chemistry teacher Kirstin Pluchino and the Chemistry department, the goal of the class is to help students analyze the real world applications of Regents Chemistry topics. In the class, students will analyze topics such as green science, mili-

tary technology and food science. Students will also examine the uses of Chemistry in those fields. Pluchino hopes for the class to be as "hands on as possible." Unfortunately, this exciting new class is not set in stone, so if you think you might be interested, you should contact Assistant Principal Chemistry and Physics Scott Thomas.

English

The English department will bring back two classes from the 2008 - 2009 school year that were not offered to students this year: Writers Work Shop and Women's Voices. Both of these classes were taught by English Teacher Annie Thoms during the 2008 - 2009 school year, but when she left on maternity leave for the 2009 - 2010 school year, the classes were removed from the syllabus. However, Thoms will return to the school for the fall 2010 term and so will the classes.

According to the course descriptions on Stuy.edu, in Writer's Workshop, an elective for juniors and seniors, students will learn techniques to help them write with "honesty and power." Students will also study models from contemporary and classic fiction to learn how to create an "effective narrative." In Women's Voices, an elective for seniors, students will examine topics, such as sexuality and gender roles, from "a pro-female perspective." The class will also read novels, short stories and poems throughout the semester.

Fine Arts/Technology

The fine arts and technology departments offer various courses that teach students how to craft

things on their own, by using anything from computers to ceramics wheels. Many of these courses are graduation requirements as five techs or ten techs so all students are required to take at least one tech class during their four years. One of these classes is Acrylic Oil Painting, offered only to seniors as a ten tech class. This course "functions like an artist workshop," according to its description on Stuy.edu, and allows students to evaluate both their own work and the work of their peers.

Another class offered by the Technology department is Ceramics. Although this class has an emphasis on forming clay, students will also be able to use tools like kilns, wheels and glazes. Students will learn the methods and rules that will give them a broad understanding of ceramics, including safety and glaze chemistry. According to Stuy.edu, this class is available to all students interested in "exploring ceramics from a creative, artistic and technical perspective."

Physics

An elective offered to students of all grades is Physics of Music. Created by the Physics department, this class is open to "anyone who is interested in exploring the physics of acoustic and electronic instruments," according to Stuy.edu. Students looking to take the class need no prior experience in either music or physics and can expect to learn about "the physical realities underlying the composition and perception of acoustical and musical phenomena."

Although Stuyvesant is known for its rigorous core curriculum



and emphasis on Math and the sciences, these classes show us that nearly all interests are catered to at Stuyvesant and that students can always find classes that they find interesting.

Social Studies

The social studies department, while not introducing any new classes for the coming term, is full of interesting classes that have been around for years. One of these classes is Modern China, a class for all sophomores, juniors and seniors who are interested. Modern China will be taught for the first time by Social Studies teacher Bill Boericke, who will bring a breath of fresh air to the class by putting a new focus on Chinese economics and trade policies. The Assistant Principal Social Studies, Ms. Suri, says that the class "is going to be completely different."

Another class being offered by the Social Studies department is The History of Western Political Theory—a year long course

World Languages

The World Languages department is also bringing back a class for next term. In the fall, German I will be taught by German and Spanish teacher Gabriele Dehn-Knight. Because of the Language department's rotating German schedule, German I was not taught this year and the class of 2013 was not offered German I as a language. Those in the class of 2014, however, will have the class as an option. The class will "mainly follow the textbook, but as we cover more advanced topics, we will be using other materials as well," Dehn - Knight said.

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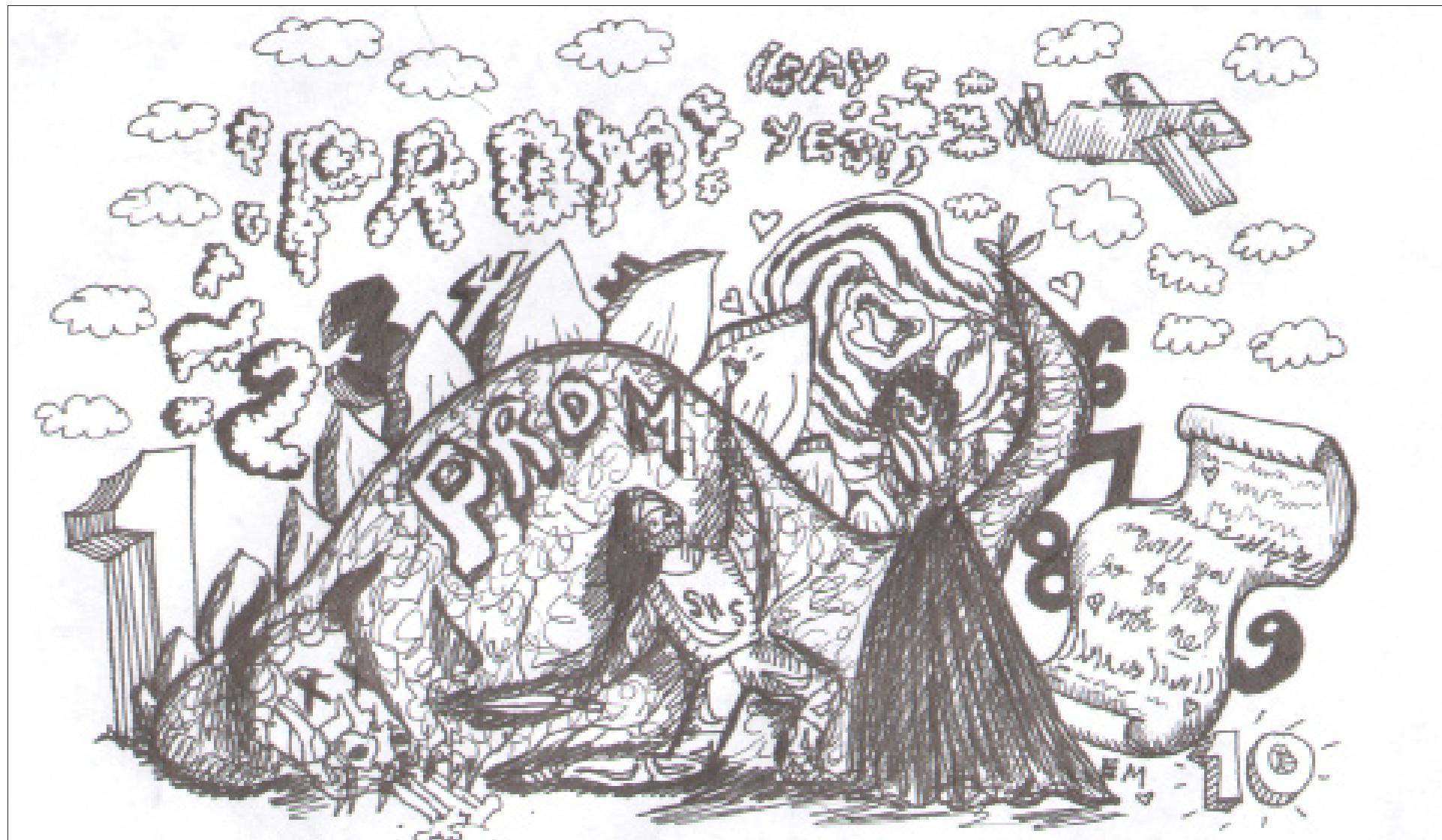
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Features

An Offer They Can't Refuse

By SHILPA AGRAWAL and HANNAH O'GRADY

The end of the year is quickly approaching, and with it comes the scramble of many seniors to land a prom date. This year, Stuyvesant seniors have gone far beyond the classic flowers-and-chocolate approach. Their creative displays have surfaced on the internet and even prompted The New York Post to write an article. Here are The Spectator's top picks for prom proposals of the 2010 season:



Ravenous for Romance

Jeff Zhang and Alda Chan

Senior Alda Chan got just what she ordered—and then some—when senior Jeff Zhang asked her to prom during an acting skit in which her character was a “food-a-holic,” Chan said. Shortly after Chan ordered a “double cheese, double anchovies” pie on an imaginary phone,

Zhang appeared on stage carrying a pizza box and a bouquet. After handing her the flowers, he opened the box, displaying his proposal on the inside lid.

“I was definitely surprised,” said Chan, who accepted. The pizza was distributed among the other students in the class.

The First Proposal

Bryant Hua and Kristi Moy

Senior Bryant Hua certainly set the stage with his proposal when he asked senior Kristi Moy, a girl’s hip-hop dancer, to prom during a scene of SING!s New Haven performance.

“I definitely wasn’t expecting it. If you look at the video [of the proposal], I was falling all over the place,” Moy said.

The girl’s hip-hop crew worked with Hua to surreptitiously plan the proposal. At the end of their routine, all of the hip-hop dancers were supposed to fall on the floor, but Moy was told that everyone had

to quickly get back up because of the strict SING! time constraint. Little did she know that everyone else would stay on the floor while she rushed to rise.

“I didn’t see any of the other girls get up, so I sat back down. But all of the other hip-hop girls were telling me to get up,” Moy said. “I thought it was part of the script but I had never even read the script, and I didn’t know what to do. And then he [Hua] asked me, ‘Kristi, will you go to prom with me?’ And it was really sweet.”

Like a Fairytale

David Park and Ronny Ho

Who ever said the days of chivalry are gone? Senior David Park shows that knights in shining armor can be successful even in the 21st century. Park dressed up in all gray and had with him a sword and a shield to give a knight-like impression. After jumping off his “horse,” a friend who carried Park on his back, and “slaying” the dragon, played by another student dressed up in a dragon cos-

tume, Park asked for senior Ronny Ho’s hand to prom. As Park got down on one knee, someone from the crowd of onlookers rushed to give him a bouquet of flowers, and Park asked Ho, “Now that I’ve slayed the dragon, will you be my princess and come to prom with me?” His gallant proposal was well-received by a happy, albeit startled Ho, who said “yes.”

Chalk Full of Love

Ethan Stumpf and Sara Carrion

Senior Sara Carrion did not expect to see anything more than early-morning joggers and bikers on her daily walk to school along the West Side Highway, so she was startled to see the words “SARA / PROM?” written repeatedly in multicolored chalk on the ground between pier 40 and school. As she neared the end of the path—excitement building—she noticed senior Ethan Stumpf waiting for her with a single

Prom-bound poet

Charles Marquez and Jennifer Reyes

Open Mic is the place where people let go of emotions, share writings, sometimes make people laugh and sometimes make people cry. Senior Charles Marquez was able to do all of these things when he went up to the podium, and asked senior Jennifer Reyes to prom.

Marquez had just finished reading a poem when he said he wanted to read another sonnet that he had written. The sonnet started off by asking: “Why is there so much pressure on prom night?” The sonnet went on to discuss the prom-frenzy

rose, surrounded by passersby who had stopped to witness the spectacle. “I wasn’t sure if he was going to ask me,” senior Sara Carrion said. “I was very pleasantly surprised and really happy about it.”

Stumpf, who had woken up at 5:00 a.m. that morning to write his message along the bike path with the help of senior Dylan Cohen, was rewarded with Sara’s enthusiastic “yes” and cheers from onlookers.

Go Team, Go!

Gregory Dinkel and Claire Littlefield

Senior Gregory Dinkel first got his idea of how to ask senior Claire Littlefield to prom when watching a commercial in which supporters of a sports team painted the name of the team across their bare chests. “I got some of my friends together and we did the same thing,” said Dinkel, who got five other students to spell out P-R-O-M? on their torsos. Dinkel himself stood next to them while sporting check boxes

A Tuneful Tender

Arthur Yuen and Irene Ng

In Bollywood, and even in some Hollywood movies, the hero always manages to win over a girl’s heart through song. Although we are told that what we see in movies does not actually happen in real life, this rule does not hold true for senior Arthur Yuen, who asked senior Irene Ng to prom by singing a rendition of B.O.B’s “Nothin’ On You” and Train’s “Hey Soul Sister” with the help of Stuyvesant’s A-Capella group.

His proposal drew a

large crowd of people to the second floor atrium.

“I was really nervous because I didn’t expect that many people to be there,” Yuen said. Although his nerves caused him to repeatedly glance at the lyrics he had written on his hand, his performance paid off when Ng said agreed to his proposal after he sang, in the tune of “Hey Soul Sister”: “Hey Irene, I just want to ask a single thing of you,” and someone from the crowd rushed out to pass him a bouquet of flowers.

that Stuyvesant seniors feel, and went on to confess to an anonymous subject that the author wanted to spend prom night with her, saying “all I am asking is for us to dance. To be in your embrace while we swing. If you’d so please as to give me a chance. To let you blossom like a flower in spring.” At the end of the sonnet he revealed the subject as Reyes, who was sitting in the audience, and asked her to prom. She smiled and said “yes” before walking up to the podium to read her own piece.

Features

Writing, Not Always Learning, Across the Curriculum

**By ARIELLE GERBER,
HANNAH O'GRADY
and YING-YU SITU**

It's a typical school night, and sophomore Lichi Chan is working on an essay. This is hardly the first essay she's written, but it is unlike any of her past essays. This is not a thesis essay for English, nor is it a research paper for social studies. Rather, it is an essay on basketball—for physical education.

This is a result of Writing Across the Curriculum—a program designed to deepen students' understanding of subject material, while also enforcing and enriching their writing skills, by having them write in all classes—even those that don't typically require it. What started as an educational reform movement in the 1970s has become a developed program found in many high schools and colleges across the country.

and college across the country. While the program has been successful in some classes—namely humanities courses—both students and teachers report that it is lacking in effectiveness in other departments.

Some subjects, such as Spanish and social studies, seem to lend themselves naturally to Writing Across the Curriculum.

"In Spanish class, we write responses to videos about Spanish culture," freshman Sandy Yu said. "It's definitely useful because studying Spanish isn't just about learning the grammar. Writing it out places an emphasis on learning and accepting the way Hispanics speak and think different-

Even in classes that do not lend

Even in classes that do not lend themselves to writing, however, the program can be successful. Recently, in the Physical Ed-

Recently, in the Physical Ed-

education department, students were asked to write a report on the rules of games or sports, or on how they could explain certain concepts in physical education. Students in a weight training class also had to create charts explaining each muscle group and do a presentation.

when my math or physics teacher assigns us writing to do," Feng said. "It's a good way to test how much you know. If you fully understand something, it's easy to put into words. If you're struggling on your paper, then you know you haven't learned enough."

have worked for other teachers," wrote an anonymous teacher from the Art Department.

ymous social studies teacher.

Some students believe that the problem with the program is that no one really cares. "I think a lot of students don't take writing essays outside of English class seriously," sophomore Eric Heo said. "It's probably because the teachers don't take it too seriously either. My friend gave in his history essay two weeks late and still got full credit for it."

"My math teacher last year said, 'I have to do this Writing Across the Curriculum thing' and made us write essays about any subject we wanted, as long as it related to math," freshman Nina Wade said. "They couldn't be any longer than a page because he didn't want to have to grade pages of essays. He didn't really care, he was just doing it because he had to."

Some students and teachers feel Writing Across the Curriculum should be removed from certain classes completely. "I don't think it has a place in the gymnasium because it detracts from the already too little physical activity for students," wrote an anonymous Physical Education teacher.

According to freshman Heloise Lanoix, who was assigned writing homework in her Physical Education class, "We would have learned much more if we had spent the time actually playing volleyball—not writing about it."

Lanoix's feelings are shared by several other students including Chan, who still does not understand why learning to play basketball requires writing an essay about it.

"For stuff like Global History and English you have to write," Chan said. "In other subjects like [physical education] and math, it's ridiculous."

tion] and math, it's ridiculous.

While the program has been successful in some classes—namely humanities courses—both students and teachers report that it is lacking in effectiveness in other departments.

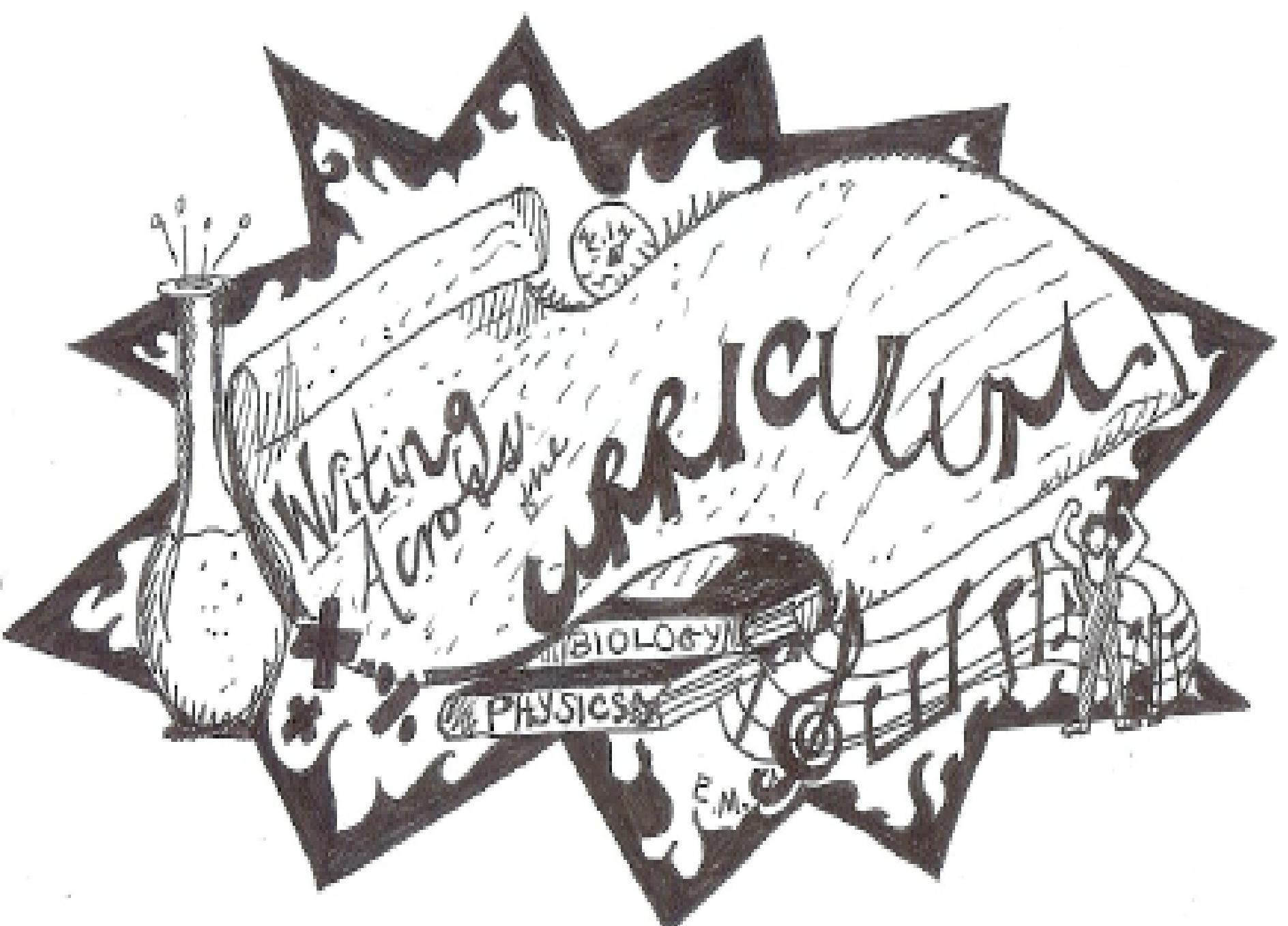
"It's definitely helpful," Physical Education Assistant Principal Larry Barth said. "If you can express how to do it to someone else, that shows that you've understood the material."

rate writing across the curriculum policies into their lessons.

Many of the surveyed teachers also wrote that they thought it would be helpful if the administration would give them more concise guidelines on how to incorporate the program. "I really would like to have a kind of handout or even a small pamphlet on Writing Across the Curriculum writing exercises that

For teachers already rushing to cover all of the required material in the curriculum, having to grade Writing Across the Curriculum assignments takes up too much of their time.

Another suggested reason for the program's lack of traction in these departments was that it takes excessive time away from the core curriculum. For teachers already rushing to cover all of the required material in the curriculum, having to grade Writing Across the Curriculum assignments takes up too much of their time. "It takes at least three



Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Why We Cheat

Several weeks ago, one of our staff members sat down outside his math classroom to take a make-up test. After some minutes of work, an anonymous girl walked by, surreptitiously dropping a folded sheet of paper on his desk, and without a word of identification, walked away. Not knowing what to do, he quickly shoved the paper in his backpack, but later discovered that the paper contained the girl's neatly organized class notes, which included every single necessary formula for the test.

In its many forms, academic dishonesty is firmly entrenched in the culture of Stuyvesant High School. If you walk down any hallway in the building you are almost guaranteed to see students copying homework, sharing questions on tests or "loosely paraphrasing" another student's work on labs. Take-home tests, when they are given, degenerate quickly into answer-sharing free-for-alls. In one example, a teacher who attended an institution famous for its honor code gave students in his AP class—students who are theoretically genuinely interested in learning the material being taught—a take-home exam of the kind he was given in college. Sure enough, while some students chose to take the exam without outside help, the majority of students shared answers with one another, clearly the teacher's trust.

When our school is filled with instances of academic dishonesty, it raises questions about how Stuyvesant students will behave when accepted into college. A good student must also be a good citizen, and act with integrity in all his academic pursuits. Despite how prevalent this behavior is, we are rarely caught or made accountable for our actions. We as a student body are considered to be some of the "best and the brightest" in New York City, if not the nation, and yet, often our high grades reflect not our hard work and academic aptitude, but rather our willingness to cheat, lie and game the system.

The question, of course, is why. What is it about our school and our students that seems to breed contempt for integrity and motivate us to cheat? Who and what are ultimately to blame?

The tired, knee-jerk response to these questions is that the cut-throat, competitive nature of Stuyvesant encourages this behavior. Our student body is selected solely on exemplary performance on the highly-competitive Specialized High School Admissions Test. Every student who walks through the second floor entrance on his first day of freshman year has out-competed thousands of other students for this privilege. Furthermore, a large number of the students at Stuyvesant earned their placement with the help of preparatory classes, constituting what some would argue is an unfair advantage. We come to Stuyvesant hungry for success, and may be willing to use unorthodox measures to attain it, but this argument is ultimately inadequate in describing the fundamental motivations for academic dishonesty at our school.

Academic dishonesty stems from a profound lack of respect in our school community, as well as a sense of combative division between students and the faculty and administration. We are a school that puts far more emphasis on the quantitative value of numbers and statistics than on the importance of learning and knowledge. The work assigned in many classes reflects this approach to education. Busywork

assignments asking students to perform onerous tasks, such as copying down physics problems verbatim from a Regents review book, send a clear message that deep, conceptual understanding of material is worthless when compared to high scores on a standardized test. This type of assignment completely disrespects the material being taught, and ultimately insults students' academic skills. The same can be said of pop quizzes, which show that the teacher does not respect or trust his or her students. In English classes, for instance, these quizzes encourage students to "study" books through alternate sources such as Spark Notes because of the implicit message sent by the quiz: it is more valuable to memorize facts about the book, like the names of characters or important events, than to actually read and form one's own interpretations of the text.

Some teachers will even go so far to disrespect the subject they are teaching by reading their classes questions from the departmental finals in order to "prepare" their students. This devalues the material being taught in the course, and essentially an entire semester of study. We are some of the best and most capable students in New York City, and we deserve assignments that challenge us to think critically and analytically as opposed to ones that simply test our mental endurance and ability to regurgitate facts.

This implicit disrespect fosters the kind of "us against them attitude" that motivates academic dishonesty. Students feel so victimized by the amount of assignments they receive, the tenor of their assignments and the constant fear of quantitative evaluation that they resort to academic dishonesty as an act of desperation. It is a well known and unsurprising fact that the classes assigning heavier, less analytical workloads are the classes in which students are more likely to cheat. Students in morning classes will provide later periods with answers to a test, despite the fact that their answers will help those students score higher than they will themselves. This is not the behavior of students who seek to relentlessly out-compete their classmates. This is instead an act of communal resistance—a non-verbal way of saying "we're all in this together." Copying homework or sharing answers to a test, while undeniably wrong, become minor acts of rebellion against a course and school that has devalued learning and analytical thought. Conversely, students are far less likely to cheat in classes where they respect the teacher and the material being taught.

We, the students, have great responsibility when it comes to curbing academic dishonesty. Far too often, students copy work or cheat on tests simply because it is easier than actually investing the time and effort necessary to earn good grades with integrity. For some, this is a matter of academic maturity. These students simply cannot manage their time, nor find the moral fortitude within themselves to complete all their work, and instead take the easy way out. The sad reality of our school is that as disrespectful as they may be, pop quizzes are necessary tools in a teacher's arsenal because we, as a student body, have proven time and time again that we cannot be trusted to do everything expected of us. However, as seductive as cheating may seem, there are real life consequences beyond a loss of moral rectitude. When we leave Stuyvesant behind, we will enter

professions that require us to do our jobs to the best of our abilities solely on our own merits. Academic dishonesty can take you into college and through medical school, but when the scalpel is in your hand and the patient is on the table, there will be no friend whispering you directions on how and where to cut.

While an environment of disrespect can cause academic dishonesty to thrive, its ultimate origins lie among us, and our moral failings. We come to Stuyvesant High School to receive the best education the New York City Public School System can provide, and have an obligation to ourselves not to poison that learning environment with cheating and plagiarism. Top-down curricular reforms can only go so far in changing the culture of our school. Ultimately it is the role of the students to make sure that acts of academic dishonesty disappear from the hallways and classrooms of Stuyvesant High School.

Although academic dishonesty seems inevitable, to an extent, in any high school community, there are things that can be done to foster a less vicious and more respectful environment. Teachers should eliminate busywork and rote memorization from their curricula because most students have shown, through copying at least one homework assignment, that they reject this type of instruction. Assignments and exams that test a student's ability to analyze and apply concepts are not only harder to copy, they also communicate to students that this is meaningful work that should be taken seriously. In a similar vein, the volume of work assigned by all classes should be decreased. A constant flood of work devalues the effort that students put into their assignments, and the exhaustion brought on by sleep deprivation causes students to copy work that, if they had time, they would complete legitimately. Fewer assignments with more emphasis on analysis would remove the sense of meaningless obligation that many students feel towards their assignments. When we feel we are actually learning, we are not thinking about cheating.

Finally, teachers must make academic dishonesty a constant part of the dialogue in class. Simple measures that have been adapted by some teachers in the school, including non-cheating pledges on exams that are administered, can help remind students that academic dishonesty is a serious transgression that poisons the learning environment. Constant re-enforcement also prevents some students from falling into the morally relativistic trap of thinking that their academic dishonesty is justified because all of their classmates are engaging in the behavior as well.

By shifting our school's focus from quantifiable, statistical achievement towards a more humanistic emphasis on analysis and critical thought, we can help eliminate the "us versus them" mentality that is at the root of many instances of academic dishonesty. If students are made to feel as though they are respected by their teachers and that they are a part of a wider community, they will hold themselves to higher standards of conduct and behavior. Of course, there will always be those who under any circumstances are willing to lie and cheat their way to the top of the meritocracy, but in a respectful, learning-based Stuyvesant High School, they will not have a leg to stand on.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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of the
Student
Body"

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The Spectator

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FOR THE RECORD

- In La Crème du Cinéma," Hyemin Yi's name was misspelled in the byline.
- In Issue 15, the title of the article should be "La Crème du Cinéma."
- In "Norimahdang 2010: Kimchi for You and Me," Gayoung Kwon was not credited for being the girl with the "powerhouse voice."
- In "Norimahdang 2010: Kimchi for You and Me," Brian Kim was the co-host with Gina Jung, not Brian Sou.

Opinions

From South Park to Stuyvesant



By DANIEL SOLOMON

The evening started off innocently enough; I had finished my homework and had settled down in front of the TV to watch my favorite show, "South Park." Packed into the 30 minute episode was the usual helping of no-holds barred humor, which among other things, parodied the founders and figures of the world's major religions. I found it funny, but some people weren't laughing. Indeed, the show ignited a firestorm of criticism, and even death threats, from those in the Islamic community who were upset with the program's depiction of the Prophet Muhammad. The show snidely made fun of Islam's prohibition of the depiction of Muhammad, and its network censorship, by never revealing the Prophet's image while dressing him up in a bear suit.

When I came to school the next day, the controversy was a source of much chatter. Reactions ranged from indifference to outrage and paralleled our school's sharp religious divides. At Stuyvesant, we have Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and assorted non-believers. Despite our different beliefs, we form a harmonious school community. Seekers are friends with members of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA), Jews hang out with Hindus and everyone knows an atheist. In this way, Stuyvesant is a microcosm of America and represents what this country should strive for.

The people who make death threats against those who they disagree with should look to places like Stuyvesant. Here, we engage in constructive dialogue about religion in history class and in the hallways; in discussions where fists never fly and voices are rarely raised. Last year, in Global Studies, we had a spirited debate about the role of the burqa in society, and present, were several students who regularly wore the head veil. The class was closely split, with many students arguing that wearing the burqa was a matter of freedom of expression, and others, including myself, who held that the veil was a symbol of oppression and an assault on women's rights. Though people were obviously emotionally invested in the issue, the tenor of the tête-à-tête remained restrained.

We can make, and take, jokes about each other's beliefs without blowing up. However, when statements are uttered that go beyond the pale most people unite in indignation, regardless of their religion. This was made clear to me just the other day, when a Muslim friend of mine came into class, and was visibly upset. When I asked her what she was angry about, she responded that her blood was boiling after a fellow classmate disrespected the Holocaust and those who were targeted by it. This touched my heart.

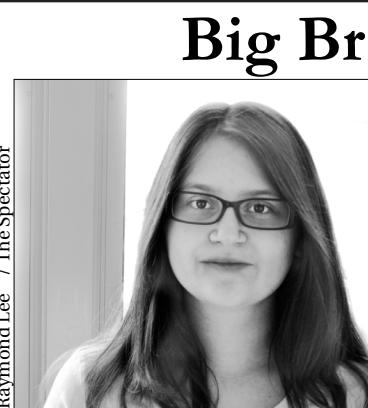
There is some religious tension, particularly between non-believers and the observant. I can attest to having heard and participated in countless debates about the existence of God, whom I happen to believe in. Nonetheless, teachers and the administration go out of their way to accommodate those who are religious and the student body tends to take a live-and-let-live attitude toward the issue. One example of this accommodation is the all-girls swim gym class that is made up of mostly strictly observant Muslims who are not supposed to be seen by males while in bathing suits.

For all the talk about religious tolerance and insensitivity, what disturbs me the most about the "South Park" incident is the way freedom of speech was cast to the wayside. After the want-to-be terrorists made

Here, we engage in constructive dialogue about religion in history class and in the hallways; in discussions where fists never fly and voices are rarely raised.

their threats, Comedy Central promptly censored the episode's sequel that aired the following week. This self-muzzling does not augur well for a nation that prides itself on being the freest place on Earth, because as David Ben-Gurion once said, "the test of democracy is freedom of criticism." Just because a certain position about a particular issue is offensive to a specific minority group, does not mean it should be roped off from public debate. This is the start of a slippery slope that inevitably transforms a free society into a fascistic one. Even hate speech, which the cartoon did not represent, is rightfully protected under the Constitution unless it causes substantial harm to a person or the public. Ultimately, it must compete in the marketplace of ideas, where it is almost always rejected.

I advise the Islamic extremists who made death threats against the creators of "South Park" to change their evil ways. I advise them to learn how to express themselves without threatening violence onto others. I ask that they understand that intimidation has no place in the discourse of democracies. I wish they could discover that one can argue over contentious issues while maintaining a modicum of civility and that one cannot win an argument by screaming. I hope that one day they will be able to take a joke, to sit back, relax and enjoy the show.



By SAMANTHA LEVINE

"Take her back to the hospital and put her back inside of you," my older brother, Michael, articulately expressed at the age of two. Even though I was only a newborn, I was probably able to gather that I should sleep with one eye open—at least until my brother had to leave for college. My sleep schedule got back on track when my brother began to see that by exploiting my powers of cuteness, he himself could reap a variety of benefits. Only when I began going to school did I realize that my brother's influence stretched much farther than manipulation, evil glares and stolen animal crackers.

Throughout my education, I followed my brother from school to school and ultimately to Stuyvesant. While from my brother's perspective it must have felt like having a miniature stalker, from my perspective, having my brother

pave the way for me had its advantages. In a way, an older sibling is like a database. Input teacher A, output information; input math question, output explanation. Math, for example, has always been my brother's forte, and through the years he has taught me to think about problems—in any area—from several angles (advice which I remember every time he becomes the problem).

In the social atmosphere of school, the seat kicker, the desk tapper and the toy hogger are all terrors. Fortunately, when I began school, such things were par for the course. While growing up, my brother and I were always fighting over something. For example, my brother always felt that whatever I had was always better. This led to a lot of conflicts involving high-speed hall chases to reclaim books and toys. Other times, my brother and I would get into fights when one of us refused to do what the other wanted to do together. Although I grew to love video games later on, my interest hadn't been innate, and I don't think my brother ever grew into drawing rainbows and butterflies. But somewhere along the way, we learned how to compromise and solve our problems—skills which continue to translate into more comfortable school dealings with other students.

However, of all the benefits of having a sibling, my observations

of the college application process were the most valuable. For one, I learned that it's never too early to start on the college essay—particularly if you're lacking in life-changing experiences. My brother just took a simple everyday experience, added a bit of humor and ended up with a fairly enjoyable essay. Even without those self-help books, he made it into college. My brother also gave me some heartfelt advice, suggesting that unless I'm insured to be the valedictorian, with perfect SAT scores, it might help to play in Carnegie Hall, build latrines in developing countries, discover a new gene, publish a best-selling novel, become an Intel finalist and be an Olympic gold medal winner—all things that I intend to achieve in the next year.

While siblings do tend to incessantly quarrel, compete and glare, they are still interesting to have around. It's nice to have a somewhat guaranteed companion and someone to pin blame on. Siblings have to make an effort in order to maintain a successful relationship, but the process is well worth it. As much as I've fought with my brother over the years, I can't imagine my life being the same without his help, support, protection and advice. And although I can't speak for my brother, I get the feeling that he's finally coming to terms with the fact that my journey home from the hospital was a one-way trip.

Campaigning 2.0



By GAVIN HUANG

The race has begun. From now until June, the school walls will be plastered with posters (as if there already aren't enough) and mediocre portraits of presidential wannabes—some in laughably professional poses, others in the intimate style of a MySpace self-portrait. There will be the classic candidate meet-and-greets on the bridge in the mornings, pamphlets with completed Sudoku puzzles strewn on the school floors and strategy meetings (with snacks!) after school. For a race that largely boils down to a popularity contest, the candidates and the Student Union (SU) take their elections seriously.

Like any electoral process, there are rules that the candidates must follow—all of which are detailed at an interest meeting with the Board of Elections (BOE). Most of the rules have been passed down from past elections, with few modifications. The first few clauses of the candidates' rules pertain to campaign posters and detail the basic logistics of when, where and how they may be posted—not on or right before Election Day, only on bulletin boards and only 8.5-by-11 size paper allowed.

The burden of responsibility falls, expectedly, on the candidates, who must ensure that their official campaigners—they may designate up to 10—follow the rules set forth by the BOE. As in a real election, the candidates are advised to "select [their] managers wisely," seniors and BOE co-chairs Julie Kim and Lee Kuhn wrote on the Facebook event promoting the candidates' interest meeting.

But even with responsible cam-

paigners and vigilant candidates, many of the rules are difficult to enforce. The rule dictating the size of campaign materials is meant to ensure a fair election, though candidates with more capital can easily outmaneuver their rivals by producing more pamphlets. It is nearly impossible to track each candidate's designated campaigners. A candidate can easily ask a friend to help with lit-dropping or flyer-posting.

The BOE depends on a Good Samaritan rule to promote a fair election. "If you notice any of the above rules being violated, immediately report to a BOE member, with proof," the rules say. The key word is "proof." As much as the BOE wants a clean election, sabotage does occur, and when the time comes for candidates to prove they weren't involved in foul play, the odds are often stacked against them. Take, for example, the rule against online campaigning, considered the bane of the SU elections. In the 2007 soph-frosh primaries, the BOE disqualified four of the five freshmen tickets for campaigning online. The only ticket that was not disqualified had garnered only 25 votes and advanced to the general election. The mess prompted then-president Jamila Ma ('08) to call a reelection that disqualified candidates could not participate in.

"Most of us got eliminated because of our campaigners," then-freshman candidate Chris Lee told The Spectator in "Freshman Primaries: Four Tickets Disqualified, Reelection to Be Held." "[The BOE was] clear but it was hard to adhere to the rules. Who isn't on Facebook?"

The answer to Lee's question is "no one." When Lee and the three

other tickets were disqualified, rules against online campaigning were fairly new. They had been introduced in the spring of 2007, deciding it was "easier to monitor campaigns when the Internet isn't involved," former BOE chair Julia Rabkin ('07) told The Spectator in 2007.

Three years later, the rule is relatively archaic in a time when social networks are gaining a larger role in our daily lives. Other schools allow their candidates to post platforms and pictures online to reach a wider audience and provide information about their candidacy that they may not be able to convey on a sheet of paper. Kim has been a member of the BOE since 2007 and says that the rule is meant to ensure that candidates don't limit themselves to faceless online campaigning.

"This is a school-based election. We want people to put effort into campaigning in school and meeting people," Kim said. "Not everyone has access to Facebook because their parents won't allow them to have one or because they choose not to have one."

There is no doubt that being able to see the face of the candidate is the most important part of an election, and the candidates know that. They plaster the walls with their pictures. They dress up in fancy clothes and bombard their peers with literature. As much as the elections are a popularity contest, the candidates still try hard to sway the students, who may not always be as supportive as they want them to be.

Participation in the SU elections has gradually decreased over the years, and low turnouts have been the trend for the past three years. Allowing online campaigning will bring the election to more students and increase interest in the campaigns. In national elections, the most successful candidates used the Internet in tandem with physical campaigning (elections will always be about the people). Eliminating the ban on online campaigning will ease the work of the BOE, whose members can focus on detecting real sabotage in school instead of patrolling their Live Feeds. It will give candidates a taste of how real-world campaigning works and increase hype about the elections. If candidates utilize all their available resources like in a real campaign, maybe students will start taking them more seriously.

Opinions

Attention, Please



Rosa Huang / The Spectator

By RITA KIRZNER

I read the same sentence over seven or eight times before I blinked my eyes and put the book down. The train shook me from side to side, and I stared ahead of me, not seeing

anything. As usual, I was having trouble concentrating on reading my book. Though the reading was only 20 pages long, it seemed impossible to get through—after a few minutes of trying to read, my eyes began focusing on the white space of

the page rather than the words.

I felt as if my ability to read long pieces of writing was slipping away. I used to fly through books as a kid, but these days, reading a page took several minutes. And if I struggled to read a few pages of my history textbook, what would I do when

be.

I wasn't the only one, though. I thought about all the things people used as distractions: television, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Formspring—the list continued. These forms of entertainment all provided quick information with easy access, making them perfection distractions. I wanted to know things fast. I was short on time all the time and I craved condensed information in small paragraphs—the opposite of what our textbooks provide. It was so much more enticing to look at the news feed on Facebook, where I knew exactly what was happening in a few words.

Was it the fact that we all talked on AIM and looked up information on Google that spoiled us, making us feel entitled to speedy access to everything? We have become accustomed to thoughts being expressed in one or two lines, and we even started using abbreviations like "idk" or "lol" because typing out three words took too long. People just wanted small bites of information or a broad idea, rarely caring about the full story. Like the classic brat from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," Veruca Salt, we want it, and we want it now!

I tried to regain the diligence needed to beat this impulsiveness. As if trying to treat an addiction, I worked on disciplining myself to have patience and stick to a task, no matter

how hard. In math class, I'd try to understand why something worked rather than just memorizing the formula. I would take the stairs instead of the escalator. I looked things up in the textbook instead of finding them on the Internet. It wasn't practical, but it taught me to steadily push through chal-

If I struggle to read a few pages of my history textbook, what would I do when college professors spring a 700-page book on me and expect it finished in a week?

college professors spring a 700-page book on me and expect it finished in a week? Sometimes I forced myself to skim to pay attention, which worked for a while until I lost concentration again. Focusing on anything was just harder than it used to

As if trying to treat an addiction, I worked on disciplining myself to have patience and stick to a task, no matter how hard.

lenging or laborious work and endure the boredom. We can't walk away from everything that is slightly unpleasant or laborious, or else, once we enter the real world, we won't be able to accept the burdens of responsibility.



Mostafa Elmahdy / The Spectator

By JOSEPH FRANKEL

'Tis the season of Advanced Placement (AP) exams, bringing panic to students who clutch their red and white prep books, sift through flash cards and attempt to cram in as much review as they can in what little time they have left. For a generally stressed out student body, this is the apex. Naturally, most of us strive to maintain the best habits in the days before our exams: eating right, focusing

only on what we need to do and getting enough sleep the night before the exam. But, ironically enough, a school policy prevents us from doing so. Stuyvesant's policy of making class attendance mandatory on AP test days is not only ineffective, but adds an unnecessary level of stress to already anxious students.

While most teachers understand when students happen to "fall ill" the morning of their AP exams, many still counter-in-

tuitively require students to report to class on the day of their exam. While this is fair enough to students whose exams are in the morning and don't have to deal with the anxiety leading up to taking a test in school, it is unreasonable for those whose exams are in the afternoon.

Many students, when facing an impending in-class exam, let alone an AP exam, spend the classes beforehand wrought with anxiety, attempting to study what they can. The problem is exacerbated when it comes to AP exams: not only are students spending their class time agonizing over the coming AP test, but they are also unable to focus on everyday class material—and with good reason. The time that they spend stressing about their impending test, all the while gaining nothing from classes that day, would be much better spent studying or sleeping.

Students, and ultimately the school, would be much better served if they were excused from classes, in order to maximize their time studying and sleeping—two things that our teachers repeatedly emphasize as important measures in preparing for any exam. Not only would students be under at least an iota less of pressure, but they would perform much better. Considering the pains that the administration has gone to in order to improve our college acceptance rates, the most recent example of which is the four year math requirement, this paradigm seems completely counterproductive. It makes no sense that the school would jeopardize the results of important tests in favor of half a day's

worth of lessons that we'd barely absorb.

If the idea of excusing students from class were completely unheard of, Stuyvesant's current policy would make much more sense. But, according to students from other schools throughout the city, and some from out of state,

"Regardless of how we cope now, it is not only the most logical, but most beneficial, idea to adjust the attendance policy to allow for students to better prepare themselves."

this has been standard policy for years. Students from Bard High School Early College and Hunter College High School both reported that their schools maintain an excused absence policy for AP test days, for both afternoon and morning tests. Not only does this policy seem to be maintained by many schools, but some even go out of their way to further accommodate students taking AP tests. For example, according to students at Evanston Township High School, in Evanston,

Illinois, those who take APs are not only excused from class the day of their exam, but are sent home early the day before to allow them to optimally prepare for the day ahead.

While giving students an extra half-day to study might be a little excessive, there is no reason why Stuyvesant cannot show at least some of the leniency that other schools demonstrate during AP season. With the continuation of the current policy, students will still handle this stressful period the way they have for years: with incredible willpower and focus during classes preceding the AP, or by conveniently catching a cold.

Regardless of how students cope now, it is only the most logical idea to adjust the attendance policy to allow students to better prepare themselves. If the Stuyvesant administration wants its students to perform their best on major tests, it needs to get out of the way.

As our teachers are always fond of reminding us, our behavior and level of work "won't cut it in college." While we're taking our AP exams, designed to approximate a college final exam, Stuyvesant should adhere to the policies of the universities it presumes to prepare us for. Almost all institutions of higher education allow students a week long reading period, in which they have the opportunity to focus on nothing but studying for their finals. While we're not quite there yet, it demonstrates the point that no college student in the country would react well to having to attend a class at eight o'clock, let alone during finals.

Arts and Entertainment

In Need of Exposure: Sarah Morgan Cohen-Smith and Spencer Birnbaum



By RITA KIRZNER

Not all Stuyvesant students know what career they want to pursue in the future, but most hope to find a job they love. Of those who participate in plays, theater productions, writing publications and other artistic outlets, many are uncertain whether these interests will be relevant later in their lives. But there are students, like senior Sarah Morgan Cohen-Smith and junior Spencer Birnbaum, who are well on their way to a potential career in photography.

Both Cohen-Smith and Birnbaum have been interested in photography for years. Cohen-Smith was first drawn to photography at an art camp that she has attended for five years. It was there that she realized that drawing was not her forte, and as a result, she transferred into a photo class, discovering a serious hobby.

Smith is currently part of a program called The Internship at International Center of Photography (ICP), taking a class which consists of three projects across a span of 30 weeks: documentary, studio and personal vision. She has previously taken two other classes on dark-room photography at the ICP.

Smith's work is mostly portraiture, and she likes her photographs to tell stories. Currently, she is working on two main projects, one of which requires in-studio shooting of her two models, junior Matteo Singer and senior Paola Sokayeva. "I was experimenting with lighting situations and a big medium-format camera," Cohen-Smith said. "I've never worked in the studio before, but it's awesome."

The other project is still in the planning stage, involving fairytale adaptations and shooting with toy cameras to give a surreal effect.

For her current work, Cohen-Smith uses the Nikon FM10, a manual film camera. She owns many other cameras, including a Polaroid and a lomographic Oktomat—a camera that takes eight pictures at once. Although Cohen-Smith occasionally borrows her parents' digital camera, she herself does not own one,

and instead, shoots mostly in film. Her parents plan on getting Cohen-Smith the Canon 40D, a sophisticated digital camera, for her 18th birthday. It will allow her to view and delete pictures at her whim, unlike film cameras, which only have room

"When someone is paying you for pictures, it changes the dynamic slightly."
-Spencer Birnbaum, junior

for a specific number of shots and whose quality can only be determined once developed.

Unlike Cohen-Smith's inspiration, Birnbaum's interest began at home. Initially exposed to photography by his uncle, Birnbaum received his first point-and-shoot on his 12th birthday. "Things really clicked," said Birnbaum, when his uncle let him borrow his backup Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) for a day. About a year ago, he bought his own DSLR camera and, with the help of his aunt—a professional fine art/travel photographer—he began to focus on developing vision and editing his work.

Birnbaum says he has always used Canon cameras. He currently shoots with the Canon Rebel XTi, which allows him to change bodies and lenses, creating different effects in his photography. Like Cohen-Smith, Birnbaum also works with portraiture, but says he has been told that some of his work has a high-quality commercial look to it. Inspiration for his photography comes from his life. "Every time something captures my imagination,

or I have a compelling life experience, it changes what, and how, I photograph," he said.

Both Cohen-Smith and Birnbaum seem to know what they want in the future. Cohen-Smith hopes to one day be a fashion photographer and shoot for big magazines. Birnbaum plans on continuing to work in the photography field.

To achieve these goals, both Cohen-Smith and Birnbaum pursue opportunities and experiences in the field. Cohen-Smith was part of a photography workshop called Rebel Voices, in 2008, which was funded by the Sadie Nash Foundation and explored women's rights and activism through photography. At the end of the workshop, she and other participants displayed their work in a gallery in Brooklyn.

Smith also interns for her father's friend, a professional portrait photographer. "It's not very glamorous. I hold reflectors and make sure collars sit straight. But it's very informative," she said. In addition, Cohen-Smith was one of three students in the United States to win Kenyon College's art scholarship.

Birnbaum is the staff photographer for Chair and the Maiden, an art gallery in NoHo. He shoots all of their events, from show openings to musical performances. At the same time, Birnbaum is the staff photographer for the not-for-profit organization Fund Art Now, which raises money for various art projects. "When someone is paying you for pictures, it changes the dynamic slightly," said Birnbaum, acknowledging that working for a professional adds some pressure.

Both working diligently to achieve success in the field of photography, Cohen-Smith and Birnbaum have gotten head starts on their potential careers. They see the beauty in seemingly minuscule things and document them through film. They hone the difficult craft that they are naturally talented in. With the pre-mature success that they've already achieved, it wouldn't be outlandish to find their names credited in fashion magazines or posh photo albums of their own in the future.

Forty Years Can Give You Such a Crick in the Neck



By MOLLIE FORMAN

Bursting with enthusiasm and creativity, "Waking Sleeping Beauty," written by Patrick Pacheco and directed and narrated by Don Hahn, tells the story of the greatest comeback in American filmmaking history. This documentary on the Disney Renaissance, between the 1980s and 1990s, follows the company's leaders and animators in their quest to revitalize a failing art form and reveals the mania, tragedies and triumphs behind our greatest childhood memories. While the film soberly disappointingly when discussing the bureaucratic side of Disney, stunning archival footage gives this documentary an endearing spirit.

In the early 1980s, Disney animation was in bad shape. With other sectors of the Walt Disney Company booming, animation was put on the back-burner. Hahn says co-founder Walt Disney himself temporarily lost interest in animation during the 1940s. The documentary picks up on the eve of the release of "The Black Cauldron" which was beaten by "The Care Bears Movie" at the box office.

Hahn, who produced several major Disney features, narrates with the gusto of a park guide. The footage is completely archival—nothing was recorded for this documentary except the narration. Hahn brings us back in time with him, immersing the audience in the subject matter. The bright colors and plucky piano score give the film a fantastical quality.

The childish narration, which directs questions at the audience and occasionally sounds forced, might alienate those looking for straight information. Nonetheless, the narration serves to make the audience comfortable with Disney's cast of characters. The animators, and even some of the executives, are rarely the adults we expect them to be. CEO Michael Eisner and Company President Frank Wells are introduced by a clip of them pie-ing each other in the face. The executives, and even co-founder Roy Disney, are subjected to countless caricatures drawn by disgruntled animators.

The real stars of this film are the animators. Some of the faces are familiar: a young Tim Burton glances morosely at the camera, and John Lasseter, who became Chief Creative Officer of Disney and Pixar in 2006, beams tiredly. In the 1980s, Lasseter was just another Disney animator. He is shown flipping through a se-

quence of Peter Pan drawings, while his colleague chirps, "It's better than the movies we're making today, but we can't help that!"

This high spirit in hard times permeates the entire department; when the animation team is moved from the Disney lot to a warehouse, the animators, as Hahn narrates, "celebrate the end of Disney animation with a reenactment of 'Apocalypse Now.'" Even as animator Joe Ranft flips through hundreds of revisions to be thrown away, he is in high spirits.

Because there is so much enthusiasm in the animation department, the large part of the film dedicated to corporate shenanigans gets tedious. Eisner, Wells and Studio Chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg are certainly intriguing characters, and it is entertaining to see their egotistical battles. However, a documentary on Disney would serve better by focusing on creativity—not the squabbling of bureaucrats.

What makes this documentary memorable is the integration of clips from the making of the Renaissance classics. Lyricist Howard Ashman's energetic pitch of "Under the Sea" from "The Little Mermaid" is edited together beautifully with the final result. Another fantastic editing moment occurs when Hahn narrates over the powerful transformation scene of "Beauty and the Beast," describing the exultant reaction of their first screening audience. A shot of Angela Lansbury and Jerry Orbach recording "Be Our Guest" reveals the magnitude of animation's comeback: the legendary presence of these actors encompasses the power that has made these classic films everlasting.

"Waking Sleeping Beauty" is not a perfect documentary: the self-indulgence of a movie made by filmmakers about themselves can become stifling. However, perhaps they have a right to be indulgent, because it is rare that their story gets heard. The narcissistic struggles of Eisner, Katzenberg and Roy Disney are legendary, but it is easy to forget that, without their artistic collaborators, they would be nothing.

These are the people we want to believe are behind the movies we love: talented, passionate artists who pour their whole hearts and souls into their craft. It is refreshing to see that behind the bureaucracy of film production is a group of people who make movies because they love them just as much as we do.

Arts and Entertainment

Unearthed from the Slushpile: Cali Ska Teens Grow Up Into Groove-Tech



By JAMES KOGAN

As much as I enjoy Rihanna's preoccupation with rude boys, or Ke\$ha's incredibly healthy habits of brushing her teeth with whiskey, at times I want music with more soul than the autotune can offer. For those occasions, I know I can turn to the Rx Bandits, a band refreshingly talented and undeniably unique.

Since starting out in 1995 in Orange County, California, the Rx Bandits have come a long way with their signature sound. Originally known as the Pharmaceutical Bandits, the band, in its early years, consisted of several high school seniors playing Third

Wave Ska—essentially, happy-go-lucky reggae. The band's third album, titled "Progress," marked the band letting go of its roots and shifting from ska into the world of progressive rock, introducing distorted riffs and guitar effects.

Its sixth and latest album, "Mandala," demonstrates the band's morphing sound, almost completely leaving behind its signature ska-based horn melodies in favor of unusual time signatures, long and trippy delay-laden instrumental sections and even some Spanish lyrics. With Matt Embree on guitar and vocals, Steve Choi on keyboard/guitar, Joseph Troy on bass

and Chris Tsagakis (commonly known by fans as C-Gak) on drums, the band's sound clearly conveys moods and emotions without being muddled in the band's experimental tendency.

One of my personal favorites in the album, "It's Only Another Parsec," starts off with a whirring drone, then speeds into a punchy synthesizer arpeggiation that sets the song into a fast-paced whirlwind. The band plays around with structure and melody, with many tiny riffs that make up any one of its songs. Embree's smooth, soulful voice lets you linger in the verse before plunging you into a refreshing chorus and pulling you back out. The song builds

up to a peak with a quick-picked and almost dissonant progression, takes you about on the chorus one last time and then, comes to a rapid stop. Fading out and into an instrumental section, the end of the song is reminiscent of a calm beach, complete with seagull noises and delayed riffs that ebb and flow like a lava-lamp.

Another captivating track is "Mientras La Veo Soñar," which beckons one to get up and dance the salsa along with the heavily syncopated melody. Spanish lyrics in the verse turn into English at the incredibly bright sounding chorus and provide just the right amount of room to breathe before returning to the main motif. Three and a half minutes into the song, the riff begins to fade out and is replaced by a strong and consistent drum line that plays along with a keyboard solo.

The next track on the album is described best by Embree, in a pre-album YouTube update: "like a caterpillar marching," he said. "March of the Caterpillar" has a quiet and consistent pace while blending calm minor-key guitar chords and twin guitar harmonies. The sound of blowing wind veils the song with a solemn feeling of loneliness, and an almost unnoticeable drum beat provides the rhythmic backbone of the song. I find it remarkable how the music is able to evoke images; the track seems to embody a single caterpillar making its way across a leaf.

The ballad "White Lies" has a bittersweet melody and the perfect amount of "heartbreak," without getting too whiny. After a drum intro that wonderfully showcases Tsagakis's unique playing style, characterized by syncopation and oddly placed beats, we're lead into soft key-

board chords that make up the verse. The chorus is just as somber and filled with heart-wrenching, yet mature, emotion, almost allowing one to imagine the whole band crying while singing its backup vocals. The song culminates with long piano and violin solos and slows down on a last heartfelt note, accompanied with a soft guitar strum.

Since starting out in 1995 in Orange County, California, the Rx Bandits have come a long way with their signature sound.

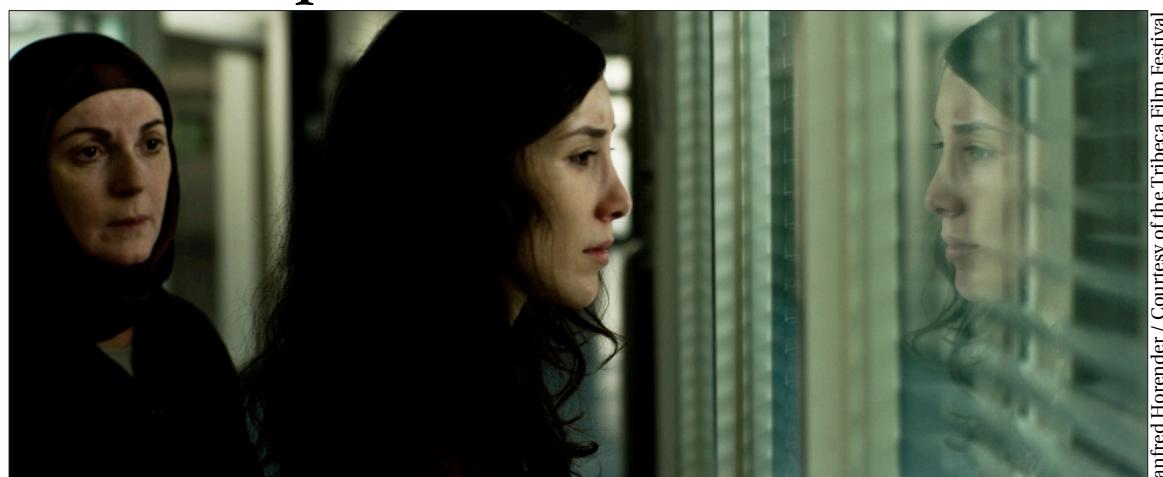
The album flows in a seamless and mature manner, similar to jazz pieces. Despite their experimental and almost dissonant elements, the songs are still coherent and enjoyable to listen to. The guitar, drum and piano bits are incredibly calculated without trading off technicality for melody, a defining characteristic of "groove-tech." While the songs are a huge departure from the group's original sound, they showcase a fresh evolution in music—one that can constantly intrigue listeners with unique and intelligent composition, but still keep an enjoyable rock vibe.

And the Winner Is...

"When We Leave" Garners Top Tribeca Fest Honors

By HYEMIN YI

All eloquent diction aside, "When We Leave," which premiered at the 9th annual Tribeca Film Festival, is very simple and



From a scene in "When We Leave." Left: Halyme (Derya Alabora) Right: Umay (Sibel Kekilli)

"When We Leave" is a thoughtful and heartbreaking film about a woman who must free herself from an abusive relationship, as well as the cultural prejudices and judgments that keep her there.

familiar. It is a universal story about the need to love and be loved. "When We Leave" is a thoughtful and heartbreak-

film about a woman who must free herself from an abusive relationship, as well as the cultural prejudices and judgments that keep her there. Director and writer Feo Aladag gives a lot of attention to the nuances of Islamic, Turkish and German cultures, providing a rich setting for the film. The film is not solely trying to grapple with profound social issues. It zeros in on the plights of one specific woman and one specific family to create a story packed with real human yearning and emotion. Given its dramatic premise, the film had the potential to be at the very least, mediocre and melodramatic and at the very best, truly remarkable.

Umay (Sibel Kekilli) is strong enough to withstand generations of Muslim tradition and yet, as a daughter cast aside by all those she loves, she is vulnerable enough to have depth to her character. Umay attempts to build a decent lifestyle for herself and her five-year-old son Cem, but is incessantly drawn back to her family, even after it has officially cut ties with her; this is painful to watch—as nice as it would be to have the family take her back, it's not going to happen. She shows a lack of good judgment when she shows up to her sister's wedding, fully aware of the shame it would bring her family.

As antagonizing as the family sounds, the film is powerful partly because of the brief moments and shots that humanize them.

Umay is not the only member of the family who feels the pain caused by her separation; all the characters experience plights of their own. Umay's oldest brother, the pinnacle of conservative Muslim chauvinism, frequently attempts to bring Cem back to Istanbul despite Umay's resistance. However, beyond all the anger and anguish, his eyes show hints of regret and remorse. Umay's father, who vehemently shuts the door on his daughter on multiple occasions, lies on the bed of a hospital and quietly apologizes to her. The entire cast of "When We Leave" provides the impressive acting necessary to give the nuances involved in exploring the unavoidable

pull and connection of family. Much of the 119 minutes of the film is filled with silence. While this does leave room for logistical confusion (at an early scene of a family dinner in Istanbul, there is no explanation for who is whom), it also creates a sense of quiet, hovering intensity that is the stylistic driving force behind the film. Aladag chooses to show, rather than explain, each step of the journey. The silence creates a focus lens for the characters' emotions. When Umay is eating dinner with her husband's family, the tension and Umay's fear are depicted through the silence—no words are necessary.

The theme of one woman's struggle for personal freedom has

often been explored, but rarely with the subtlety, craftsmanship and humanity as that of "When We Leave." It is no surprise that the film won best narrative feature and actress at the TFF, or that prior to the festival it also received the Label Europa Cinemas award at the 2010 Berlin International and six nominations at the 2010 German Film Awards.

While the narrative concentrates on Umay and her family, examining the Muslim communal complexities that arise from Umay's actions, the story is not one specific to the plights of Turkish immigrants in Germany—it is a universal story about the need to love and be loved.

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Page 6

SPECTATOR

Friday, June 8, 1984

SURVEY

By Mark Bardack

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics." With this precaution in mind, the Spectator has attempted to gather some idea of the opinions of the faculty.

With this survey The Spectator instituted a new policy in which it will attempt to represent both viewpoints of the students and faculty.

As you may recall, earlier in the year The Spectator conducted a student survey. Many of the questions used in this teacher poll were taken directly from the student survey in order to compare and contrast the views of both groups.

However, the inferences drawn from this survey should not be regarded as conclusive of the views of the entire faculty, due to the somewhat limited response we received. It is for this reason that an interpretation of general attitudes from the responses rather than percentages, will be given. If anyone is interested in the exact figures, please come down to The Spectator office, Room B12.

The Spectator would like to thank those teachers who participated in the poll for their cooperation. Their interest in the welfare of the students will hopefully allow for greater understanding and respect between the two groups.

The following are the results of the May 16th teacher poll.

1. Question: Do you favor letter or number grades?

By almost a two-to-one margin, most teachers, favor the present system of number grades. This view was consistent with that of the students who favor number grades by an even wider margin of four-to-one. One teacher commented that a number grade is "more satisfying to the student", while another member of the faculty looked at the matter from a practical point of view stating, "Because of admissions offices the student has to have a numerical grade." One interesting proposal was to grade some courses by letters and some by numbers.

2. Q: Do you feel that teachers at Stuyvesant in general place an unnecessary amount of pressure on students?

An overwhelming number of teachers felt that they are *not* the cause of student pressure. Interestingly enough, of the four groups that students had to choose from, teachers were seen as the least source of their pressure. One teacher gave his own interpretation of the problem: "A few teachers make excessive demands and encroach on the rights and time of other subject teachers. Students get caught in the crunch."

3. Q: Do you believe Stuyvesant students are too grade conscious?

By an almost unanimous margin, the faculty believed students are too concerned with grades, which is most likely due to the heavy emphasis placed upon college entry at Stuyvesant. Yet, one teacher who felt that not enough students are grade conscious remarked, "I wish they were more so."

4. Q: What factors do you believe are the primary causes of cheating (you may choose more than one)

- a) lack of severe punishment
- b) lax test taking procedures
- c) knowing that others are cheating
- d) incomplete teaching by teachers
- e) the same test being given throughout the day.

Of the five choices listed, most teachers chose the lack of severe punishment and student's awareness that others are cheating as the primary causes of this serious problem. Lax test taking procedures and the same test being given throughout the day were also seen as major contributors to cheating, each receiving the same number of votes.

However, only a handful of the faculty considered incomplete teaching as a cause of cheating. This figure provides a stark contrast with the students who viewed this factor as the primary reason for their cheating. Furthermore, the students felt that the lack of severe punishment played only a minor role, while the faculty chose it as the primary cause.

A good number of teachers felt that none of the five choices listed could be considered to be primary causes of cheating. Rather, a significant number wrote in that a "lack of morals on the part of students" is the main cause of the problem. A lack of student understanding about the purpose of the tests, students need to obtain the best possible grade, and a lack of students preparedness, were other write-in answers listed by teachers.

One member of the faculty summed up his own view: "It (cheating) is a character defect and not caused by any of the factors you suggest. However all of the factors you suggest can increase the temptations to cheat ... and can be given as rationale."

5. Q: Which of the following plans do you believe would be best for the future of the school?

- a) moving to a new building
- b) renovating the present one

The response to this question, which was posed to the students as

well, reveals a different type of thinking by the two. An overwhelming number of teachers favored moving to a new building while only a few members of the faculty advocated renovation. Students meanwhile split the vote equally between the two choices. Obviously, the teachers seem to be approaching the matter from a practical point of view while the student body is apparently more concerned with nostalgia, or the desire for immediate changes they can benefit from.

6. Q: Hunter High School allows students two excused cuts from each class per term. Do you think a similar system should be instituted at Stuyvesant?

Although the teachers responded by a two-to-one margin against such a system, one might originally have thought that the faculty would have voted unanimously against such a proposal. The response indicates a liberal thinking by many of the faculty and a willingness to experiment with new ideas.

Even one teacher who voted against this policy revealed a certain

mendations. "Yes, but only for those who earn them."

The issue of college recommendations goes beyond the surface. More than one teacher felt that students are unappreciative of the time and work that the faculty devote to writing these recommendations. One teacher commented, "Many teachers write twenty or more, spending at least forty hours of their own time, with little or no thanks from students." Another commented, "Few students follow their requests with a thank you and only a few go back and tell the teachers what kind of success they had. This is discouraging."

8. Q: Do you think the Stuyvesant student body lives up to its outstanding reputation?

As most of us are aware, the Stuyvesant student body is often heralded as one of the finest in the city and even the nation. Although the majority of the faculty agreed that it lives up to its outstanding reputation, a significant number of teachers felt that it does not deserve such a high rating.

However, many teachers were opposed to such a proposal, believing that the requirements are high enough already. One teacher wrote, "New York City teachers are required to meet more conditions than most." Another commented that "the administration is as selective as it can be."

Yet one must wonder whether those who were against the proposal are opening the doors for somewhat less capable teachers. One faculty member addressed the problem stating, "The Board of Education should not lower standards in order to certify people who are basically incapable. Teachers are needed, but poor ones are worse than not enough."

Those teachers who favored such a proposal felt a major requirement for teaching at Stuyvesant should be experience on college level or in a gifted or specialized school. Other requirements listed were five-to-ten year teaching experience, proven teaching ability rather than just knowledge of subject area, an age minimum of thirty-five and extra courses required of prospective teachers on a more advanced level in subject area. Furthermore, a prerequisite listed was an interview with as well as. One teacher felt that the faculty must be willing to work with students on projects of both a research and creative nature.

11. Q: Do you think students get overly involved in extracurricular activities, such as Sing, which may detract from their school work?

Teachers have often complained about excessive absence on the part of students during preparations for Sing. When posed the question, teachers split on the issue, some feeling that students get too involved in extracurriculars, while others believing that "good students can manage."

12. Q: Do you think there should be a separate test day for each department?

The idea of the separate test day, which exists now, is to diminish the possibility of a student having to prepare for two or three exams on any one day. An overwhelming number of teachers agree with this policy but some added certain conditions. One teacher stated, "Yes, but not a rigid one. There are too many special problems." However, if the policy is not adhered to rigidly, does it have any use at all?

13. Q: What do you think can be done to improve student-faculty relations?

For this question, the faculty was asked to make any suggestions that they thought would better relations between students and teachers. Many faculty members felt that smaller classes are a necessity as well as time allotments for individual meetings between teachers and students during the school day.

Other teachers suggested outside of class extracurricular activities such as student faculty plays, volleyball games, and softball games. The idea of further mutual respect was also suggested where students "should not be allowed to do as they please (and) teachers should show more concern for their students as people." One faculty member felt that "students expect



degree of flexibility. "Perhaps one cut and that only for older students." Others who favored the idea stipulated certain conditions.

One teacher commented, "Yes, if Stuyvesant students would follow it rigidly," while another added, "Yes, but only if you need them."

7. Q: Due to the fact that most Stuyvesant students go on to college, do you think teachers have a special responsibility to write college recommendations?

Perhaps the most controversial question of the survey was this inquiry as to whether the Stuyvesant faculty has an extra responsibility to write college recommendations.

The majority of teachers responded that they do consider it a responsibility to assist as many students as is possible in gaining admission to the college of their choice. However, many teachers who answered "yes" stated that reasonable time allowances should be made. One teacher commented, "Yes, provided the school gives the teacher time off in order to write them properly."

One teacher felt that the faculty takes on this special responsibility only when students deserve recom-

9. Q: Do you think the Stuyvesant faculty, in general, is deserving of the same outstanding reputation?

The logical question following the previous one would be to inquire how teachers view themselves. By a very slim majority, the teachers agreed that the Stuyvesant faculty, in general, is deserving of the same fine reputation as that of the students.

However, the survey revealed a high percentage of teachers who felt that the faculty could improve its performance.

10. Q: Since Stuyvesant is a specialized high school, do you think there should be some special requirement that teachers must meet before becoming a part of the Stuyvesant faculty?

If so, what requirement(s) do you recommend?

Because of the generally gifted student body, the issue arose of whether or not there should be some special requirement for teachers who desire to teach at Stuyvesant, in order to insure a gifted faculty as well. By a slight majority, the faculty felt that indeed, some special requirement should have to be met.

Continued on Page 10

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Sports

Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better

continued from page 16

and more talented athlete. But what does it mean to say that you play a harder sport? No sport that is intrinsically easy would have any sort of widespread success. Therefore, saying that your sport is harder means nothing more than that you find it to be more difficult. If you struggle at your sport and would have more success at another, you might be playing the wrong sport.

This is the main problem with the notion that one sport can be easier than another. All sports require a distinct set of skills and strengths. I once saw Mo Vaughn hit a 505-foot home run, but I get the feeling that that 280-pound home run machine wouldn't be very effective on a soccer field. Christiano Ronaldo is considered among the best soccer players in the world, but one hit on a rugby field might just end his ca-

reer. Chad Ochocinco can break all the franchise receiving records he wants for the Cincinnati Bengals, but I wouldn't expect him to keep up with Canada's Olympic curling team.

When you claim that one sport is easier than another, you have to consider every aspect of those sports. Soccer may, for the most part, be more physically demanding than baseball, and a greater level of overall athleticism is generally required. However, the skills necessary to throw, field and hit a baseball well are extremely difficult to attain and execute.

Unless a sport requires every skill necessary for another sport, and more, it cannot naturally be more difficult. And unless a person has equivalent natural talent for two sports, and has mastered the skills of both, he cannot validly attest to which sport is more difficult. As soon as you can do that, let me know.

Boys' Track

Staying On Track

continued from page 16

as good as he was. We are replacing him with everyone stepping up and playing their part," junior Billy Barnes said.

Barnes himself is expected to win the steeplechase event at Boroughs, and Surkont, only a sophomore, has continued to establish himself as a top runner, just breaking two minutes in the 800 Meter Run at the Howard Richter Memorial Meet by three milliseconds. Furthermore, Stuyvesant's relay teams, which have already had four Top 5 finishes this season, are expected to place in the Borough Championships. Cohen, even at less than full strength, is also expected to place highly, if not win, at Boroughs, if he is able to participate. "His hundred percent would be tops in the state," said Mendes, implying that he should not be doubted even when fighting through illness.

In addition to the runners stepping up, one constant throughout the years has been

Mendes. Stuyvesant is one of only a select few schools that can boast an undefeated record at Borough Championships throughout a single millennium, and its consistency is certainly a testament to Mendes's unquestioned dedication. "You can't praise enough our coach's persistence and dedication to the team. He's more willing to be here sometimes than we are," Surkont said.

The Hitmen are extremely confident entering the last leg of their season—even more so with everyone stepping up to fill the void left by an ill Cohen. With the goals set at winning the Borough Championship, placing at states and sending some runners to the City Championship, LaGuardia seems to be the least of their worries on their road to continued success. "We will dominate them in every distance event, every relay and practically every sprint," Barnes said. "I couldn't see us losing."

Under Pressure

continued from page 16

My arm felt alive when warming up, an excited tension running through my veins. I squeezed the ball harder and threw it faster. But as soon as I stepped between the lines, I felt every ounce of confidence that I had drain from my body. My stomach sank. My arms became jelly. The Beacon fans unrelentingly yelled profanities as their catcher and cleanup hitter dug in 60 feet, six inches

away. His eyes met mine and focused intently on my pupils, as if we had been standing an inch away. Jaw clenched; his intent was obvious. He wanted to smash anything I sent his way.

And so the inning proceeded.

Every time I threw a pitch I knew there was no way it would go where I wanted it to. I walked 4 batters and let up one hit. I blew the game and cost my team the division. Based

solely on ability, could I have taken care of that Beacon team? I think so. But when the chips were down, I joined the ranks of Romo, Rivera and any other athlete who let the intensity of sport get to them.

However, a great athlete learns to accept these performances and to become better. After the 2001 World Series, Mariano Rivera followed up with a 2002 season in which he posted a 2.74 ERA and 28 saves—solid numbers for any

pitcher. Tony Romo had a season after the botched snap in which he threw for 26 touchdowns and had a 97.6 passer rating.

When athletes slip up in the clutch, it can be hard to shake off initially. But as time goes on, our mistakes get smoothed over, and we learn to try even harder the next time around. That's what makes sports so great; we can always redeem ourselves and relish the good while forgetting the bad, no

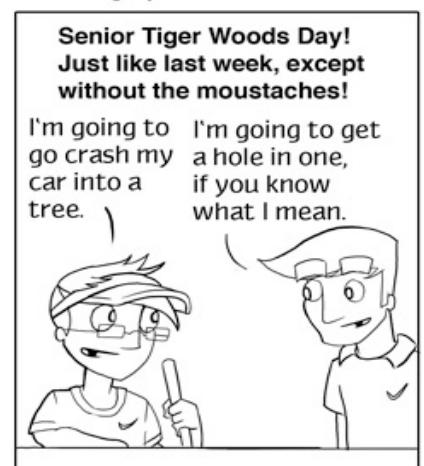
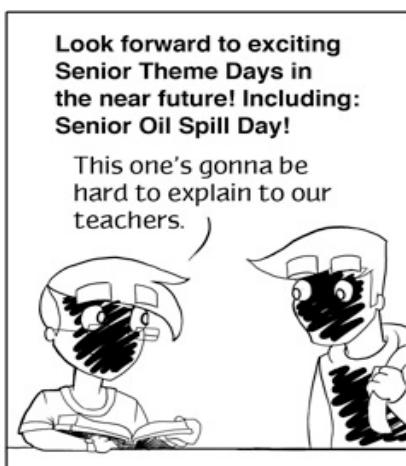
matter how much time and effort it takes.

Scrawled on a piece of tape on my baseball glove is the word "RELAX." Every time I see it, I'm reminded of pressure, failure and how far I've come to move past that one game. No matter what the stage or the scope, athletes get nervous and at times succumb to the pressure. But these are the very times that allow us to appreciate the times when we succeed.

Cartoons

Conversations

The class of 2012 has Senior Mayan Apocalypse day



THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better



By CODY BEHROOZI

All the time, when I'm talking to friends or reading a sports article, I hear that one sport is easier than another, or that one position within a sport is easier to play than another. To me, this is either blatant, unfounded elitism or just plain wrong.

"Easy" is an entirely subjective description, and it has no place in the sports world. No sport, when played at a moderately high level, is truly easy. Throwing a five-ounce ball at 90 miles per hour is not an easy thing to do for anyone, nor, for that matter, is hitting it. The average Joe won't tell you that running as fast as you can through, past and around massive, pad-covered linebackers is simple. And I doubt the word "easy" would be used to describe hitting a tiny, rubber and plastic ball with a metal club at a 4-inch-wide hole, hundreds of yards away.

So then, why do we ever call a sport or a particular role "easy?" I suppose the root of the problem is that many people think it is logical to compare the difficulty of two sports. Or perhaps at an even more basic level, people think it is possible to compare two sports objectively.

People often hold an unsubstantiated belief that their favorite sport, or the sport they play most often, is simply superior. This comes naturally with any competitiveness, and I entirely understand it. As a matter of fact, I probably wouldn't hesitate to tell you that baseball is the best sport in the world (but that's not because of some competitive thing, it's just the truth).

Claiming that your sport is more difficult than another is a by-product of this competitive mindset. If you play the harder sport, you must be the better

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Under Pressure



By JACK ZURIER

Dallas Cowboys' quarterback, Tony Romo, has made his name in the National Football League (NFL) through his solid, even-handed approach to football. But on January 9, 2007, Romo's image as a calm, collected leader took a hit when he dropped a potential game-winning field goal snap in the 4th quarter of the National Football Conference Championship playoff game against the Seattle Seahawks. The snap was well-placed; there were no notable weather conditions or any other factors that could have led to Romo's blunder. So why did one of the most consistent players in the NFL make such an egregious mistake on a routine play? The immense amount of pressure that weighs down on even the most talented athletes is enough to lose a game, a season or even a career.

As fans, we expect our favorite athletes to be completely unaffected by the levity of the situations they play

in. But even our heroes are suspect to cracking under pressure. I cried when Yankee closer, Mariano Rivera, let up a single to Luis Gonzalez to lose the 2001 World Series, just because of the sheer disbelief that someone so consistent could falter when it mattered most. When you strip down the multi-million dollar contracts, the dozens of sponsorships and the burly physiques, our favorite athletes are still very much human. When they crack, it's disheartening. But, at the same time, it makes us realize just why we love sports. Even when a relatively obscure outfielder on an underdog team steps in against one of the greatest pitchers on one of history's greatest teams, there's no telling what can happen, and who's going to let the pressure get to them.

As intense as things get on a worldwide scale, pressure can still affect athletes who will never play professionally, and for whom the game that they love is nothing more than a game. Last year, I came into a varsity baseball game against Beacon High School in extra innings in relief of Stuyvesant legend Nolan Becker, who had just thrown 7 near-perfect innings of baseball. The score was 1 to 1 and there I stood—an intimidated, wide-eyed sophomore with a trembling right arm—attempting to coax a scoreless inning out of a very dangerous lineup in the most important game of our season.

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Boys' Track

Staying On Track

By PHILLIP GODZIN

The Stuyvesant boys' outdoor track team enters the back end of its season, looking to continue its undefeated streak at the Manhattan Championships—which dates back to 2000. Despite tough weather conditions and a training facility an hour's commute away, at Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island, the team has overcome the obstacles it has been faced with and looks to enter the Borough Championships as a favorite.

Through six official meets thus far, the Hitmen have obtained their usual consistent results. "We've exceeded expectations," sophomore Konrad Surkont said. "As a team objective, it's always to win the Borough Championships, and it looks like we are in pretty good shape."

Though Stuyvesant is primarily known for its distance running, this year the team has had success in short events, as well. "Our sprinters are better than average, our distance runners are up to their usual high standards, we are a little weak in the jumps and throws, and are about where we usually are in the hurdles," Coach Mark Mendes said. Inarguably, the team's distance program should be enough

to propel it over its main competition in Manhattan, LaGuardia High School, which seems to be atop the city in the field events, especially due to its addition of a European throws coach to assist in its field event training.

The Hitmen are relying on their younger runners this season, especially with the temporary loss of senior and captain Daniel Hyman-Cohen. Out since last indoor season with mononucleosis and unlikely to regain the dominant form which propelled him to runner-up in the 3200 meter run at last year's city championship, Hyman-Cohen may likely end his great run at Stuyvesant in disappointment.

"It's been very disappointing. I've had one really good race all year, and I haven't gotten back to that level yet," Hyman-Cohen said. Despite his shortcomings this year, Hyman-Cohen had an exceptional junior year, which was enough to get him recruited to run Cross Country at New York University (NYU), the reigning National College Athletic Association Division III champion.

Even though Hyman-Cohen has committed to NYU, he still hopes to help his team win Boroughs in any way he can. "My goals now are to help the team at Boroughs, and maybe run a respectable time at



Junior Joseph Jung practices for an upcoming race.

cities. Hopefully by then I'll be in decent shape," he said.

Even if Hyman-Cohen is not in perfect form for Boroughs, Stuyvesant still has plenty of weapons with which they should be able to defend their Borough Championship title. "[Hyman-Cohen] is not the only reason why this team is good. People like [Surkont] are stepping up and are going to be just

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Girls' Tennis

Lobsters Claw Their Way Into Playoffs

By CLAY GIBSON

After winning its division with a record of 11-1, the Stuyvesant's girls' tennis team, the Lobsters, are heading into the Public School Athletic League finals for the fifth consecutive year. Under coach Jeffrey Menaker, the Lobsters have gone 22-2 in the last two years, winning the division both years.

At the end of last season, two of the Lobsters three singles players graduated—Veronica Li ('09), first singles, and Tiffany Wan ('09), third singles. "I was really scared that this would set us back, but I think we've actually got a stronger team over all this year," junior Emily Quint-Hoover said.

The Lobsters desperately needed someone to step up and fill Li's former position. Senior and co-captain Bessie Rentzler did just that. "Bessie deserves a lot of credit," Quint-Hoover said. "She's our number one singles player and she's been amazing the entire season, even after a small back surgery." Rentzler, who will be playing for Columbia University next year, currently sports a 7-2 record.

The influx of new talent has helped to boost the team's spirit, and create more depth in the Lobster roster. After losing five seniors, the Lobsters picked up six new freshmen. Underclassmen now account for nine of the team's 15 roster slots. Throughout the season, Menaker experimented with the Lobster lineup, trying to incorporate all of the new faces. Not only did this constant rotation help give the young players more experience on the court, it allowed Menaker to learn which players play well together. "While we're not as top-heavy as we were last year, we are clearly deeper and more diverse," Menaker said. "I prefer this kind of lineup to the one we had last year."

The surprising amount of young talent has given the team new life. Freshman Dina Levy Lambert, for example, has picked up the second singles spot, and racked up a remarkable 11 wins in 11 matches. "This particular group has shown great commitment and an immense desire to compete," Menaker said. "This year's team is extremely tight-knit. I'm not sure I have ever been around a girls' team that is this close."

The freshmen do not only add to the depth of the team, but also to the team dynamic. As opposed to last year's team, this squad has become closer off the court. The increase in team bonding has led to greater unity on the court. "We really support each other—staying until the end of every match, cheering on our teammates and awarding miniature lobsters to the most inspiring players after each match," Rentzler said.

The team camaraderie has helped the Lobsters throughout the season. After losing 4-1 to Beacon

