



# The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"*

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## Librarians Implement New Changes



Sam Kim / The Spectator

Sitting near the bookshelves in the library is not permitted anymore.

By ANTHONY CHAN  
and SAM MORRIS

Two changes were put into effect in the Stuyvesant library this year to make it a more valuable resource for students. The New York Public Library (NYPL) will assist in creating a catalog for the Stuyvesant library and incorporate this new catalogue into its main one as part of a pilot project. In addition, the Stuyvesant librarians have implemented a policy to limit social space in the library.

The purpose of the pilot project is to make all of the NYPL re-

sources, including the resources of the school library, more accessible. "You'll be able to order things from the New York public library either for school and research purposes, or even for pleasure," librarian DeLisa Brown-Guc said. "When you order a book from any library in the city, they will deliver it to the school. We will have a back room area for it where you'll be able to come here and get it."

Only a limited number of schools are currently involved in the pilot program. "We had to apply [for the program]," Brown-Guc said. "It's 53 schools out of all the schools in the city, so it's a real honor to be chosen and to participate in it."

"A full range of schools from elementary, middle, and high schools were chosen," librarian Christopher Bowlin said.

However, Stuyvesant has a different situation from some of the other schools because we have never had an online catalog so our catalog can't migrate directly into their catalog," librarian DeLisa Brown-Guc said.

Assistants from the NYPL visited the school library on Tuesday, October 4, to help organize the project. "If the [NYPL] can afford it, they will re-catalog our entire system," Brown-Guc said. "If that happens, and it seems likely that it will, the system should be up and running by the end of the month."

The resources of the selected schools will be made available only to their respective student and staff populations, as part of the NYPL online catalog. "Other schools will not be able to use Stuyvesant's resources," said Brown-Guc. "Our collection will stay reserved for Stuyvesant's personal use only."

Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman believes this project will help expand the available resources of our school library. "Any school library is by nature limited, so the prospect of putting the resources of the entire New York City Public Library at our fingertips is really exciting," Grossman said. "You can have any book that you might want, whether it's for school or things besides school."

In addition to creation of the new online catalog, another change is taking place in the library. Students are no longer allowed to sit along the aisles between the bookshelves. "We had as many as 20 to 40 people back there a period and it just wasn't working in terms of using the space as a library space," Brown-Guc said. "We made a decision to focus more on creating the atmosphere of a workplace in the library."

Many students are in favor of the change. "The people who sit

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## The Crime of Peacefully Protesting

By BENJAMIN KOATZ

We just wanted to go home, but we were being corralled like cattle. The protesters of Occupy Wall Street—a grassroots movement for social equality and American democracy—had made it all the way from Zuccotti Park (renamed Liberty Plaza), downtown at the corner of Liberty Street and Broadway, to Union Square at 14th Street, and we just wanted to go back.

But the New York Police Department had a different idea in mind. After following the protest up from its onset and seeing firsthand that, aside from delaying some traffic for a few minutes, we caused neither damage to property nor bodily harm to civilians or officials, the police still decided to separate the protesters at 12th Street and Broadway into two more easily manageable groups (one of about 1,000 and one of about 400). I was part of the 1,000-person group, which made it to Union Square, where protesters began to make speeches to the public concerning corporate greed and influence on American politics, two of the main focuses of the movement. Then, though we had already begun chanting, "Let's Go Home! Let's Go Home!" as we turned around to head back to the Plaza, the police decided to split the protesters up even more.

And so the chaos began.

Whether it was their aim to have protesters aimlessly running around and screaming for help and guidance, I have no idea. The entire scene soon soured as white-shirted police officers pepper-sprayed innocent bystanders for simply asking the officers why they were arresting people, pushed septuagenarians onto the floor, dragged a woman I later met in jail across the ground by her hair, beat men senselessly with batons and, in one instance, punched a teenage girl in the face for the mere crime of standing amid the ruckus. I saw the last action firsthand. The rest you can see on YouTube.

About 60 protesters and I ended up escaping the madness down 12th Street by walking toward University Place, holding trampled signs with sayings like, "Wall Street is Our Street," while we cleaned pepper spray from our faces with baking soda and water. At the end of the sidewalk, we ran into another group of officers holding a bright orange net who told us that all we had to do was sit and wait. When we asked why we could not be peacefully let through, they said we had to calm down, remain on the sidewalk, and create a path for pedestrians, though the police were blocking the path themselves with netting. We sat down in neat, orderly rows on the edges of the sidewalk and waited.

Then, after a few minutes of chants from bystanders on the

other side of the barricade and from those of us entrapped by it calling for our release, we noticed a second group of officers coming down the other side of 12th Street who also carried crowd-control netting. A group of about six officers, including one white-shirted lieutenant, ran to the front of our utterly confused group. Some cops told us to go one way while others told us to go another, and all of them warned us about stepping even one toe onto the street. One officer said if I did so, it would "make [her] day."

Then, wordlessly, a lieutenant pushed an olive-skinned protester against the wall to our south, crooking his arm back into a disfigured 'L' and constraining him with white, hard-plastic handcuffs. The blue-shirts then told us all to turn around, and began cuffing the remaining sixty protesters who were trapped like sardines in their opposing nets. After 10 minutes of pleading with the police to let me go, saying we were innocent, asking why I was being held, and alerting them of the fact that I was a minor, I was finally arrested, and we sat down to wait for the police to get sufficiently large vehicles to transport us all.

We were never read our rights, and we were never told what we were being charged with. They

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A&E

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Commemorating 9/11 Through "With Their Eyes"

In the last decade, student theater groups around the country have put on Stuy's own play about 9/11.



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Opinions

Junior Ramblings

The shell shock of entering the most hectic year of high school

## Grossman Appointed Writing Coordinator

By LINDSAY BU  
and ALEX WANG

Principal Stanley Teitel has selected Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman to fill the new Writing Coordinator position. Grossman will carry out his new duties alongside his current duties as head of the English department.

Teitel created the position over the summer in order to improve the implementation of Writing Across the Curriculum, an initiative the administration began in 2008 to enhance students' writing abilities by incorporating writing into every major subject class.

"The ability to be able to write well is very very important. So I made it a school goal," Teitel said. "But I've been unsatisfied with the progress we've made. Part of that has to do with my own naïveté, so to speak. I just thought that by adding writing to what goes on in the classroom, writing would improve. I realize now that's not the case. There has to be an actual plan in place, and a way of implementing that plan."

"The idea is that because Mr. Teitel has had the Writing Across the Curriculum goal for several years, it makes sense to have someone in the building who's overseeing that goal," Grossman said. "One of the biggest goals that

I have and that Mr. Teitel has is to help train the other supervisors to be more aware of how best to use writing both in and outside the classroom so that they can be even better resources for the teachers in their own departments."

Grossman is already holding workshops and meeting weekly with the other departments' assistant principals and has sat in on some of their classes. He follows these class visits with discussions with the faculty members about what they are doing well and what they could improve on. After going through this cycle with each supervisor, Grossman will begin sitting in on the classes taught by other teachers.

"[Working with one teacher] requires that I spend a period visiting his or her classroom, a period talking about what I saw, hearing what they were happy with and what they might do differently, making some suggestions, taking a period to think all that through, and then another period to write a letter to them [...] to memorialize what we talked about," Grossman said.

Grossman paid his first visit to Teitel. "To give him credit, he said to me as we were getting started with this, that he recog-

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## UN Representative

Frank E. Loy

## Lectures on Stuyvesant

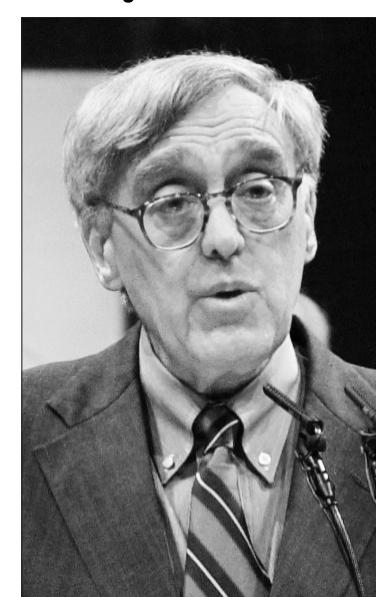
By SOULIN HAQUE

"Let me make myself clear; I am not all that knowledgeable about UN. This is the first time that I actually served with UN," said Frank E. Loy, Representative of the United States for the General Assembly of United Nations, to a room full of students, who broke out in laughter.

Loy gave a lecture about the importance of the United Nations (UN) on Monday, October 3 in Lecture Hall A. Though Stuyvesant Model United Nations organized the event, which was open to all students.

President Barack Obama nominated Loy as one of the Representatives of the United States of America to the Sixty-sixth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations this year. Loy previously worked in the Department of State three times—in the Johnson Administration as Deputy Secretary for Economic Affairs, in the Carter administration as Director of the Bureau of Refugee Programs under the rank of an Ambassador, and in the second Clinton administration as Under Secretary of State of Global Affairs.

Junior and Assistant Delegate Trainer of Stuyvesant's Model UN Hannah Brodheim was the lead organizer of the event. Brodheim's father met Loy through Natural Conservancy, a non-profit environmental organization for



Courtesy of ISD Reporting Services / The Spectator

Frank Loy came to speak at Stuyvesant High School regarding the United Nations on Monday, October 3.

which Loy serves as secretary. He invited Loy to speak at Stuyvesant, an offer Loy later accepted.

"We never had a speaker of his stature before. It was very exciting to get a glimpse inside the United Nations," Model UN faculty adviser and social studies teacher Clarissa Bushman said.

Loy started his lecture with three questions: What does the

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## Candy-Selling Hugger-Muggers Accost Stuyvesant Students

By EUGENIA SANCHEZ

During third period on Friday, September 23, Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie announced over the loud speaker that students should be wary of men selling candy on Chambers Street. For the past two weeks, a group of two or three men standing in front of the 1, 2, and 3 train subway entrance on the corner of Chambers Street and West Broadway have approached several students in attempt to steal their possessions.

Archie, who thought students might be embarrassed by their situation, did not reveal the identities of the victims who were mugged.

"As soon as Ms. Archie started talking, I knew exactly which men she was referring to. [They] have approached me several times on my way to the subway, hugging and talking to me, offering me candy. I walked the other way and didn't make eye contact but they didn't stop, and it made me really uncomfortable," sophomore Michelle Lin said.

According to several students, the group consists of approximately six-foot-tall African-American men in their early 20s dressed in baggy clothing. One of the involved men creates a distraction by grabbing or putting his arms around victims' shoulders, while offering to sell candy and asking for monetary donations to "non-violent music programs," "sports facilities," "inner-city schools," or "music demos." In the meantime, another man goes through students' backpacks, attempting to steal wallets, money, cell phones, or iPods.

"They're the men right by the coffee stand near [Café Amore's] pizzeria," sophomore Crystal Lau

said. "I walk away super fast to avoid being involved with them."

Multiple students have encountered these men on their way to and from school.

"Both of them were standing in the middle of [Chambers] street," freshman Chelsey Tan said. "There were people coming at my direction on the other side and I had nowhere to go. One of them was holding a cigarette as he followed me."

"One of them approached me and said something along the lines of, 'Yo homie, help a brother out, will you?' and put his arm around me. But I broke free and just quickly walked away," sophomore Kevin Li said.

Most of these students have not had serious altercations with the men, and have not been mugged or assaulted. However, the administration warned students to take the situation seriously.

"These men are particularly dangerous simply because they act so friendly," Archie said. "They grab and hug you, and you don't really have time to suspect a lot is going on. To the outside world, it just seems that two friends are hugging. It wasn't until students got home that they realized they were missing their Student MetroCards, school IDs, cell phones, or money."

Assistant Principal Organization Randi Damesek has contacted the police, according to Principal Stanley Teitel. In the meantime, Teitel urges students to "travel in groups and remain alert," he said in an e-mail interview.

"Policemen have been strategically placed throughout Chambers street, both in person and in cars, between Stuyvesant and the entrance to the 1, 2, 3 subway station," Archie said. "But in the meantime, students have to be aware of their

surroundings and be attentive. Try to walk up Lawrence Street, which is parallel to Chambers, and remember to always walk in groups. Don't engage in conversations with anyone and ignore the men if they approach you. It's never completely safe out there, and students should always be aware of that."

"It's a terrible feeling to have to be so paranoid going to school," sophomore Frances Shapiro said. "But you have to do what is necessary to stay safe."

According to the New York Police Department (NYPD) First Precinct's Official Crime Complaint Statistics, the Tribeca area received six complaints of robbery in September. In this past week, however, it did not receive any complaints of robbery.

Since contacting the police early last week, the administration has not been notified of any thefts or harassment incidents involving their students.

"I haven't seen [the muggers] around for some time," junior Kris Dyer said.

Many students consider the Stuyvesant community safe and are confident the harassment will end soon. "There are always a lot of people everywhere, and it makes it easy to be aware of your surroundings," senior Kevin Kotharul said. "As long as you keep your possessions safe, you'll be fine."

"Since September 11, this neighborhood has been really safe," said junior Miranda Kalish, who has lived in the area her whole life. "As with any neighborhood, you have to keep your eyes open, avoid talking to strangers and walk away from intimidating people. Soon, the men will have to stop."

## Librarians Implement New Changes

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along the aisles become obstacles for those who pass through them trying to find an interesting book or just get to class," sophomore Jennifer Wu said. "I find it very annoying to have to excuse myself every time I reach for a book."

Other students disapprove of the new policy. "The change limits the space, so that there's no part of the library that's quiet, making it hard to concentrate," sophomore Ada Mui said.

Due to the further limited seating area, fewer students are able to occupy the library every period. Some believe that this restricts the use of the library's resources and unnecessarily decreases the amount of student space in an already overcrowded school. "Not many people can come to the library because it fills up really quickly," sophomore Thoasin Bari said. "A lot of people don't really have a place to go anymore."

However, some of the faculty members who use two classrooms and two teacher lounges connected to the library or work in the Writing Center have said that the new limitations helps people who actually need to work. "Last year, the library was so overcrowded that sometimes noise levels were such that we couldn't conduct conversations in this area," Writing Center teacher Katherine Fletcher said. "The Writing Center has definitely been benefiting from [the new policy]."

Grossman believes that by putting a limit on the number of students allowed inside the li-

brary, the librarians will be able to manage the available space of the library more efficiently. "There has to be some kind of cap on the number of students that can enter [the library], given that students use the library for a variety of reasons: to go on the

**"You'll be able to order things from the New York public library either for school and research purposes, or even for pleasure."**  
—DeLisa Brown-Guc, Librarian

computer, to study, to do homework together, to talk, or to socialize," Grossman said. "From what I can see, the librarians are doing a sensational job at managing what really is an area that, every minute of the day, is used for such a wide range of things."

## Stuyvesant Students Join in Occupy Wall Street Protest

By ELENA MILIN and THOMAS ZADROZNY

The city buzzes with mid-day hum as men in starched button-downs and dark-colored suits walk through the Financial District, leather briefcase in one hand and lunchtime espressos in the other. They pass Liberty Plaza, two blocks away from Wall Street, but instead of seeing of the usual people reading newspapers on park benches with pigeons at their feet, they are confronted by the sight of protesters sleeping under patio umbrellas behind metal barricades with hand-made posters at their sides. The protesters mill about, singing patriotic hymns and conversing about corporate politics as someone beats a drum in the background. In the midst of the diverse crowd of impassioned Occupy Wall Street protesters, there even stand a few students from Stuyvesant: seniors Ben Koatz, Brendan Carroll, David O'Donnell, Mavi Toktabi, Lilja Walters, and Briana Byron, as well as sophomore Cassie Kessler.

"We are a diverse group of people in background and in ideology, but we all agree corporations have far too much involvement in American politics," Carroll said.

The growing group of non-violent protesters from around the country has been camping out near Wall Street since Saturday, September 17. On the Occupy Wall Street Web site, the organizers state their mission: "We the people of the United States of America, considering the crisis at hand, now reassert our sovereign control of our land."

In December 2007, the world economy began to falter. By 2008, it was officially in a global recession. While the precise causes are

still hotly debated, many people place much of the blame on Wall Street. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the recession was in part caused by risky speculation by banks and stockbrokers in real estate.

To avoid sliding into a depression in 2008, Congress passed the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), a \$700 billion bailout to prevent banks, insurance firms, and automotive companies from going bankrupt. The TARP fund was followed by President Barack Obama's stimulus packages.

As of 2011, Wall Street has rebuilt itself from its collapse. Banks are posting record profits. However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 15 percent of Americans were living below the poverty line in 2010, and according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment remains above nine percent.

This is what Occupy Wall Street is protesting. "We're here to say that we're unhappy with the fact that our government continues to put corporations before people's needs," said activist Melanie Butler, a member of the women-initiated peace organization Code Pink.

On Friday, September 23, there were approximately a hundred people in Liberty Plaza. Forty camped out in the park while others showed up to protest for a few hours.

Gil Vasquez, a United States Army Veteran, was there to protest job loss. "It's not just one thing. People think, 'Oh, it's Wall Street.' It's not just Wall Street; it's many reasons."

The diversity in demands of the movement has received criticism from protesters and political analysts. Complaints have

also been raised about the lack of central leadership, but many protesters say that the assembly-like structure gives the movement the ability to credibly represent a large swath of the nation. The activists claim this is exemplified in their diverse group, with participants traveling from across the country to protest.

Law student Robert Stevens, a native of Minnesota, was inspired by anti-capitalist protests in Bolivia when he visited. When Occupy Wall Street was starting, Stevens' ailing father had no health insurance as his organization went out of business. "It was time to embody the things that I believe in," he said.

In the past several weeks, a handful of Stuyvesant students have spent their lunch breaks and free periods protesting alongside these people from across the nation.

Koatz and Carroll have been traveling to Liberty Plaza during their lunch periods, and a handful of Stuyvesant students have attended the protest after school.

"We need to prove that we really represent the 99 percent of America," senior Mavi Toktabi said.

Now in their third week, many protesters are saying they will stay for as long as it takes for their demands to be answered, with some pushing for a complete overhaul of America's political and economic systems.

"I've heard estimates of from November to next year," Toktabi said.

However, as winter approaches, camping out in Liberty Square may become more difficult. Furthermore, on Saturday, September 24, the private owners of the Liberty Plaza park announced

that protesters could not sleep in a manner that would interfere with foot traffic through the area. Subsequently, the 700 protesters that had been in the park marched to Union Square, screaming, "End the wars! Tax the rich!"

On charges of disorderly conduct, police officials arrested eighty protesters, including senior Ben Koatz.

According to Koatz, the police had attempted to break up the march, but the group had split into two and continued northward. The police attempted to pen in the protesters with orange net, but the mass charged for the corner of East 14 Street and University Place. The police began to arrest protesters en masse, using tactics including nets, mace, and undercover officers. "We were marching, peacefully protesting and making speeches, and then they broke us up," Koatz said.

Subsequent to his arrest, Koatz spent eight and a half hours in police custody. He did not hear the charge he was arrested under until he was released. He spent six and a half hours in jail, saying of the experience, "Jail is a really awful place. Of course, people know that jail is an awful place, but the sense of entrapment and the loss of freedom, of having a door that you have no control over [...] it's a shock to your system," he said.

As arrests continue, media coverage increases with claims of police brutality towards protesters, including pepper spraying and beatings. Police arrested a group of 700 protesters out of the approximately 1,500 who marched from Liberty Plaza to Brooklyn on Saturday, October 1, according to The New York Times article "Police Arrest More Than 700 Protestors on Brooklyn Bridge," published

on the day of the arrests.

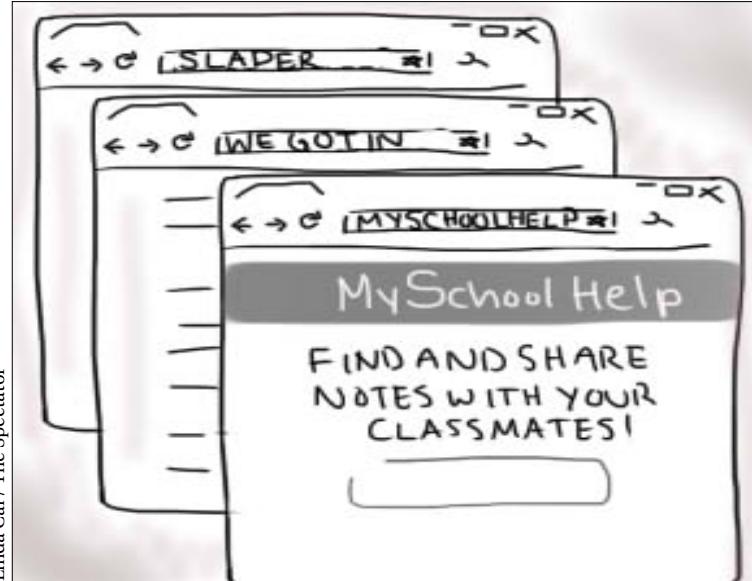
Though they were heartened by the media coverage that the police's treatment of protesters has garnered, both Koatz and Carroll expressed concerns that the focus of Occupy Wall Street was being shifted toward combating police brutality. "We are in danger of losing sight of the goal," Carroll said. "I'm worried that maybe this would detract from the original reason that people were brought here, which is to fight corruption and to fight corporate involvement in politics."

In the wake of the Union Square arrests, both the Transit Workers' Union and the United Federation of Teachers have decided to participate in Occupy Wall Street. Koatz was wary of the group's accepting offers of union money, because he thought this would injure Occupy Wall Street's ideal of direct democracy. "If we start accepting big money just because it's big money, and because we want that, and because it looks good, then our message is going to be corrupted by people who want to take over our movement and not have it succeed," Koatz said.

Koatz and Carroll are attempting to set up a Stuyvesant chapter of the Occupy Wall Street movement. They held an interest meeting on Wednesday, September 28 and received a modest turnout. Koatz spoke about organizing marches from Stuyvesant to the protest, since it is so close by. "This is about democracy. This is about free speech. This is about expressing ourselves. We're not going to not talk to you, because you disagree with us, because what we're doing is disagreeing with a lot of people now, and that's everybody's right as an American," he said.

# Features

## Online Student Collaboration: Cheating or Just Helping?



Linda Cai / The Spectator

By KAVERI SENGUPTA  
and KAREN ZHENG

Many Stuyvesant students sit in front of their computers and wonder how they will endure their stressful years at high school and gain entrance to the college of their dreams. Often, they work on homework together, share study sheets, and edit each other's essay in order to help one another. In recent years, a plethora of Web sites have cropped up to aid students in their academic efforts, largely by facilitating student collaboration. However, the ethical line between working together and taking advantage of one another, sometimes through cheating, is often blurred, and no matter the intent of many of these new sites, they can easily fall into misuse. The three sites featured here are examples of online student tools involving varying degrees of student collaboration. The first allows students to share study sheets, the second to view college essays of students who gained Ivy League admission, and the third to view answers to textbook problems from a host of commonly used class texts.

### **MySchoolHelp**

Myschoolhelp.com, a site created early last May by 18-year-old entrepreneur Benjamin Lang, lets students enter their schools into a database and consequently share notes from different classes with each other.

"It actually started two years ago when I made a site called Ramaz Help for my high school in New York City," said Lang, referring to Ramaz High School. "It was for sharing notes, tests, and reviews, and it's still alive. From that success, I decided to do it for all high schools and now I'm testing it out for colleges also."

Upon entering the site, students can view a sample page with notes from Ramaz High School, which is located on the Upper East Side. These notes are posted with the grade, level/class, teacher, year created, and author, and are written on a GoogleDocs page. Students can type up notes or scan them into the computer to upload, allowing for the inclusion of a wide variety of material. For example, geometry notes from Ramaz High School contain hand-drawn diagrams, and biology notes have links. Most are clearly outlined, with definitions, processes, and summaries.

Lang attempted to make the site's resources available to as many people as possible. A student (or teacher) does not need to create an account on the site to add a school. Nor does he or she need an account to view notes. However, an account is necessary for uploading files, though students also have the option of logging in through Facebook.

MySchoolHelp has grown since its recent beginning. "We

have about 120 schools in the database now. It doesn't mean 120 schools are using it, but 120 different people from different schools have added their school into it," Lang said. The schools are located all over the world, including the United States, Canada, and India.

In order to promote his Web site, Lang pitches it at many entrepreneurship events. "One of the biggest ones was at Baruch College. Over the summer, I was in California at Teens in Tech Incubator. Over there, we practiced pitching and improved our projects. At the end, we pitched at their big event, so we got some good press from there. All that's really helped," Lang said.

Teacher responses at Ramaz High School and other schools have also been positive. "From my school, everyone knew about it. We spoke with the administration a lot, they were very supportive, and the teachers also. Recently, we've gotten a lot of e-mails from teachers saying they want to start using it, so it's been a combination of students and teachers adding schools."

Yet some Stuyvesant students believe that MySchoolHelp would be relatively unhelpful for studying. "I think it's mostly geared toward college students," junior Daryl Sew said after exploring the website. "People [at Stuyvesant] can do the same thing on Facebook with their friends."

After realizing Ramaz Help's success, Lang "got interested in this note sharing business and from there it's been going pretty well," Lang said. Stuyvesant has not yet been added to MySchoolHelp's database, though Lang is eager to see it join the list of 120 schools.

### **WeGotIn**

Created a year ago, wegotin.net is probably one of the more student file-sharing sites on the Web. It provides high school attendees with the opportunity to view college applications of students who now attend Ivy League schools.

"The mission is to provide an alternative to the very expensive college advisers that charge thousands of dollars to applying students. It's to give the student who doesn't come from a wealthy background some insight into how to successfully answer the application questions," said Howard Yaruss, Chief Executive Officer and founder of wegotin.net. "The schools we have are Harvard, Yale, Brown, Columbia, Cornell, and Penn, which are obviously very prominent schools. We hope to expand in future years."

To obtain access to applications to one college, students pay \$24.99. However, Yaruss allows students who are unable to cover the cost to use the site for free.

"We don't ask identifying in-

formation from the customers because they're high school seniors who are applying to school. We didn't want to make them uncomfortable by having to reveal their identity," said Yaruss, who therefore does not know the diversity of his customers, though he does believe that the site could be helpful to foreign applicants who do not know how to fill in college application.

"We have about 100 applications. We got an advertisement through Facebook, and that's how we ask them to donate their applications to help students applying to their school," said Yaruss, who pays students who submit applications to the site \$60 for each submission.

Students have had a positive reaction to the site, stating that it gives them a leg up on the applications process. "We did a survey [of the users] last year. We only had Brown and Columbia. We asked them to rate us on a scale of one to five, one not being useful, five being extremely useful. The average was slightly above four, which was very useful," Yaruss said. "We got all sorts of comments, people who said that it gave them a sense of what kind of tone to use, just basic stuff, how many sentences, to those smaller questions that are asked."

"It would be helpful because I don't think they [students] would plagiarize. The colleges would check and the website should help seniors with their college essays," junior Shelley Shin said.

Senior Judy Pu disagrees. "I don't think that it can be helpful—definitely not worth \$25. College counselors know what kind of profile you need to fit into an Ivy League, so it is not necessary to compare yourself to applications online," Pu said. "You need to be honest in your application. Trying to model yourself after someone will most likely not work."

College advisors have also reviewed the site negatively, because they believe it may lead to plagiarism and gives an advantage to a certain group of students who discover that this information is available. Some find the site unethical, since colleges do not endorse it and Yaruss pays students for their applications. "Most of the college advisors have been very negative and the most interesting thing to me is that websites like College Confidential have not wanted to have any mention of us on them," Yaruss said.

Colleges that Yaruss has contacted have not responded to his statements. "The colleges themselves have not contacted us. I've sent them e-mails saying if they want free access to the database they're welcome to it, so as to avoid plagiarism," said Yaruss, though he doubts anyone would plagiarize because the actual applications are easily accessible online.

Considering application time is just around the corner for high school seniors, Yaruss hopes students will make use of his site to get a leg up. "This is no one's opinion. This is what actually works," he said.

### **Slader**

You are almost done with your BC Calculus homework. You have one question left. It is number six. It is impossible. Your classmates agree that it is impossible. Its answer is not even in the back of your textbook, for you to somehow work backwards from. In class the next day, there is not enough time for your teacher to review the homework. One week later, you stare incredulously down at your test paper, at a

question very much like number six, but with slightly different variables.

Enter www.slader.com, a Web site launched in August 2010 by Kyle Gerrity and Scott Kolb. Slader provides 1,000,000 step-by-step solutions to 276 math and science high school, Advanced Placement, and college-level textbook problems. It also has small, but growing, English and history platforms: users can contribute summaries of books taught in high school classrooms, and of chapters of history textbooks. Slader also allows students to join class pages to discuss questions and collaborate with their peers. Currently, 13,468 people use the Web site, including 140 Stuyvesant students and alumni, who have generated 82,635 solutions.

Slader works through a collaborative online community. After a student registers for an account, he or she can search for a textbook and browse by chapter or page number for an exercise. Most exercises have multiple solutions, and users can view two solutions each day. To view more solutions, users can pay a monthly fee of \$1 to \$4, or give back to Slader by recruiting others to register, contributing solutions themselves, or flagging incorrect solutions. Solutions contributors can opt to receive payment in terms of money instead of viewing access and can typically earn up to \$5 a year for each solution. They are paid \$0.50 to \$0.75 for the solution, and more as users view and vote for their answers based on the clarity and helpfulness of the process. A team of moderators, which is comprised of college and graduate school students, looks through and correct the solutions.

"Our aim is to create an educational platform where students can share their unique solutions of textbook problems," Gerrity said. "Why should a high school student be stuck on a particular math problem when tons of his or her peers out there know the answer? Slader's educational objective is getting users to both teach what they know to their peers, and getting help for what they don't understand from their peers."

Alumnus Vivian Best ('99), now an environmental education and sustainability teacher at Kahlia Elementary School in Hawaii, saw a Slader ad on Craigslist and contributed Pre-algebra solutions to the Web site. "Coming from a teacher's perspective, I'm curious about textbooks and different types of textbook problems," Best said. "It's fun for me to write out solutions systematically in the way I'd like to see them, and to find the clearest way to explain to someone who doesn't understand this concept how to do the problems."

"As a provider of the solutions, I wasn't just giving answers. I was also explaining my reasoning through each and every step, which made it seem as if I were an online tutor," said alumnus Steven Shanab ('06), who solved pre-calculus questions, in an email interview.

Stuyvesant alumni Shilpa Agrawal ('11) and Oren Bukspan ('11) interned at Slader over the summer. Kolb said, "They helped us understand the nuances of the high school experience of 2011. It's completely different than in 2002, in terms of where students go for academic resources. They helped us figure out how to offer a platform relevant to our users."

Bukspan decided to join Slader because he was interested in computer science and programming.

"I put together a gauge process for users as they go along. I created a thermometer graphic that marks their progress based on a certain goal. For example, Slader's goal for the summer was to reach 900,000 solutions. Now that they've reached their goal, it displays how many users they have on the site," Bukspan said. "Slader has its community engage in its goals and the intention is that anybody who comes to the site is part of a large, collaborative community where you know you can get support if you need it and an outlet to give support if you want to."

Agrawal was intrigued in Slader's mission and status as a start-up. "I became really interested in what they were doing, and I thought it would be cool to be a part of something new," said Agrawal, who drafted letters to high school newspapers to spread the word about Slader. Like Bukspan, she came up with ideas on how to structure the Web site to give students the best experience possible. "It's a very user-friendly site. It's a lot of fun for teenagers to use," Agrawal said.

Both Agrawal and Bukspan's biggest concern with the Web site is its potential to be misused. "When I was there the first day, I was so confused. I was thinking, 'Isn't this just a way for students to cheat?'" Bukspan said. "Being there in the office and hearing what they have to say, their mission is completely the opposite of cheating. It's more than a resource. This is a place where you can contribute what you think if you're passionate about academics and education. All different kinds of opinions are thrown out there. It's so different than what it might sound like at first."

However, some teachers say the potential for misuse cannot be ignored, no matter the mission of the site. "As long as it's used appropriately, I'm sure it can help students," physics teacher Thomas Strasser said. "The danger is that students can copy answers without knowing how to solve the questions for themselves. I'm worried that most students will just use it for getting homework answers."

Agrawal admits that there is no way to stop users to simply take solutions from Slader. "It can be taken advantage of in ways it shouldn't be taken advantage of. But it really benefits students because it's valuable to have in-depth explanations. That's how you understand what you're doing, more than anything," she said.

Other faculty members pointed out that the issue of copying could be eliminated if teachers came up with their own homework problems. In reference to Slader, biology teacher Jason Economie said, "It's generally a good idea because most teachers' homework assignments are not from the textbook. We like to give more thought-provoking questions. If this is providing the basic information for struggling students, then by all means."

Kolb is not very concerned about the cheating possibilities that come with a Web site like Slader. "Students may come to Slader and just copy down solutions, but that's not any different from what they've done before—copying others and turning that in," Kolb said. "There are a lot of students who need help and are stuck and go out looking for help. Slader's a great way to not only explain but help to explain. Utilizing Slader to connect with peers and share academic knowledge is what it's all about."

# Features

## One Schedule At A Time

By TASNIM AHMED

Students frequently visit Room 239 to whine about schedules, request program changes, and beg for different lunch periods. The programming office's main purposes are to make student programs and change them—though these tasks are easier said than done. Contrary to popular belief, computers are not the only organizers behind the class and teacher lists students receive on the first day of school. A computer program created by former chemistry teacher Steve Kramer about 15 years ago and maintained by Assistant Principal Technology Services Edward Wong creates most of the schedules. However, last year, approximately 350 schedules were put together manually due to the many conflicts the program would be unable to handle.

With so much to do, the programming office must be efficient, spending only seven to eight minutes on each schedule. Most others are made using a computer program created by Kramer using software called HyperCard used in Apple computers. While not a lengthy process, programming is difficult because of the many factors that must be considered, such as classroom space, the number of teachers teaching a specific class, the periods certain classes are in session, and the electives taken by the students.

Programming office personnel begin to create schedules in early August, and sometimes do not finish until the day before school begins. This leads to schedules being available only once school starts, not beforehand. In addition, several programs are subject to change, so the schedule a student is first given may not be the schedule he or she follows throughout the year. The first step in the process is to check that every student has a graduating program, or the classes necessary to earn a diploma. The graduating class is prioritized over all other classes. "Everything will be done to accommodate a child, but if it interferes with their graduating requirements, [their electives] will be sacrificed," Program Chair and math teacher Sophia Liang said.

Sequential classes are also considered, and the programming office must check to see that, in the second semester, these classes are scheduled again for a student. Students who have taken high school classes, such as Global History, in middle school, will have to take the next level class for the course and must take an elective or an Advanced Placement class in their senior year to fulfill the requirement of having four years of history. This applies to all other four-year courses.

Often, students apply for a course after online programming, believing there are empty seats in a class. If the student is not given this class, it is mainly because not all computers are updated as are those in the programming office so the class may actually be filled. When classes are constantly changing, an empty seat may also be reserved for another student who needs the class more.

Following the beginning of the school year, once schedules



The Programming Office, room 239, is where all students' schedules are put together.

Christina Leong / The Spectator

are created, the programming office's next task is to set up online programming for the next term. Wong creates the code for the software that manages online programming, which takes about two weeks.

Wong emphasizes that students follow directions when applying for classes online. "If a student doesn't fill out all three choices, and they don't get the classes they want, we have to randomly choose a class, and then they get upset," he said.

Online programming is necessary because of all the classes offered at Stuyvesant. It gives the programming team an organized set of data indicating student preferences and provides the necessary information to make a schedule. In addition, statistics from online programming help decide whether or not to continue certain electives. If few people choose to take an elective, it may not be available in the future, because an assistant principal may choose to use his or her budget on a more popular class. For example, the elective Physical Chemistry, taught by Chemistry teacher Dr. Zhen Chuan Li, was not scheduled for the fall term due to a lack of budget support. "This is Dr. Li's expertise, he loves the class, and even though it's a little challenging, it's a great college level course, and we hope to bring it back for the spring term," Liang said.

Often, students are confused and disappointed when they are not given the class that they wanted to take. The main cause for this is scheduling conflicts. If students choose to take AP classes, but they interfere with a required class, then they will not be able to take the APs, which are usually treated as electives. In addition, during online programming, students

who applied for an AP class are notified of their acceptance through e-mail or via Student Tools, but this does not necessarily mean that they will be scheduled for the class; it simply means that they have the qualifications needed and has

However, lunch is not allowed to be substituted for a class. Exceptions are sometimes made for musicians in one of the bands, orchestras, or choruses, or students who have not fulfilled the graduating requirements.

The more classes a student takes, the more challenging it becomes to create his or her schedule. "Ten-period days are the most difficult [to create] because there is no wiggle room," Liang said. Thus, those who have a full schedule and request a change may not have their requests attended to because of the other complications a single change will bring. Other problems arise when students are programmed for one of Stuyvesant's 100-plus singleton classes, in which only one teacher teaches the subject for a single period.

The programming office is not the only place where schedules are altered. Guidance counselors also have the authority to change a student's schedule depending on his or her situation. Because guidance counselors keep track of a student's record, they notify the programming office if a student does not have enough credits to graduate or must take a certain class.

Besides students, teachers also need schedules, which are also made by the programming office. Teachers have no say in the students that will be in their class, but if they have preferences for certain periods or classes, they must go to their department's assistant principal, who will then notify the programming office if the request is approved. Because a teacher cannot teach more than three periods in a row, the programming office must take this rule into consideration when

creating schedules. Lastly, a teacher's route is accommodated; assistant principal help set up schedules so that teachers will not have to move from floor to floor constantly.

Students complain that the distance between classes is not taken into consideration for them, but programming office personnel say doing so would be impossible. "The only way to be fair is to be as random as possible [when scheduling], because we have escalators, and in the worst case, there are elevators," Liang said. However, elevators are to be used only by those who have extreme difficulty walking from class to class, such as with a broken leg.

Stuyvesant's programming officers must handle the hectic job of creating over 3,000 schedules for students and teachers. However, making and correcting programs is not their only job. "We are the programming office, but we are also much more. Programming is just one aspect," Wong said. In fact, most of the staff members in the programming office are also teachers. Liang, as previously mentioned, is a math teacher, and Assistant Program Chairs Rosa Mazzurco and Hugh Francis are both English teachers. Teachers must go through an application process to work in the programming office, and if they are accepted, their number of teaching hours will decrease to give them time to devote to programming.

At a corner of the second floor, the programming office's team constructs and alters the schedules that frame 10 months of Stuyvesant's year. Apparently, the faces that make up each class and the bustling in the hallways are not so disorganized after all.

**"If a student doesn't fill out all three choices, and they don't get the classes they want, we have to randomly choose a class, and then they get upset."**  
—Edward Wong,  
Assistant  
Principal  
Technology  
Services

room on their schedule for the class.

Another common misconception is that extra classes could replace a lunch period,

## Features

### The Arab Spring: Close to Home

By MADHURIMA CHOWDHURY, ARIELLE GERBER, TEN-YOUNG GUH, and ALIYA TUZHILIN

This spring, news of revolutions throughout North Africa and the Arabian peninsula shook the world. In Egypt, in particular, protesters filled the streets in an attempt to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak, the autocratic ruler who had been in power for nearly 30 years by the time he resigned in February. To most in the United States, these uprisings are faraway events, but to those with families in affected regions, the dust has yet to settle.

#### *Shady Gabal*

Senior Shady Gabal described the scene in Egypt as "chaos everywhere." The cousin of Egyptian residents who protested against Mubarak's regime, Gabal heard firsthand about the police brutality in response to the violent protests. "My male cousins, they would stay all night outside their homes with guns to protect themselves. This was how everyone did it," he said.

"Thankfully, nothing happened to them," he said. "They were in the protests, but they were safe."

While his family has been able to avoid danger, others, he said, are not so lucky. "I heard stories about people walking around with machetes, people having to guard their homes all day and night with weapons," he said. "There's no law, no order, no police. Riots, robberies, it's been like hell. It's torture. This is how it's like with no government around. There's no peace anywhere."

Since the transitional military government has gained power, the country has "sort of calmed down," Gabal said.

The military council is slated to hand over power after the parliamentary or presidential elections later this fall. While Gabal and his family viewed Mubarak as "a dictator of sorts," Gabal said he has serious doubts about the rising Muslim Brotherhood establishing a government in Egypt.

"The country's split between the two main groups in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood and

everyone else," Gabal said. "If they came into power [...] Egypt could become a religious state, and I don't think anyone, at least anyone that I know, wants that."

The military has been maintaining order in the nation for now, but Gabal said that that is not enough.

"The army really can't do anything without the people's support," he said. "John Locke said if the government doesn't support the people's beliefs, if it doesn't protect the people's right to life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, [...] then it won't get support, and it could get overturned. That's what they did in Egypt. They overturned the government."

#### *Menna Elaskandrany*

For a month, junior Menna Elaskandrany said she lived on edge, watching the news fearfully, knowing her family members were among the rebels.

According to Elaskandrany, what started the wildfire of protests that engulfed the country was poverty. "There is only about a handful of people that have money and the rest of the people live on less than a dollar a day," Elaskandrany said. "They try to provide for their kids but then that doesn't work. So they [...] leave their kids in the streets."

Mubarak, she said, would give tax money only to his friends. "People have been really, really tired of the President. They just got fed up," Elaskandrany said. "They were determined to get rid of the President."

The recalled the start of the protests, when Abdu Abdel-Monaim Kamal set himself on fire in front of the parliament building in Cairo, following in the footsteps of Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian man, who set himself on fire in protest only a few weeks before. "People were glad to die. They were like, I'm giving up my life for a good cause. For 30 years, we've had enough," Elaskandrany said.

Elaskandrany's family in Egypt was in the midst of the revolution. "When [the protests] first started, my uncles in Alexandria started protesting day and night," she said.

The revolts also affected her relatives outside major cities. Since the attention of the police



Christine Lee / The Spectator

officers was focused on the cities where the protests were occurring, the crimes in the small towns skyrocketed. Thieves roamed the streets. "My aunt was telling my mom, 'We have to sleep with knives. We have to stay awake with knives. We have knives everywhere. Just in case a burglar comes, we have to attack because there is no way out,'" Elaskandrany said.

Though Elaskandrany was many miles away from Egypt, she followed the revolution through the media. "All the [TV] programs showed the revolution. They had pictures. They had everything live," Elaskandrany said. "For a month, at dinner, we would be watching TV. In the morning we were watching TV. Every minute I would spend at home, I was doing homework and watching TV, talking to my sister and watching TV. We were calling my aunts all the time, trying to make sure that they were okay."

Watching what was unfolding in Egypt made Elaskandrany long to be with her family. "I would sit in front of the TV and think, why couldn't I be there? If I was there, I would feel a lot better because, first of all, I would be part of the revolution and second of all, I would [know] that my family is safe. If anything

happens to them, I would know. I don't want to be million miles away," Elaskandrany said.

Elaskandrany is thankful that her family was unharmed. "[The revolution] was for a good reason. I hope after this a better President comes along. And I just wish things would get better for [Egyptians]."

#### *Aminah Sallam*

While her father's sister and other relatives were protesting Mubarak's reign, junior Aminah Sallam and her father could only sit, watch the Arabic news, and hope that they would be okay. "It was a very emotional experience," she said.

"I felt this overwhelming sense of unity amongst my people, and despite the fact that I don't live there, a newfound strength of liberation," Sallam said. "It was truly inspiring."

Sallam's father grew up in Egypt and was a consistent advocate of Mubarak's overthrow, yet Sallam said that her father's reaction to the rebellion was much more nuanced than her own. "While [my father] was in college in Egypt, he and many of his friends organized huge protests against the government, but they never made a significant impact," she said. "He was glued

to the news 24/7 [...] it was quite apparent that it pained him not to be a part of the movement he himself had worked so hard to initiate years ago."

Sallam's family in Egypt, including most of her Father's family, was very active in the protests. "My cousins were invited to protests through Facebook," she said. "They were out there every single day protesting." While her family members faced danger, they weren't severely harmed in the riots.

"I know my uncle was, at some point, in an area that was hit with tear gas, and he suffered from inhalation of it, but it wasn't that severe," she said. "Despite the dangers of protesting, my family members stuck to them."

Though turmoil has swept the nation, Sallam said that her family, apart from actively protesting, has been mostly unaffected. "We haven't had a permanent government take charge," she said. "Everything is the same, pretty much, except that Mubarak isn't really in government anymore," she said.

Enacting significant change, she said, will be a long and difficult fight. "Nothing will really change until we have a democratic election and until we solve this problem."

# 98.01

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Class of 2011  
Valedictorian's GPA

Highest Senior GPA

Highest Junior GPA

Highest Sophomore GPA

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# 63:3

# 14:77

# 25:77

# 30:93

# 61:145

Girl:Boy Ratio in  
Junior Aerobics

Girl:Boy ratio in  
Physics C

Girl:Boy ratio in  
Multivariate Calculus

Girl:Boy ratio in  
Weight Training

Girl:Boy ratio in  
AP Computer Science

As of October 5th, 2011.

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# Features

## Working on SHSAT Problems

By REBECCA GAEBLER

For many 14-year-olds, getting accepted into Stuyvesant is the result of pressure or encouragement from devoted parents, endless hours in SHSAT classes, and some individual initiative. But unfortunately, many other aspiring Stuy students lack the resources to prepare adequately for the exam on their own. In order to help students like this, Junior Adam Schorin began a free SHSAT tutoring program last year, geared towards helping underprivileged students. The class meets weekly during the school year, and twice a week during August. A combination of Stuyvesant students from ARISTA (the National Honors Society), Bronx Science students, and also professional tutor Steven Tenney help students to prepare students for the exam. The tutoring team works with the students on an as-needed basis in one-on-one settings or in small groups, for which Schorin writes lesson plans, worksheets, homework, quizzes, and makes copies of practice tests and other materials. This fall, Schorin's first round of candidates will take the test.

Schorin started the test prep in conjunction with Brotherhood Sister-Sol, a youth outreach program based in Harlem. "We started the tutoring sessions with basic lessons in specific skill areas, and moved onto practice tests and one-on-one tutoring with the addition of more tutors as the year went on," said junior Noah Hellerman, a tutor who has volunteered his time since the programs began in August.

Around the same time, more students started coming from the Stuyvesant High School Black Alumni Diversity Initiative, whose goal is to increase the minority population at Stuyvesant High School. Headed by Stuyvesant alumnus Renee Eubanks ('81), the initiative is currently setting up a "SHSAT bootcamp" for middle school students taking the SHSAT exam this October. The program started on September 13 and is independent of Schorin's tutoring program.

As news of the program spread through word of mouth, even more students found themselves in the small classroom of the Schermerhorn building at Columbia University, where the tutoring currently takes place.

"Unfortunately, we could not accommodate all the applicants in our small classroom this year," said Schorin, who accepted students on a first come first serve basis. The goal for next year is to acquire a larger classroom, further develop the lesson plans, and run the test prep for at least double the number of students as this year," Schorin said. The program currently has 12 students.

Schorin thinks that his program is helpful because of the empha-

sis on individual tutoring, when needed, and small class size. He recalled being inspired after working as a tutor through the Brotherhood Sister-Sol program last year. "This girl was struggling. She told me her math class was canceled the previous year and that English was not her first language. That experience really made me realize how essential a program like this is," Schorin said.

Students usually finish practice tests at home and then bring them the next week. The tutors go over them and help individual students with their specific problems.

"I worked with one girl who is not taking the test this year. She is in 7th grade. She had a lot of trouble with setting up equations and figuring out what to do with the problem. But by the end of the three hours, she was better at it as long as she had examples," said junior Olivia Balderes, who started tutoring since September. This year, 7th grade students were also accepted so that they would be able to get a head start in their preparation. Next year, however, the SHSAT class will be open to only 8th graders. The results of the program have been promising. "Just after the first week, the students' raw scores on their practice tests went up by 20 or 30 points across the board," Schorin said. As the test date, Saturday, October 29, approaches, Schorin has planned an in-class practice test.

However, he said, while those who have put in effort see results, lack of parental intervention can detract from the benefits of the program. "Some parents have their kids there on time each session completely prepared, others don't. So when students are late, unprepared, or absent without letting me know, it can be incredibly aggravating to get everyone up to speed," Schorin said.

Despite these difficulties, Schorin finds the process very rewarding. "It's very fulfilling to see your hard work pay off when a student gets something for the first time," Schorin said.

Similarly, Hellerman accredits the students for the program's success. "While it does sound cliché, all that this program has done, or tried to do, is give these kids the same opportunities [many of us] had as 7th and 8th graders. The kids are the ones that have put the effort into learning the math and reading skills, and taking the practice tests. Besides that, the dedication of the tutors has been all that these kids need," Hellerman said.

The tutors hope to see the students at one of the specialized high schools next year.

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

## Dawn Vollarro: Artist at Heart, Mathematician in Mind

By ISABELLE MAHNKE

While art and math may seem unrelated, math teacher and artist Dawn Vollarro finds them intimately similar. She sees both of them as forms of problem solving that require a "big picture" perspective, whether the end result is a geometry proof or a painting.

Vollarro spent her early life in Brooklyn with her parents and identical twin sister. While her twin went to Stuyvesant and eventually achieved a doctorate in History, Vollarro pursued her passion for art, choosing to attend the visual art program at the High School of Music and Art, since renamed Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School. Though she loved art, Vollarro never saw herself pursuing a full time career as an artist. She felt that the art world would be too difficult to break into and make a career out of. Instead, after an inspirational teacher at LaGuardia helped her discover her interest

**"I didn't want to work in a cubicle because it would feel like being a hamster in a cage."**  
**—Dawn Vollarro, math teacher**

in math, she decided to pursue a career in it, but had little interest in becoming a teacher. In fact, in high school, she wrote an English paper expressing her inability to see why anyone would want to be a teacher. She considered a career in accounting, or a similar field involving math, but rejected those options because she "didn't want to work in a cubicle because it would feel like being a hamster in a cage," she said. Eventually, she considered the idea of becoming a teacher as an alternative to cubicle life, and realized that it would give her an opportunity to help people "enjoy math and see it as a creative endeavor," she said.

Vollarro's interest lies primarily in more applied math, as op-



Dawn Vollarro, math teacher.

Nicolas Fung / The Spectator

posed to theoretical. This is the area that she studied, attending both college and graduate school at New York University, where she majored in applied mathematics. She is especially interested in discrete math, a branch of math addressing numbers that have distinct, separated values, which has a great deal of practical application. "I would like to see discrete math course come back as an alternative for students not on the calculus track," she said.

Vollarro took her first teaching position as a student teacher at Stuyvesant, where she has worked for the past 19 years, while she worked towards her master's degree in teaching at New York University. She then became a full time teacher, and has taught Geometry, Algebra II and Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Art Appreciation, and a now defunct History of Math class.

Outside of teaching, Vollarro is very involved in art, using several mediums; colored pencils, pen and ink, graphite, and markers. "I turn on music and lose myself in my art for hours," she said.

She displays her work, including sketches, paintings, knitting projects, and works in progress, on the creative online community site, spraygraphic.com. She also has online profiles on Flickr, a photo and art sharing Web site, and has participated in the Sketchbook Project on the Art House Coop website, which invites people to send in sketchbooks to be entered into the Brooklyn Art Library. Last year, she designed the escalator logo featured on the Student Union Sweatshirts. Though she does not categorize what kind of

art she does, two of her favorite artists are Van Gogh, for his bold color and texture and ability to bring life to the mundane, and Albrecht Dürer, a prominent figure of the Northern Renaissance who incorporated geometry in his artwork.

Vollarro's interests span beyond art and math. She also enjoys keeping in touch with her family, especially her sister, and finding good restaurants in New York. She enjoys traveling with her husband, and has taken trips with other Stuyvesant teachers. She and her husband once travelled to Italy, where they met up with math teacher Richard Geller, whom she describes as an "influence" in her teaching. She has also traveled to San Francisco with math teacher Melissa Protass.

Between the time when her sister attended Stuyvesant and when Vollarro first started teaching there, the student culture has changed somewhat, she said. Though students have always been focused on academics, Vollarro said that she sees a lot of students overburdening themselves with too many AP classes, and also a culture of pressure to get good grades, as well as excessive focus on getting into prestigious colleges. "I see kids with three or more AP classes who don't even have a lunch period," she said.

She said that she feels that students need time to pursue interests other than academics, and wishes that Stuy offered more electives in the arts and mathematics that would allow students to see what they enjoy and become more well-rounded as people. "[Students] should have an opportunity to get [their] hands dirty," she said.

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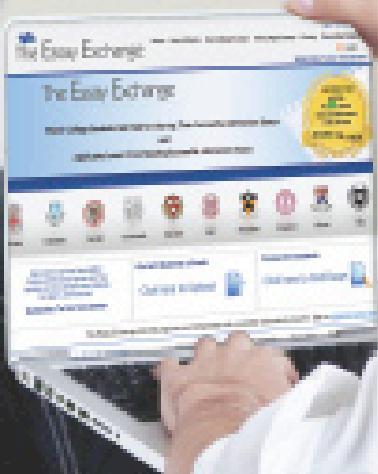
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# Humor

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

## Interest Meetings' Interest Meeting Fails to Generate Enthusiasm

By ELI ROSENBERG  
and JOE STEELE

Despite high hopes, Stuyvesant's first annual Interest Meetings' Interest Meeting, held on Wednesday September 21, was cancelled due to a low student turnout, reflecting a distinct low point in student enthusiasm at Stuyvesant. The meeting was intended to generate interest for the many upcoming interest meetings to be held by various school clubs and publications, and went largely unnoticed by the majority of the student body, mainly due to a lack of proper publicity.

**"Only a scant handful of students seemed interested in expressing their interest."**  
—Edward Cho,  
SU president

"I checked the Facebook Group's Facebook Group to see if there were any new groups announcing any interest meetings, but I couldn't find anything," freshman Grace Lo

said. "So far it's been impossible to even find a meeting for an activity I might want to participate in."

Having organized the non-event, SU president Edward Cho later acknowledged that further measures could have been taken to broadcast necessary information.

"We suspect that the reason for the low turnout to many interest meetings was due to the confusion that the average student faces when forced to choose only a small number of interest meetings to attend out of a large selection of high quality extracurricular interest meetings," Cho said. "Sadly, only a scant handful of students seemed interested in expressing their interest. It was very hard to compete with such important, focused, and completely non-farcical events as the Occupy Wall Street protest."

Originally, the meeting's organizers, including Cho and other members of the Student Union, had planned to conduct an information session in which they could explain to non-plussed students the nature and importance of showing up at various interest meetings in person in order to demonstrate tentative curiosity in whatever activity the meeting was intended to generate interest in. The fact that an insignificant number of students attended has prompted a wave of controversy and intrigue among certain circles in the Stuyvesant Community.

"It shows a lack of commitment that you see in new students," avid Meeting-Attendee and Model United Nations member Isadore Hechkoff said. "They just don't appreciate the value of staying inside and potentially gleaning some vague, intuitive information

about a club they might join on some of the last days of summer. I can't understand it."

The backlash has reached the ears of the SU, which have already started plans for the 2012 Interest Meeting season.

"We've already started

**"I checked the Facebook Group's Facebook Group to see if there were any new groups announcing any interest meetings, but I couldn't find anything."**  
—Grace Lo,  
freshman

brainstorming how to improve turnout for next year," Cho said. "In fact, many of us agree that the only logical course of action is to begin planning an Interest Meeting for the Interest Meetings' Interest Meeting itself, just to ensure the students' obvious interest in the meetings isn't further endangered."

## Programming Office Closes Due to Lack of Appreciation

By ROBERT MELAMED

The programming office has decided to shut its doors, after years of hard work and dedication to bureaucracy. Recently, the office has come under fire from students dissatisfied with their schedules.

Surveillance footage taken on Monday, September 26 shows the program officers packing up their suitcases and emptying their desks. Assistant Principal of Technology Services Edward Wong was seen boarding up the programming office and lining the back of the second floor hallway with caution tape.

"We felt overworked and underappreciated," Wong said. "I would like to see those ungrateful students try and program their own schedules."

"This is going to be chaos," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "Without the programming office to take the bullet for students not getting classes they want, now I will have to deal with them."

To deal with the change, statistics teacher Bernard Feigenbaum has been appointed Programming Overseer Pro Tempore. Feigenbaum has established a system that he believes will deal with all of Stuyvesant's past programming difficulties.

"My system combines complex statistical techniques such as linear regression and optimization to provide students with the best possible schedule," Feigenbaum said. "Of course, to the layman, it may appear that the system simply assigns classes completely at random, but I assure you that this is not the case."

Feigenbaum has already released tentative schedules for next semester, sparking criticism from students and faculty alike.

"I was programmed for five periods of freshman geometry," senior Swara Saraiya said. "And the rest of my schedule consists of multiple periods of drafting."

Though the program office

will no longer be functioning, Teitel believes that Stuyvesant can continue running smoothly. "In the past, programming was done almost completely by a computer," Teitel said. "Now we just need to find someone else to turn it on."

**"My system combines complex statistical techniques such as linear regression and optimization to provide students with the best possible schedule. Of course, to the layman, it may appear that the system simply assigns classes completely at random, but I assure you that this is not the case."**  
—Bernard Feigenbaum,  
math teacher

## Stuyvesant Stops Saying Pledge of Allegiance, Disowned by Government

By JAMES FRIER

United States Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced in a joint press release on Monday, September 26, that Stuyvesant High School would henceforth cease to be a part of the United States, and that all Stuyvesant students would lose their American citizenship. The reason given for the unprecedented, forced secession of U.S. territory was that students and faculty were no longer reciting pledge of allegiance on a daily basis, a fact which cast doubts over the school's true national allegiance.

Before this year, the student announcers read the Pledge of Allegiance over the intercom during the beginning of third period every day. Everybody would turn towards

**"The only thing that ensures us that we can trust these kids is the fact that they say the Pledge every morning."**  
— Janet Napolitano,  
United States Secretary of Homeland Security

the American flag that hung in every room, and, with their hands over their hearts, recite the pledge.

"It felt great knowing that when I was reading the Pledge every morning, thousands of students were reciting it with me, and reaffirming their loyalty to our nation," former Student Announcer Isaac Lapidus ('11) said. "But I had no idea that the government kept such a close watch on this kind of thing."

Despite the many years of diligent recitation of the Pledge, when this year began, there was no student announcer, and the Pledge was conspicuously absent from whatever announcements were made over the intercom. After only one week without the pledge, a concerned student notified government of

ficials, who immediately took action.

"The only thing that ensures us that we can trust these kids is the fact that they say the Pledge every morning," Napolitano said. "If they don't, anything can happen. Arson, racist freestyle rapping, unexcused absences — God only knows what they're capable of."

After learning that Stuyvesant was no longer American Territory, Principal Stanley Teitel quickly began to take measures to establish the school as an independent sovereign nation. "It's always been my dream to have my own country," Teitel said. After slightly modifying the dress code to serve as a constitution, Teitel formed a standing army using former School Security Officers, and began to take

measures to have Stuyvesant's sovereignty internationally recognized. "I've already sent those Model U.N. kids to meet with [United Nations Secretary General] Ban Ki-Moon about getting recognized as an independent state," Teitel said. "And the social studies department is working on creating a functioning legislature as we speak."

Although Stuyvesant's newfound statehood poses many challenges, Teitel remains confident about its success. "I believe that this situation will in fact make it easier for me to run the school," Teitel said. "Now I can finally instate the death penalty as the punishment for having more than three cuts in a semester."

# Editorials

## STAFF EDITORIAL

### Managing the Masses

The school is packed. Its halls and staircases are more congested than the West Side Highway during rush hour. Classes are bursting at the seams. The library, formerly a place of peace and refuge from the crowds, fills up within the first few minutes of every period, barring entry to a mob of angry students, desperate to find a quiet sanctuary to cram for next period's exam or complete pages of unfinished homework.

The annual increase in the size of the freshman class is always met with disdain from the rest of the Stuyvesant community. The disgruntled upper-classmen, already put off by the abrupt transition into a new year of school, feel the quality of the education they expect is being compromised by the size of the perpetually expanding student body.

The complaints about overcrowded conditions are aimed in every direction, though much of it gets directed at the administration. Whether it is the Stuyvesant administration or the Department of Education (DOE), we continually denounce the higher authorities as the source of all evil in our cramped, space-starved lives. Or we attack the programming office staff, whose inability to magically place every student in his or her first choice of class or elective gives us proper cause to rant and rave.

But the sad truth is that the scorn we feel goes nowhere. The school may be teeming with complaints, but very little effort has gone into effecting any tangible solutions.

In 2009, The Spectator published a staff editorial with similar complaints: "Overcrowding and budget cuts have become recurring and increasingly problematic, forcing us to cope with a more constrained school environment." Two years later, not much has changed. And while the average high school class size in New York City decreased by one percent over the last year, according to the DOE's Web site, attendance at Stuyvesant has only gone up. If we continue to complain without taking action, the situation will only get worse. The solution will not, and cannot, come from the administration. It must come from us.

Instead of complaining, we can institute simple adjustments to help ease overcrowding woes, and thus make Stuyvesant a better place. First and foremost, students should focus on practicing common courtesy to help clear our over-congested halls. By standing on one side of the escalator and refraining from pushing on the staircase or stopping to talk in crowded areas, we can alleviate much of the strain.

The Student Union (SU), which is often heard about but rarely perceived to be active, could be a key player in reaching sensible solutions. Demands should be made for increased student space. The auditorium, relatively dormant during the school day, could be utilized as a study hall area for students who desire a quiet place for work during free periods. Empty classrooms could also be set aside for a similar purpose now that the quickly filled library is no longer available after a certain number of students have gone inside. In addition, the student lounge should be made into a more commodious space for those who wish to socialize. These solutions, which would require some faculty supervision and therefore cooperation from the administration and faculty, would greatly aid our overflowing population.

A more legislative change, and one that would greatly benefit the student body, would be to re-allow students to exit the building during their free periods. Currently, the prohibition on leaving the school during free periods forces a greater number of students to further clog the building, adding noise and congestion to areas that are intended for quiet studying, when they could be outdoors. The free period restrictions, according to Principal Stanley Teitel, are the result of a chancellor's regulation, and have been in effect since before his tenure as principal. When asked what could be done about overcrowding during free periods, Teitel said, "I don't have an answer. I wish I did."

The policy change, according to Teitel, would have to come directly from the Department of Education (DOE). However, DOE Deputy Press Secretary Matt Mittenthal researched the policy and found that "[it] is fully

within a principal's discretion to set a policy around when and for how long students can leave the school premises during the day." In other words, it is entirely up to Teitel to determine whether or not we can spend our free periods outdoors.

The SU, with the support of the student body, should actively and relentlessly petition the Stuyvesant administration for outdoor free period privileges. If the changes were instituted at Stuyvesant, not only would the quality of student life greatly improve, but the weight of overcrowded woes would be greatly diminished.

Yet with all the possibility for positive change, there is also room for some perspective, as many other schools suffer through much worse conditions. According to The New York Times SchoolBook blog, approximately 256,000 students, or a quarter of the students in the New York public school system, "spend at least part of the school day in an overcrowded class." And in many schools in Queens, which contains around 2,600 overcrowded classrooms, classes are held in trailers behind the school building simply to accommodate the vastness of the student body. Our education is not nearly as compromised as those experienced by the so many students. We are able to weather the current economic storm slightly better than our fellow New York public schoolers. Nevertheless, this is no reason for us to stand idly by when simple improvements can be made.

Student activism can go a long way if we work to institute reasonable changes in conjunction with leaders of the Student Union, who have a direct line to the administration. Instead of complaining endlessly about the current state of affairs, we should demonstrate that student-based activism is not just a remnant of the past. We all want to better the school environment; we only have to do something about it.

Let us amplify the student voice, and bring about changes from which we can all benefit. Let us show that students can actually have some role in improving our student life, and can effect change that is necessary, beneficial and vital.

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse  
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Student  
Body"

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## The Spectator

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## A Note to Our Readers:

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

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

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

## FOR THE RECORD

- In "Untouchables En Garde for Fifth Championship," the Bronx Science fencer who gained an A-rating is not on the high school's fencing team.
- In "Let the Voice of the Students Be Heard," the School Leadership Team (SLT) was misnamed.

**Spectator Interest Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 11**  
**and Wednesday, October 12**  
**in the library**  
**after 10th period**

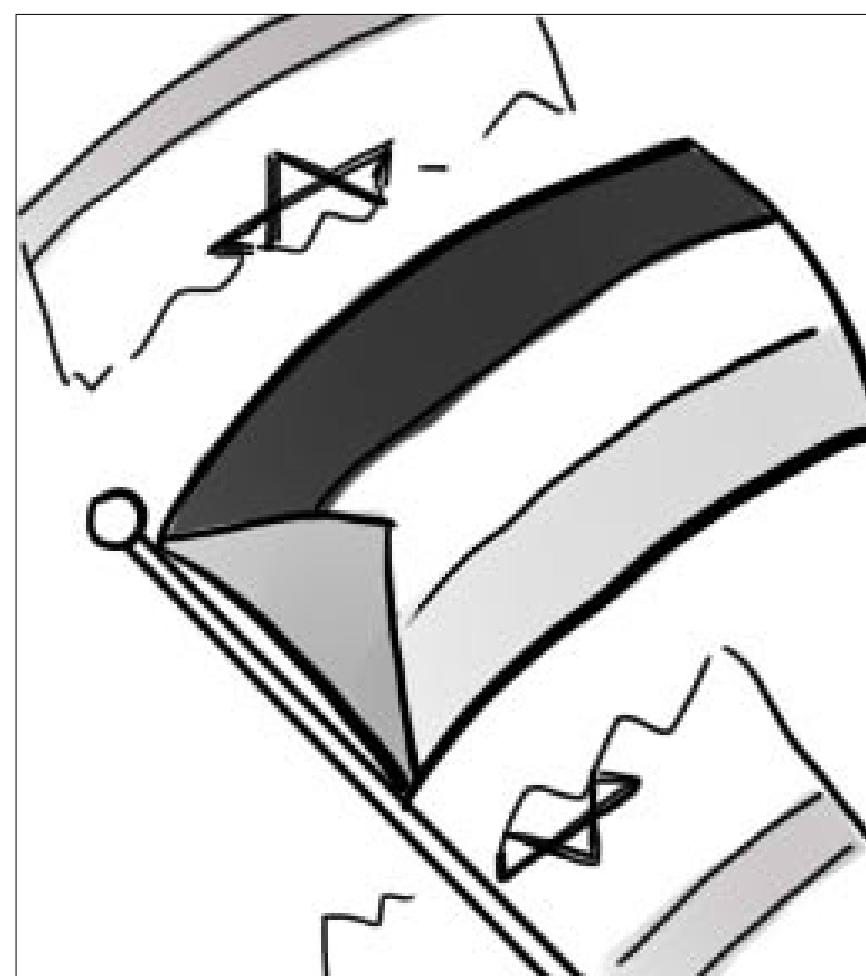
## An Examination of Palestinian Statehood



Sofia Pidziralo / The Spectator

**By ADAM SCHORIN**

On Friday, September 23, at a general assembly of the United Nations, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas made a bid for Palestinian Statehood, which called for Israel to conform to its pre-1967 borders. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has openly rejected the borders proposed by Abbas, and President Obama has promised to veto statehood should it come to the UN Security Council. The implications of statehood are huge not only



Linda Cai / The Spectator

**Both sides boast far more inconsistencies than they will admit to, so for negotiations to even be considered, they must reconcile their “rights” to the land and deal with the tangible facts and figures regarding population.**

for Israel and the Middle East, but for the world as a whole. Below, members of the Stuyvesant community express their opinions on the matter.

**Menna Elaskandraney  
(Class of 2013)**

Growing up, I always referred to Palestine as a country. It never really occurred to me that people would disregard the history of Palestine and instead label the country as something less than a sovereign nation. Learning that people are currently debating the status of Palestine's statehood just upsets me. It is really unfair to the

Palestinian people; their history, culture, beliefs, and land are being slowly taken away from them, and very few countries are doing anything to help.

I dislike the fact that countries have the power to veto the existence of a Palestinian nation, especially since it previously existed as a nation. Palestine poses no possible threat to the existence of other nations. What makes it okay for a limited group of people to decide whether or not Palestine can be recognized as a nation? Palestine was, is, and always will be a nation whether or not certain countries choose to accept that fact—it has already been determined by the Palestinian people. As human beings, they have the right to live freely under their own government in their own land and be recognized by the world. As an American, I believe that we should help Palestine gain the freedom it once had.

**Daniel Solomon  
(Class of 2012)**

Peace is no easy endeavor; it requires hard work and tough compromise. There are no shortcuts in the process, especially in the Middle East where a just and durable resolution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has eluded us for decades. Both sides accept the principle of “two states for two peoples,” and the rough outlines of any settlement are clear: Israel will retreat to its pre-1967 borders and cede the West Bank to a new state of Palestine, Jerusalem will be a shared capital with joint sovereignty over holy sites, and Palestinians displaced by war will be monetarily compensated by the Israeli government rather than allowed back into the Jewish State. Only small details need to be ironed out, like issues surrounding mutually-agreed-upon land swaps that will reflect changing population patterns over the past 40 years.

Israel has made offers, both in 2000 and 2008, that built off this consensus and culminated after months of talks. Each time, the Palestinians swatted away these deals. After another failed round of discussions, despite their bad-faith negotiations, Palestinians decided to take their case for statehood to the United Nations, a body known for its anti-Semitic and anti-Western tendencies. Their bid is likely to stall in the Security Council where it will be quashed by the United States, but they may see their status at the UN upgraded by the General Assembly.

This is a dangerous end-run around the peace process. To be legitimate, it must be based on agreements between the two parties, not *deus ex machina* decrees from the international community. The vain attempt also threatens to undo the little progress we have made on this situation, voiding treaties such as the Oslo Accords, which prohibit unilateral action by either Israel or the Palestinians. Countries that seek a halt to this conflict should send the Palestinians back home, the only place where we can bridge the gaps at the bargaining table—where the Jewish State waits, and has

always waited—and win the peace.

**Omar Ahmad  
(Class of 2010)**

Over the years I have encountered many perspectives on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and in keeping my own views as free from bias as possible, I try to give each opinion its fair consideration. As a Palestinian youth in America, I have thankfully been shielded from the greater struggles faced by those who live in the heart of the battle. From what I do encounter however, I believe that the greatest issue is the ten-

**As an American, I believe that we should help Palestine gain the freedom it once had.**

dency for the respective sides to withdraw and fail to recognize each other. If Palestinians do not recognize Israel, and Israelis do not recognize a Palestinian population in territorial limbo, nothing can succeed.

Israel has constitutional consistencies that should be seen as a good standard for the region, but its exclusivity and selective border policy make it unsustainable for future peace movements. The people, economy, and government are all in place, but the territory comes with the responsibility of the entire colonized area, not just prime real estate. Likewise, the Palestinian Authority must construct itself from the inside out;

infrastructure and unity should be the only priorities.

Both sides boast far more inconsistencies than they admit to, so for negotiations to even be considered, they must reconcile their “rights” to the land and deal with the tangible facts and figures regarding population. Abbas and Netanyahu have both taken steps in the wrong direction; Netanyahu with his headstrong settlement-building and Abbas with his premature and isolated bid for statehood. He has cast a blind eye towards many of the refugees who truly need the state in his bid, and likewise toward Palestine’s biggest intermediary, Israel. At the end of the day however, there remains one group of people in greater peril day to day with more difficulties and stagnant lives: the ever-growing Palestinian population without proper citizenship.

If Israel claims to be on the moral high ground, then it must act accordingly and choose either to give up the land it has annexed, or to keep it and accept responsibility for the local populations. Israel must take responsibility for all the people in the affected areas or define its borders and shift jurisdiction to another governing group that will grant citizenship to the Palestinians whom Israel has rejected.

**Adam Schorin  
(Class of 2013)**

I believe in Palestinian statehood. Not only do I think Israel should support statehood, but I feel that it must do so in order to survive.

For the first time in recent decades, Israel's existence is being called into question not by its enemies, but by its allies. Last month, the Israeli flag was burned down at its embassy in Egypt, and the building was attacked by a mob. A week earlier in Turkey, which is another one of Israel's supposed allies in the mid-East, Israeli ambassadors were forced out in a similar manner.

So this year as I prepared

for the Jewish High Holidays, I thought back to the High Holidays of 38 years ago. On Yom Kippur in 1973, a day on which Jews observe a religious fast, Egypt and Syria simultaneously invaded Israel. The conflict ended 19 days later in a UN-mandated cease-fire, resulting in the Camp David Accords, a 1978 peace treaty signed by Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Menachem Begin of Israel.

The Accords is likely the most important document in Israeli-Egyptian history, with the possible exception of the Ten Commandments, and its revocation could be a catalyst for fragmentation between Is-

**For Israel, the only options are two states or no state at all.**

rael and its allies in the Arab world. If Israel refuses to recognize Palestinian statehood or continues to build settlements in disputed territories, Israel will lose its only allies in the Middle East. Israel would once again be alone against the combined power of Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, which is possibly armed with nuclear weapons. While the Jewish religion would continue to exist without a homeland, as it has done before, the heart of Jewish culture, which I value above religion, would be destroyed.

Perhaps this is an over-simplification of an issue that cannot be simplified. Or perhaps all that needs to be said can be said in the simplest of terms; for Israel, the only options are two states or no state at all.

# Opinions

*continued from page 1*

told us all that could wait until we got to the precinct. The police shuffled 35 others and me onto a commandeered MTA bus and the rest onto various vans, and we drove down to 1 Police Plaza.

The bus ride itself was as jovial as one could make it in a prison transport. Somebody pressed the "Stop Requested" button a few minutes after the doors closed, and even some officers laughed. Some people also started rapping and beatboxing (I'm guilty of that charge, if nothing else), but seething beneath everyone's speech—

**The crime dramas cannot prepare you for the fact that there is a cell you cannot get out of, a door you do not have the power to open. That you are stuck in a cage like a dog. That you have lost your freedom. All for protesting."**

and their silence as well—was the tangible feeling that this entire ordeal was ridiculous



Linda Cai / The Spectator

## The Crime of Peacefully Protesting

and extralegal. Nobody, cops included, wanted to be there.

We spent the next hour and 15 minutes being counted on the bus, getting pointlessly transferred to vans, and having our pictures taken with and without our arresting officers, according to standard police procedure. At that point, some protesters' hands had turned purple and clammy, and they could not feel their fingers anymore, because their handcuffs were too tight. The police feigned the inability to address their concerns, saying that they did not have any extra pairs of "zip-tie" plastic cuffs, though they could've easily left the bus and gotten some from the countless other officers outside. Unlike metal and leather handcuffs, "zip-ties" cannot be unlocked by a key, and therefore need to be cut and replaced instead of opened, loosened, and relocked like other handcuffs. After a while though, we complained enough to get new cuffs for a few prisoners. It only took two hours to get that done.

Our bags were confiscated, and we signed in at the front desk of the precinct. The police searched us thoroughly, took our cell phones, and put us in a large, windowed holding cell with benches etched with gang names and expletives, a steady, oppressive fluorescent light overhead, and some toilets in the back. You do not realize how awful it is until you are there. The crime dramas cannot prepare you for the fact that there is a cell you cannot get out of, a door you do not have the power to open. You are stuck in a cage like a dog. You have lost your freedom. All for protesting.

Jail.

I could go on to bemoan the fact that we were not given food for another five hours, that the cops took their sweet time and wasted at least two or three hours on their phones, or eating, or that even just the relatively short six hours I spent in jail were the most disorienting of my life—I was a peaceful protester stuck in a room nor-

mally reserved for gang members, with no contact with the outside world, no shift in light, no sense of time. Instead, I just want to quickly hearken back to what the protest was before the mass arrests.

I have spent my entire young adult life searching for a way to express myself politically, to have my ideas heard, and this protest gave me a way to do that. On the first night, Saturday, September 17, I was able to speak in front of thousand of people using a "human microphone." I would break up my speech into short phrases, each of which would be repeated by those in my immediate vicinity after I said it, so that the whole protest could hear. Funny enough, the speech I made was a response to the anti-cop

**I saw a man I had met in jail just a few hours before. He was going back to the Occupation. We threw up a silent peace sign to each other in complete understanding as we passed with a smile: they will not stop us, no matter how many they arrest, no matter what they do.**

fervor among the crowd, saying that most cops were our friends, and that if we were nice to them, most would return the favor.

A week later, I was walking down Broadway with many of the same protesters, but hundreds of new faces as well. We were chanting, marching arm-in-arm at points, and talking to people on our way uptown. I handed out fliers, I spoke to curious onlookers on the sidewalk, and I got more than a few handshakes, peace signs, and words of encouragement from supporters.

Six hours later, I was sitting with a man who was taken down so severely he had a gash on his leg, just because he was trying to videotape an instance of police brutality.

Oh, the irony.

I'll probably have the arrest stricken from my record in about eight months if all goes



Abe Levitan / The Spectator

well in my trial for "Disorderly Conduct" on Thursday, November 3. But this experience will never leave my memory.

Joining Occupy Wall Street was my first foray into actively participating in my country's democracy. I joined—like so many others—to fight corporate influence in our government, to get our politicians to listen to their constituents rather than their lobbyists, and to try to hold accountable (rather than award with bailouts) those who caused our current financial crisis. I got arrested for it. I know the march I participated in did not have a permit, but arresting protesters for that violation is forgetting the spirit of that law—the permit rule is there to protect the citizenry from harming others through violent protest. Our protest was non-violent. We moved as swiftly as we could through traffic. The police had no reason to arrest us, let alone beat us and pepper-spray us.

They did. Although I may not be able to stand in the front lines of another march for a while (another arrest would result in me having to spend the night in jail, and the arrest remaining on my permanent record), I will do all the organizing and spreading-the-word I can while not physically present in Liberty Plaza. I hope my arrest served to get at least some media attention for the protest and the issues it brings up as well.

It's scary. You see all those newspaper headlines—80 Arrested in Protest, 3

Protesters Pepper Sprayed—and then you are part of those numbers, and you know those people by first name. You have sat with them in jail together as political prisoners. You are part of the pictures, part of the history.

And you haven't even graduated high school yet.

As an ending note: I went back to Liberty Plaza after my release at about 11:30 p.m., when my parents picked me up, seething with understandable anger bred from fear for my

safety. I had left my backpack at the park before the march. When we got there, it was still in the same place I had left it eleven and a half hours before, including the three hours before and during the march. As I picked it up and left—escorted protectively by my mother—I saw a man I had met in jail just a few hours before. He was going back to the Occupation. We threw up a silent peace sign to each other in complete understanding as we passed with

**The crime dramas cannot prepare you for the fact that there is a cell you cannot get out of, a door you do not have the power to open. You are stuck in a cage like a dog. You have lost your freedom. All for protesting.**

a smile: they will not stop us, no matter how many they arrest, no matter what they do. If anything, the arrests only bring more media attention, more concerned Americans to Liberty Plaza. They only help us grow.

Getting back into my car, with the sound of hundreds of people chanting, "This is what democracy looks like!" a block behind me, I cried. I was a criminal, but safe. The protest would go on.

# Opinions

## Point

### The Perfect Fit



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

By FELICIA RUTBERG

We are all aware that Stuyvesant students have a reputation for being elitist, a quality that stems from our diligence, intelligence, and fierce competitiveness. And although this sense of superiority may be well deserved, it is also extremely dangerous. Not only does it create an atmosphere of negativity among between Stuyvesant students, but it also heavily influences significant decisions. One of the most important choices we must make is where we plan on going to college, and being immersed in such an environment makes it difficult to see clearly.

I am always hesitant to give a reply when asked, "Where are you applying?" Afraid to be considered unintelligent, lazy, and undetermined, I often answer with "I'm not sure yet." But to be honest, the Macaulay Honors program at Hunter College is where I see myself. The amount of benefits that it offers are unfathomable: free tuition, first choice in all honors classes, countless internship opportunities, a free Macintosh computer, and \$7,500 for travel abroad. But when I say that this is a top choice, I am often met with a silence. "Why would you go to a CUNY after Stuyvesant?" my friend asked perplexedly. Her question stung, forcing me to reconsider an option I was once so sure about.

"I want to major in pharmacy at St. Johns," a classmate told me. "But, I don't understand why everyone bashes it," she asked after seeing a group of girls discussing it on Facebook. "Who from Stuy would ever go here?" she asked each other mockingly online. And with 5 AP classes, a 96 average, and a strong involvement in extracurricular activities, this student would.

These elitist sentiments, spreading like a wildfire amongst students, only breed ignorance, making it difficult to remain objective and thoughtful in the application process. What we all need to realize is that just because a school isn't ranked, frequently applied to from Stuyvesant, or because it isn't tier 1 or tier 2, that doesn't mean it isn't a viable option. A big name and the connections associated with it are great, but there are so many other factors worth

considering.

Since we are in the midst of a struggling economy, it is very important to keep cost in mind, corresponding with paralleled to a student's prospective profession. If you are planning on becoming a doctor or a lawyer, is it really worth it to spend \$200,000 for college, when medical and law schools are so expensive? And currently, going to graduate school and earning a Master's degree, a PhD, or an MBA makes you far more profitable as a potential employee. But with the expenses of graduate school, does it make sense to enter it with hundreds of thousands of dollars in loans that may take a lifetime to pay off?

With schools like Cooper Union, or programs such as Sophie Davis and other BA/MD programs (which offer automatic acceptance into medical school after college, for free), honors programs in various state schools (University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts Amherst, etc.), the Macaulay Honors program, and even well-funded SUNYs, we are given the opportunity to enjoy an excellent and prestigious education at a minimal price. They give us an opportunity to be recognized for and truly exude our intelligence, and are competitive enough to be viewed in high regard by top-ranked, graduate schools.

The concept of "fit" that our guidance and college counselors are so often discussing is another major factor to finding the right school. Although we all want to be challenged, I for one, am not sure if an atmosphere of cut-throat competitiveness will help me excel. For students such as me, maybe a more balanced school, in which they will able to shine and stand out, is the right choice. Or maybe there is a program within a school that you absolutely fall in love with, that isn't as popular among Stuyvesant students. By no means should that fact affect your decision. By no means can we allow the elitist views to become influential enough to affect such important and personal choices. Too many of us are EDing into high-ranked schools simply because they are our ticket to the top, all the while disregarding where we may be happiest.

Of course it is difficult to handle this process impartially. I still feel a great sense of pride when I am asked what high school I attend. I crave the reaction, the automatic assumption that I am intelligent. But college is the precedent for the rest of our life, and if it is spent in an intolerable condition, with regret and worries about tuition, and regret it will be very difficult for it to turn out successful and prosperous. We are far too mature and profound to let something as superficial as names and mere labels cloud our judgment.

## Counterpoint

### Ivies Deserve Investigation, Too

By ANDREW SCASNY

With early deadlines for college rapidly approaching (and the one for regular decision not far behind), you've no doubt heard plenty of advice from your parents, friends, counselors, relatives, waiters, grocery clerks, and perhaps even pets on how to handle this intense time of year. Whether or not they can agree on whether you should write about how your summer as a lumberjack taught you the value of hard work and a hearty breakfast, they often have a common message: don't count on elite schools for much. After all, with admission rates hovering under 10 percent, they are machines of rejection that will waste time, money, and spirit you should be putting towards something more feasible and rewarding, such as building orphanages for puppies (which would do wonders for your application) or applying to a less well-known school with better odds. To many elites are akin to luxury brands of clothing, ultimately doing the same job at much higher prices for the sake of image.

Casting top-tier schools as superfluous luxuries, however, isn't giving them a fair shake. Sure, praising a school based on the ideas that media and colleagues give you and pinning your hopes on it is rather baseless – but isn't criticizing it and ignoring a potential



jeany Zhao / The Spectator

if you choose to do so. Leaping headlong into a four-year commitment with anything, especially a college, requires foreknowledge of why it is the right choice for you.

When college reps discuss the importance of fit with a school, they aren't trying to trick you into applying. All schools have their own unique culture and personality, and the elites are no exception. If you want to be surrounded by intense kids working hard, building robots and programming buttons for pizza deliveries, there is no place on Earth for you like MIT. It's entirely possible that after visiting a small college in New England or the Midwest, you might find that the way of life there works for you. And there's nothing wrong with that; the whole process is about finding what works for you. Just remember that despite the images of being filled with blue-blooded white males, Harvard or Yale could turn out to be your personal slice of heaven. But you won't know until you investigate, just like with a school you've never heard of before.

The idea of elite schools being jacks-of-all-trades seems almost as reasonable as their seeming lack of personality; even with billions of dollars of endowments, spreading themselves as broadly as they do should leave them behind a smaller, specialized school. And in some situations, this may be the case. It all depends on what you find out for yourself, though. Sitting in on a class, visiting a lab, and talking to students all give insight that isn't necessarily obvious from just looking at a school. You may end up liking a smaller school, or you may end up loving the Ivy. Giving both a fair shot is what counts.

While quality of the school is a top priority, the monetary

situation cannot be ignored. Many fear that since they aren't having vacations in Martha's Vineyard, they are going to be priced out of the Ivies or get saddled with a crushing debt, while being told by the school that their debt is an investment. Fortunately, this is not the case. Many of the top universities will meet full financial need, meaning that while your family will have to pay some, coming up with the

**But you won't know until you investigate, just like with a school you've never heard of before.**

money won't be a Herculean effort. Some, such as Columbia and Harvard, take it a step further and allow families that make under \$60,000 a year to not pay a dime for their child's education. This is one clear advantage elites have – their endowments allow this financial aid to happen.

This isn't meant to shove a college you don't want down your throat. But in the mad rush to find a quality school that is willing to accept us, many have been blind to the choices that are right in front of their faces.

**In fact, doing research is what makes applying to a top-tier school a reasonable course of action to begin with.**

goldmine based on that image more or less the same? What if schools judged you based on what was easy to know about you at a glance – say, your SAT scores? An applicant with a less-than-stellar score may be brilliant but a poor test taker, and someone with a perfect score might be dull as a rock but an ace at standardized exams.

It may seem as though that analogy can be used in favor of focusing on obscure schools over the elites, but the fact that researching a school is beyond vital is not something in conflict with applying to elite schools. In fact, doing research is what makes applying to a top-tier school a reasonable course of action to begin with,

# Opinions

## A Few Words of Encouragement



By ADAM SCHORIN

We are stressed. I know it, you know it—it's one of Stuyvesant's oldest clichés. But this year, as it turns out, everyone else is stressed as well.

We've seen it all. August was peppered with a surprise earthquake, absurd humidity levels, and a destructive hurricane. The "Satan sandwich" debt deal was passed in Congress, Amy Winehouse suddenly died, and Rick Perry announced his candidacy for President. Oh, and I hear the economy's not doing

so hot either.

But for all these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, there is one man who appears to be rather positive. On Thursday, September 8, President Obama tried to pep up the nation during his address to a joint session of Congress. He recalled the once-great nation we had been and suggested that we raise to such heights again. Jobs, he claimed, are the answer. Like chairman of the Fed Ben Bernanke, Obama reminded us that the key to a positive economy is a positive mindset. Sure, job creation seems impossible in the wake of reckless spending cuts, but don't worry, he urged. Be happy!

Gail Collins had a similar tone in her New York Times column, published the day after Obama's speech. She told readers, "Every time you hear a piece of depressing news, come back with something cheerful [...] The price of gas is approaching \$4 a gallon in some places. On the other hand, Beyoncé is pregnant." If the nation's problem is its atti-

tude, maybe that's what should be fixed first.

For all of our complaining and all of our kvetching, we rarely take the time to stop and consider all the good stuff in life.

Instead of pining over the daily annoyances we encounter, why not focus on the positive? Sure, we had to pay more for lockers and lab fees this year but did you get a chance to pick up one of those glossy bell schedule cards in homeroom? I'm really glad the school sprang for the color copy on that one.

And yes, the 2-to-4 escalator has been more of a 2-to-4 staircase, but on the other hand, you're getting a really great workout.

For those of you who are more politically inclined, you may feel your stomach doing back-flips every time you review 2012's presidential candidate pool, but on the plus side, you now have ample opportunity to watch Rick Perry denounce that silly evolution theory. And hey, at least Dick

Cheney didn't run.

See? You're good at being happy and, as illustrated in the illustrious jobs plan, that

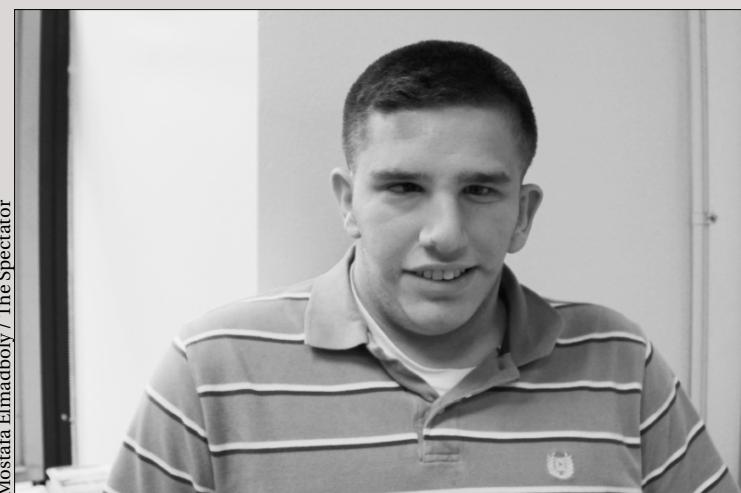
**If the nation's problem is its attitude, maybe that's what should be fixed first.**

take action, create a petition, rally support, start a movement, and try to change the things that were making you so sad and stressed in the first place. I guess you could drum up some repressed stores of activism and try to make a difference where it counts. But does it make sense to do all that work when you can just put on a smile instead?

No, we are told. Be happy and all your problems will go away.

So don't complain about the nation's massive, record-breaking unemployment crisis, or the budget crisis, or the mortgage crisis, or any crisis at all, for that matter. Don't worry about police brutality down on Wall Street, or military brutality in the Middle East, or political brutality in Washington. And definitely don't fret about the upcoming election, or the previous election, and whether you can even do something to make a difference. Trying to change any of that nasty stuff would just be impractical when you can simply smile instead.

## The Solomon Column: We Murdered A Man



By DANIEL SOLOMON

Last month, the world was watching as the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles deliberated over the fate of Troy Davis. In 1989, the black Savannah native was convicted of murdering a white cop and, 22 years later, his execution date was approaching. All the while, he had maintained his innocence, denying a verdict based on flimsy evidence and shot through with racial bias. Still, the board sided against him, ignoring calls for clemency from three Nobel laureates, Pope Benedict XVI, and nearly a million Americans. As midnight neared on Wednesday, September 21, the state of Georgia murdered Troy Davis. His blood is on our all our hands.

The Davis case encapsulates everything wrong with capital punishment and why it must be abolished. For one, it highlights the haphazard way that death sentences are handed down. According to studies by the Death Penalty Information Center, African-American defendants are four times more likely to be condemned than Caucasians committing the same crime. Indeed, anyone who has ever read "To Kill A Mockingbird" knows just how much race factors into a jury's behavior, especially in the Deep South, with its history of slavery and Jim Crow.

The Supreme Court agreed with this criticism in 1972, when it struck down the death pen-

alty statutes of every state that had one, holding in Furman v. Georgia that capital punishment violated the Eighth Amendment because it was "wantonly and freakishly imposed" and "cruel and unusual in the same way that being struck by lightning is cruel and unusual." When the states

**The Davis case encapsulates everything wrong with capital punishment and why it must be abolished.**

rewrote their laws and changed their sentencing procedures to limit the discretion of juries by requiring them to balance sets of mitigators and aggravators to arrive at their decisions, the Court allowed executions to resume. Unfortunately, this effort to eliminate error from the process has failed, a fact that even the

American Law Institute, which crafted the post-Furman system, acknowledged when it eliminated capital punishment from its Model Penal Code.

Then there is the gnawing issue of whether a person being killed is actually guilty of the murder for which he is to die. With the emergence of DNA evidence, scores of death row inmates have been exonerated, but there are probably hundreds more who did not get so lucky. This has led many legislatures to scotch capital punishment in favor of life without parole, the most notable example being Illinois. In 1999, the Innocence Project won one man's freedom a few weeks before he was to be dispatched via lethal injection, eventually overturning the convictions of 12 other inmates. The state's erstwhile governor, Republican George Ryan, put a moratorium on executions, which lasted until early this year, when the current governor, Democrat Pat Quinn, signed a bill that ended the practice once and for all.

This measure passed after an agonizing, six-month-long discussion about the death penalty, and the people of Illinois came to a simple conclusion that the citizens of 15 other states and most of the First World had already reached: a system that allows the innocent to be wrongly condemned is a barbarity that cannot be tolerated in a civilized society. So, why then, in the face of these facts, do states like Texas rival China in their use of capital punishment?

There are two main arguments for letting the killing machines grind on. The first one manifested itself a few weeks ago when crowds at the Republican presidential debate—or were they from the Roman Colosseum?—cheered when the number of people put to death by Rick Perry, 234, was brought up. It asserts that an execution is a metaphysical act, a method by which we express our revulsion at the most heinous crimes. It embraces revenge, the basest human emotion, as a motivation for taking a life. Of course, when

we create governments, we give up our right to exact retribution, allowing the state to speak for the common good. As the famed legal scholar, Cesare Beccaria, put it, "public utility is the basis of human justice."

The second contention, which says capital punishment is a powerful deterrent to the potential murderer, is not as lightly dismissed. It seems to agree with the dictates of common sense. It, however, has a couple fatal flaws. As many have pointed out, most slayings occur in the heat of passion or out of compulsion, not as a result of a careful, ratio-

it. Adjusting for external factors, he found no deterrent effect.

In the absence of data, believers in capital punishment, especially Christian conservatives, have started to cherry-pick quotes from the Bible to make their case. Specifically, they cite the litany of offenses punishable by death, which the Israelites would "hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you" (Deuteronomy 19:20). Yes, the Hebrews did trust the principle of deterrence, but today's evangelicals ignore what the ancients had that we do not: a system with vigorous protections for the defendant. They required at least two witnesses in a murder trial, and while the burden of proof in court today is guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, the prosecution had to show guilt beyond any doubt. Additionally, if guilt were established, the witnesses responsible for the verdict had to cast the first stones; if they were found to have perjured themselves, they could be put to death as well. Consequently, capital punishment, though statutorily permitted, was quite the rarity and, as the rabbis who wrote the Talmud explained, "the eye for an eye" of the Old Testament was symbolic, not literal.

In my estimation, the Biblical rules were far more humane than the Texas scheme is. Barring any movement to return to Masoretic law, however, I am an ardent abolitionist when it comes to the death penalty. Anyone who studies this issue with great intensity, as I have, will probably find himself in agreement. But no one does anything about it. The Republicans are in the thrall of bloodthirsty mobs and Democrats fear polls that show a majority of Americans supporting capital punishment. That's sad. On the whole, this country's citizens are a good and giving people, and our leaders do not give them enough credit. I believe that if we have a conversation on a national level like the one they had in Illinois, every single death row will be shuttered. Until then, Troy Davis haunts us all.

**With the emergence of DNA evidence, scores of death row inmates have been exonerated, but there are probably hundreds more who did not get so lucky.**

# Opinions

## Junior Ramblings: Junior Year Is For Phonies

Christina Bogdan / The Spectator



By LEOPOLD  
SPOHNGELLERT

It happened so quickly, too fast to tell what hit me. What seemed like a far off dream came knocking at my door, and it wasn't taking no for an answer. I knew the day would come, but I did not expect it to feel so foreign. This was supposed to be a natural part of my progression as a high school student, the next exciting step in the Stuyvesant experience. But the first day of school spoke differently to me; I was out of place. I was now a junior, but I was not sure that I knew how to be one.

The stigmas are abundant in this year of all years. By definition, being a junior is supposed to be difficult. More accurately, it is promoted as Stuyvesant's version of hell. The teachers get tougher, the work gets harder,

and the hours of sleep shorter, all with the looming threat of the various standardized tests. But challenging academics aren't the contributing fuel of any junior's fears. Instead, it is the idea that this year is your final shot at academic success.

This perception creates the mindset of juniors characterized primarily by paranoia. It is the idea that should we fail to achieve astronomical grades we will never have a shot at any respectable college. In short, that one point in one's GPA is the difference between life and death.

Unfortunately, my paranoia extends past academic expectations. I know how to function with the continual pressure of school, with a constant need for, and pursuit of, unreasonable heights of personal achievement. It's the part of Stuy life I've come to know and loathe.

What I wasn't ready for was a fundamental shift. Crossing the threshold between underclassman and upperclassman was not a simple change in grade number; it was the start of another stage of life.

I once looked at upperclassmen as alien life forms; they were the ones who had it all figured out, and I, an awkward and uptight freshman, desired their composure. I looked up to these upperclassmen, and couldn't wait to be on the other side of the age gap. To me, the juniors and seniors of years past seemed to walk around like they knew how to live - they were at the top and liked it that way. But because I placed them on such a pedestal, the first day of school seemed like a confusing dream. I felt like I was in the wrong body. I was not a junior, I couldn't be.

What I was experiencing was not purely a result of growing pains while changing grades. I felt like I was suddenly supposed to be a young adult, rather than an inexperienced teen. Even worse, I was supposed to be an example. And with those expectations, a Holden Caulfield moment arose. It was my time; I had to grow up. I should have seen the signs: there was straggly facial hair on my face, I was a Big Sib instead of a Little Sib, my voice had dropped another octave, and I had even gotten a job over the summer.

The biggest indication that I was maturing was my new baby

brother Julien. While I sit at my desk every day toiling over some homework assignment he bursts through the door of

with him.

All signs pointed toward adulthood, but the first couple of days of school made my maturity seem suddenly, devastatingly pertinent. I was emotionally overwhelmed, because I truly believed I had to figure my life out right there and then. However, the dust eventually settled on my first week and my life went on. I may not have been thriving, but I was still surviving just as I always had. It was then that I realized the truth is not that I was unprepared, nor had failed to mature, but merely that upperclassmen are not perfect. My first week freak-out may remain unique to me, but the perception of junior year is not, and it has to change. We may have matured since freshman year, but we all still have plenty of growing to do.

We are not perfect students, young adults, or even upperclassmen. Nobody is, even if we tell ourselves we have to be now or never. We must allow ourselves to understand that perfection will not appear because we have received the title of junior. Accepting this will make Stuy's inferno bearable. Still, this shouldn't stop any of us from displaying the standard masquerade of an all-knowing upper-class grade. The confidence comes with the territory; it's an extension of our inescapable imperfections, and it would be a shame to give any freshmen the right idea.

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my room without a care in the world aside from how many toy cars he can carry around at once. He tugs at my shirt incredulous as to how I couldn't want to get up and build Legos

## Cartoons

### Things You Should Tell Me Sooner...



Samantha Luangkhon / The Spectator

### "Tests"



BY NIKI CHEN

Niki Chen / The Spectator

# Occupy Wall Street

by Lori Gutman, Thomas Zadronzy, and Mark Zhang





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# Arts and Entertainment

## There's a New Girl in Town, But Will She Tear It Up?

By PATRICK LOI  
and NINA WADE

It is not often that a show will, in the first five minutes, include a beautiful woman attempting to strip and knocking over a plant in the process. Fox's new sitcom, "New Girl," does just that, even turning the incident into an endearing joke about her clumsiness, leaving her to sing-song "I'll pick that up later." It follows the adventures of a quirky, twenty-something teacher, Jess (Zooey Deschanel), who struggles to get over an unexpected break-up with her boyfriend. With the help of three new male roommates, she tries to get back into the dating world. Fox has been heavily promoting the show by distributing the pilot on iTunes for free and by scheduling its premiere after showings of the highly-rated "Glee."

The pilot begins with Jess in a taxicab on the way to surprise her boyfriend with a striptease. However, she catches him cheating on her, and immediately scrambles to find new housing. Through Craigslist, she comes by roommates in the form of three somewhat—but not completely—clichéd guys: Nick (Jake Johnson), a bartender pining for his ex-girlfriend of several months ago; Schmidt (Max Greenfield), a smooth-talking womanizer whose lines more often than not fall flat; and Coach (Damon Wayans Jr.), a personal trainer. However, Coach's character will be replaced in the next episode

by Winston (Lamorne Morris), as Wayans was needed for another show.

The premise is thin, and the show is written in a way that suggests that Jess will end up in the arms of one of her roommates. Sexual tension will probably develop after several typical

**"New Girl" is one of those witty comedies with enough corniness to make it your new guilty pleasure.**

roommate situations, such as walking in on each other in the shower (as is slated to happen in episode three). The characters are not groundbreaking and the dialogue, while witty, is rather cheesy and predictable. One of the more clever running gags is the "douchebag jar," similar to a swear jar, which Schmidt's friends force him to donate to when he says something corny or idiotic, serving the dual purpose of com-

ic relief and a "safety net" for the writers, who can blame the poor quality of their new humor on they jar if the jokes fall flat.

The glue that holds the sitcom together is, without a doubt, Deschanel. Her "simply adorable" (as the tagline states) Jess is not so different from the characters she typically plays: eccentric, sweet, and vivacious girls with comic bite. With her infectious exuberance, mesmerizing blue eyes, and charming-yet-snarky attitude, her captivating camera presence is so undeniable that the repetitive nature of her acting is nearly forgivable. Even so, at times her oft-criticized mannerisms are amplified to the point where she is no longer playing the typical bubbly doe-eyed hipster, but a caricature of it.

Her roommates are far less compelling, though each has his amusing moments. Coach is in all of one scene, in which he barks at a crying Jess to pick herself up and get out on the town. Nick is the nice, logical, desperately romantic guy of the house, and one hilarious scene features him calling his ex-girlfriend and attempting to disguise his voice with a bad Australian accent. Schmidt, the jerk with a heart of gold, truly shines when he takes off from a major hookup opportunity to help the other two lift Jess's spirits after her first post-breakup date ditches.

Given more screen time, Nick and Schmidt could easily be contenders for Jess's future affections, and each has the potential to



Margot Yale / The Spectator

grow into a much stronger character. Johnson's acting is as genuine as his emotions, and Greenfield is appropriately aggravating as a frat boy. Coach, however, is incredibly one-dimensional, in both acting and characterization, and while this can be chalked up to his limited appearance, his replacement will hopefully be much more complex.

One confusing aspect of "New Girl" is that it is sometimes unclear whether a moment is meant to be sweet and funny, or gawky and embarrassing; the mixed mood comes across as strange to viewers. For example, Jess mourns her failed romance by watching "Dirty Dancing" on repeat, singing along to the climactic song, "Time of My Life." While she is portrayed as a stereotypical heartbroken woman for laughs, the scene is cringe-

inducing. Also, the pilot's uplifting closing scene, in which all of Jess's roommates sing to cheer her up after she is stood up, ends with the foursome being told to get out for being too loud (and off-key), muddling the message of the moment.

Overall the show is funny, but it is more of a cute, subtle, one-liner-centric sitcom than a laugh-out-loud fest—the kind of show that will leave a half-suppressed smirk on your face. While it is too soon to tell how successful the program will be, its pilot drew over 10 million views after having already been made available for free on iTunes and On Demand channels. What can be told, however, is that "New Girl" is one of those witty comedies with enough corniness to make it your new guilty pleasure.

## The Secret Circle: Another Guilty Pleasure?



Myra Xiong / The Spectator

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

The 1990's introduced a plethora of fantastical dramas, filling television's primetime spots. Programs such as "Buffy: the Vampire Slayer" and "Smallville" showed that the commonplace woes of teenagers and young adults could be presented just as well, if not better, along with the premise of magical powers and the existence of the supernatural. Many fantasy dramas share a common concept, especially that of multi-generational witches. "Sabrina: The Teenage Witch," "Charmed," and now "The Secret Circle" are part of a collection of witch stories retold.

CW's "The Secret Circle," which airs on Thursdays at 9:00 p.m., is based on a trilogy of young adult romance novels by L.J. Smith. Both the book and the T.V. adaptation feature a group of witches bound together by both

their family history and similar powers in witchcraft.

In the CW series, the program starts with the murder—perceived as an accident—of protagonist Cassie Blake's (Britt Robertson) mother. Cassie then moves to Washington, where she discovers her innate abilities of witchcraft upon meeting the five other members of her circle. These include the sadistic, obvious antagonist-to-be Faye Chamberlain (Phoebe Tonkin), the sensitive and emotionally available boy-next-door Adam Conant (Thomas Dekker), and his good-natured, yet jealous girlfriend Diana Meade (Shelley Hennig). The cast, though portraying dryly typical caricatures, introduces a variety of clashing personalities, making their supernatural connection even more interesting.

After the first few days of her stay, Cassie begins to come to terms with her abilities and the damage they have the potential

to cause. After witnessing the grave and seemingly fatal effects of witchcraft, Cassie binds her power with other members of the circle, tying the six together as a mighty force for life, whilst limiting their individual strength.

"The Secret Circle" offers an interesting spin on the conflicts faced by teenagers. Because the CW features an overabundance of dramas in which kids face adult conflicts such as pregnancy, death, and financial troubles, it is somewhat refreshing to see these same stories introduced in a different light. Since many of CW's dramas involve exaggerated and unbelievable plots, adding an element of magic makes it easier for a viewer to suspend disbelief and revel in the dynamism of the show. For example, the scene in which Cassie's mother is murdered by another witch is suspenseful and chilling, and the use of magic advances the viewers' curiosity.

However, despite a differ-

ent perspective on the maudlin melodrama of adolescence, "The Secret Circle" fails to be groundbreaking in both its dramatic and supernatural aspects. Instead, it is clichéd in both genres. The premise of supernaturally "star-crossed lovers," as Cassie and Adam are described—much to the chagrin of Diana—is far from original, providing a rather boring explanation of an uncanny and illicit attraction. The magical aspects are all too familiar from T.V. shows of the last decade: the idea of practicing magic with another as a romantic expression is imitated from "Buffy: the Vampire Slayer;" the concept of witches abusing their power and suffering the consequences as they try to undo the damage caused is reminiscent of "Sabrina: the Teenage Witch;" and the breadth of abilities the witches express, as well as their use of a "Book of Shadows" to cast powerful spells and potent potions seem to be adopted from "Charmed."

"The Secret Circle" also errs in the progression and the predictability of its plot. Events such as the murder of Cassie's mother occur with little explanation and pretext, confusing the viewers. Though this is a classic example of a complex and interwoven story arc being set in place, the lack of any rationale offered only alienates those watching the show. In a similar vein, the main antagonists—who are coincidentally Diana's dad and Faye's mom—seem to be evil for the sake of being evil, as no real motive is given for their actions. Because of the dearth of a clear storyline, the show becomes predictable, and without a clear direction to the plot, the same events seem to repeat cyclically. Viewers can anticipate every time one of the "evil" villains will harm an unsuspecting witch, or even when a romantic encounter between the predestined lovers will occur.

"The Secret Circle" offers an interesting, yet predictable variation on the teenage drama with its fantastical twist. In spite of its parallelisms with other shows of a similar theme, "The Secret Circle"

**Because the CW features an overabundance of dramas in which kids face adult conflicts such as pregnancy, death, and financial troubles, it is somewhat refreshing to see these same stories introduced in a different light.**

takes a graver and perhaps more relatable approach; it deals with the death of a child's parents, the danger of the over-zealousness that comes with power, and the dishonest temptations that can be present in a steady relationship. The show, which tells a sporadic and vexing story, holds potential as another one of the CW's guilty pleasures, but lacks the innovation or ambition to become a classic of creative contemporary fantasy.

# Arts and Entertainment

## The Underbelly Project

By MARIUM SARDER

Concealed in the eerie darkness of an abandoned subway station lies a painting of a distorted American flag. The stripes, representative of the original 13 colonies, have been replaced with an intricate pattern of slanted zig-zags. Painted in 2010 by the graffiti collective Faile, this painting is part of a graffiti show so well hidden that the majority of the public will never see it.

Faile's flag is one of the many countless paintings hidden deep in the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) network of tunnels. Starting in early 2009, graffiti artists PAC and Workhorse led an 18-month underground urban artistic movement that they dubbed "The Underbelly Project." Over 100 artists from around the world came together to paint on the secret abandoned train platforms, shielded from public scrutiny.

In the early hours of the morning, PAC and Workhorse smuggled masked artists into the exceptionally dusty station. Each artist sat by his or her allotted wall spaces, makeshift lighting rods illuminating the concrete canvases, and painted for four hours only—creating works reminiscent of the politically and emotionally charged murals of the 80s rather than the vandalistic scribbles of today. Despite the difficult work conditions, which included the presence of subway rats and the constant threat of arrest, the artists remained in the station to

complete their pieces.

In an interview with The New York Times, PAC and Workhorse stated that the inspiration for the project came from their frustration with urban art becoming a

**Regardless of the arguable motives behind the project and the confidentiality of its location, The Underbelly Project is one of the largest organized art installations in the entire city.**

commercialized business. They felt that money-hungry people exploited a medium that once stood for unrestrained expression. Hoping to refurbish the former reputation of street art, they found the abandoned subway station, a perfect location to make art for art's

sake and keep it hidden from the eyes of the ordinary public.

The only people that have been able to discover the location of the project since are urban adventurers, individuals who illegally explore the city infrastructure without fear of the dark, rats, dust, and, most importantly, law. When the MTA was informed of the underground activity, they made it very clear that the project was illegal, and that anyone found near the vicinity or attempting to find the project would be arrested. Over the span of two years, undercover cops patrolling the abandoned tracks nearby have arrested more than 200 people. However, despite MTA's declaration of The Underbelly Project as an illegal art installation, they have promised to leave the paintings untouched.

Despite this gesture, others have found ways to destroy some of the artwork. Soon after the completion of the project, vandals found their way into the station and painted over some of the pieces. There has been speculation in the art world that the vandals were other artists who did not agree with the alleged inspiration behind the project. Those critical of PAC and Workhorse argue that if the Underbelly's main objective was to remain a secret, serving as an exclusive art exhibit for savvy street artists, then PAC and Workhorse should not have publicized the project and written a book about it.

Is the Underbelly an elaborate publicity stunt? Or is it the genuine work of artists who wholeheartedly believe in the "cause" of this project? Regardless of the arguable motives behind the project and the confidentiality of its location, The Underbelly Project is one of the largest organized art installations in the entire city. It showcases new work of a plethora of artists and has become an exciting, yet mysterious exhibition, serving as a time capsule for the sentiments of the artists of our generation.

**PAC and Workhorse are preparing to release their book "We Own the Night: The Art of the Underbelly Project," which documents all the paintings created for the exhibit. The book is scheduled for release on Tuesday, February 7, 2012.**



Lisa Lee / The Spectator

## Nickel-and-Dine: Tiny's Giant Sandwich Shop



Tiny's Giant Sandwich Shop, 129 Rivington Street.

By CLARISSA SORENSEN

Looking for the perfect one-stop sandwich shop to fit your cravings and your budget? The search is over; Tiny's Giant Sandwich Shop, a café and eatery located on the Lower East Side, is the perfect place to fill up on unique, delicious sandwiches.

Situated on the corner of Rivington and Norfolk, Tiny's lackluster storefront is easy to miss.

However, upon stepping inside, you cannot fail to notice the comfortable and homey atmosphere. An exposed brick wall painted white gives the shop a vintage feel, and antique bottles and jars sit on shelves behind the counter, making Tiny's reminiscent of a cozy kitchen.

The shop's menu is notable for list of fresh, delicious, wittily-named sandwiches, such as the "The Hammer" (black forest ham

and swiss cheese) and "Pestoriffic" (portobello mushrooms, roasted red peppers, mozzarella, and tomato with pesto). Tiny's offers whole sandwiches, which are large enough for two people, for \$8, as well as more reasonably sized half-sandwiches for \$6. All sandwiches are served with a side of chips.

Tiny's also has a breakfast menu, offering an assortment of bagels and toppings. Granola with roasted almonds and cashews, served with yogurt and a fresh fruit salad (\$4), is also available. For beverages, try one of Tiny's delicious homemade sodas, with flavors such as Thai Basil Lemon Grass or Lychee White Tea (\$3). Specialty coffees, such as the Macchiato or the Red Eye (\$2), are also recommended.

A fulfilling meal at Tiny's can be kept to under \$10, a good price considering the quality and quantity of the food. Though the shop is tiny, it is a great place to stop for a quick, delicious meal.

129 Rivington Street at Norfolk  
New York, NY 10002  
(212) 228-4919

## 50/50: The Unlikely Marriage of Comedy and Cancer



Michelle Savran / The Spectator

By DAPHNE LU

A forlorn-looking twenty-something man eyes an electric razor. He brushes back his dark brown hair to expose his forehead. After receiving a shocking diagnosis of neurofibrosarcoma, a cancer of the connective tissue surrounding nerve cells in the spine, from his doctor, he decides to shave his head before the chemotherapy takes its toll. Razor poised, he glances back at his friend and asks, "What do you use this on?" His friend's honest response: "You know...my body."

The newly released film "50/50" is an inspiring, true story about a young man's struggle with cancer. Instead of succumbing to depression, Adam (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), along with his goofball best friend Kyle (Seth Rogen), decides to make light of his situation through laughter, friendships, and excessive amounts of medicinal marijuana. Directed by Hollywood newcomer Jonathan Levine, this film mixes the dramatic severity linked with terminal illness with the healing powers of comedy.

Based on screenwriter Will Reiser's emotional journey battle with neurofibrosarcoma, "50/50" is a story of hope and gratitude. The protagonist is just a regular Joe, confused by what has hit him, who attempts to juggle a failing relationship with his girlfriend Rachael (Bryce Dallas Howard) and his overly worried, smothering mother Diane (Anjelica Huston) who calls every day.

Levine brings rawness to the big screen by showing the candid realities a cancer patient faces. His expert combination of the gravities and ugly truths of cancer with authentic, imperfect characters creates a realistic, emotionally relatable portrayal of Adam's situation. There were no lengthy dialogue or super emotional speeches, just real talk from real characters. With a brilliant director and a screenwriter telling his own, true story, "50/50" strikes movie gold. While the film is a comedy, it never disrespects the seriousness of death, but instead helps us accept our own mortality, a very surreal idea, with a slap of reality, be it in tears, laughter or both.

Rogen steps up in this film as not only the loud, hard-partying buddy with a taste for crass humor and idiotic punch lines, but also as the loving goofball who is trying his best to cope with the impending death of his friend. At first, he is seen as insensitive—taking advantage of Adam's cancer to pick up girls and to get prescriptions for medical marijuana so he can treat his "night blind-

ness". One night, just as Adam begins to tire of his friend's antics, he finds a book about dealing with cancer in Kyle's bathroom. It's a very subtle scene that makes Adam grasp the emotional toll his illness has taken on his friend. The warmth Rogen brings to his first somewhat dramatic role is taken from his real life experience as Reiser's best friend when the latter was diagnosed with cancer.

The true breakout star, however, is Anna Kendrick, who portrays Adam's young, sincere therapist, Katie. At first, Adam sees her as a joke but she refuses to let him give up so easily. Kendrick's performance melds maturity and innocence in a combination that moviegoers will enjoy, especially her stereotypical "relaxation music" and random touching when

**Based on screenwriter Will Reiser's emotional battle with neurofibrosarcoma, "50/50" is a story of hope and gratitude.**

comforting Adam. Her unkemptness clashes with Adam's organized self; when she drives him home one day, he asks to stop the car because he's sick—sick of all the empty chip bags he's been stepping on.

The heart of this film lies in Adam's character and Joseph Gordon-Levitt's stellar performance. Death isn't a typical theme for comedies but it's used successfully as a plot device thanks to a funny, witty, and honest script. The frustration and anger that Adam experiences is nothing without the joys and absurdities that continue to pervade his everyday life, even after his diagnosis. It's cliché to say that laughter is the best medicine, but with a star ensemble and the heartbreaking and inspiring performance of a leading man, it's hard to disagree. "50/50" will make you bawl and smile and appreciate the life you're given.

# Arts and Entertainment

## 5Pointz in Jeopardy



Christy Ku / The Spectator

5Pointz, located near Hunter's Point, Queens.

**By TAHIA ISLAM  
and OTHILLA WLODARCZYK**

Framed by the window of any 7 train passing Hunter's Point, a pair of intrepid eyes stares back at commuters peering through the subway car window. As the train curves around the bend, people look out at the shadows and intricate details, done by hand with spray paint on the already colorful backdrop of the expansive building. Illustrating the late rap artist, Notorious B.I.G., the stunning artwork is just one of the many graffiti attractions at New York's graffiti mecca: 5Pointz.

An old warehouse transformed into a stunning display of art, 5Pointz has given graffiti artists of all levels the permission to present their work on the building's 200,000 square ft. of interior and exterior walls for the past 18 years. With graffiti's negative reputation and its criminal associations, the warehouse has become a graffiti haven. Referred to as a cultural hub, 5Pointz has long encompassed the true essence of New York through its urban perspective. Unfortunately, in light of recent events, what is considered to be one of New York's most valuable art galleries is about to be renovated so that the graffiti now proudly displayed will be relegated to a small, comparatively pitiful section.

Though some pass off 5Pointz as a go-to location for graffiti eye candy, the art of 5Pointz is unlike your average graffiti, partly because the warehouse is one of the only places where graffiti artists are able to express themselves publicly and legally.

"People put time and thought to what they're doing here obviously. It's not just like people want to write their name and scribble something and make it look cool. No, they're beautifying it, in my opinion," said Josh, a 38-year-old photographer who declined to give his last name.

The various messages shown in the graffiti include a depiction of a Muslim woman with the phrases "Libyan Women Unite" and "Libyan Women Have Guns" written around.

Some of the works are political in nature. The various messages shown in the graffiti include a depiction of a Muslim woman with the phrases, "Libyan Women Unite" and "Libyan Women Have Guns," written around her. Other subtle political portrayals show leaders with inspirational words, an image of Che Guevara accompanied by the word "Liberty" being one

example. Other works serve as artistic tributes to hip-hop music, including lifelike drawings of Notorious B.I.G. and Nas.

However, much of this work, done by artists from around the country, will soon be stripped away. Owner Jerry Wolkoff recently announced plans to develop 5Pointz into two 40-foot-tall high-rise residential towers and a shopping mall. According to local New York newspapers, he believes it is time for a change, and that the new buildings will be perfect for young people who cannot afford Manhattan homes. The \$350 million dollar development will include a lone wall for graffiti and a small portion of studio space. However, when compared to an entire building that serves as a public museum, one wall and a fraction of the previous amount of interior space is insignificant.

Unsurprisingly, the new project has received much opposition, including critique from the young people Wolkoff claims to help. "Show Ur Love to 5Pointz," an online petition to keep the art temple, has collected over 11,000 signatures using Facebook and other social networking pages in an effort to organize protests.

"It's kind of sad that stuff like this, where there is so much individuality and creativity going on, is going to get pushed out by some cookie-cutter place," Josh said.

Spar1, a graffiti artist in the middle of finishing his own graffiti piece on the 5Pointz walls, commented on this coming reality with an air of defeat. "A lot of free public space has been going to capitalism," he said.

For now, the interior of the building and all the studios have been rented out to manufacturers until the deal for the renovations are secure.

Not only will the future changes to the art shrine erase hundreds of enthralling works, they will also hurt NYC's graffiti movement. Currently, 5Pointz is one of the few places for graffiti artists to legally show off their work. Without an outlet to express themselves, taggers will be forced to hit the streets, which could lead to a police crackdown on graffiti artists, perpetuating their already negative reputation.

Overall, because there are many cons to the changes taking place at 5Pointz, there still seems to be much uncertainty as to what the outcome of the situation will be. One can only hope that the graffiti oasis will be preserved.

## A Man With No Name, But Many Cars

**By JOSHUA BOGATIN**

James Bond flies away on jetpacks, Rambo rips out people's throats, John McClane fires one-liners as often as he fires bullets, but The Driver—well, he just drives. Stoically cool in his scorpion-embazoned silver jacket and leather gloves, chewing on what seems to be a seemingly never-ending supply of toothpicks, he is the best at what he does. Give him a time and a place and he will be there, ready to provide his getaway services to whomever awaits him. He does not carry a gun, he does not help with the job, and he barely even talks; all he does is drive.

The Driver is the hero of the new movie "Drive" by Danish director Nicolas Winding Refn, who has created a fairly unusual action movie; the action, while glorious, comes second to the characters. The movie follows a nameless on-the-go movie stuntman (Ryan Gosling) who moonlights as a getaway driver (or vice versa, if you will) and spends his time between jobs alone in his apartment. While reserved, he does not prove emotionless, as he quickly falls in love with his next-door neighbor, single-mom Irene (Carey Mulligan), whose husband (Oscar Isaac) comes home from prison shortly after she too falls for her neighbor. Things get messy, as the husband, Standard, is wanted by the mafia, and The Driver is soon forced to work a pawn shop hold-up in order to protect Irene and her son. When the job goes bad, the bullets start flying and the stuntman finds himself up against Bernie Rose (Albert Brooks), a kind-hearted Jewish mobster with a vicious side who will not stop until The Driver is dead.

"Cool" may be one of the only words suitable to describe Nicolas Winding Refn's film, which oozes style and class within its European art-house aesthetic. The effect is enhanced by Refn's subtle touches. Between scenes, the camera swoons above a glamour-less Los Angeles. The action is always brief and fleeting, but memorably brutal and intensely satisfying when it appears. Pink credit titles and a modern-day synth-pop score give the film a soft, almost tender quality. While by no means slow, the film takes its time for an action movie, dedicating almost the entire first half to establishing the world The Driver inhabits and the love that begins to grow between him and Irene.

Refn idolizes every frame, lighting shots with an impeccable finesse that guarantees dozens of images burned into your retina by the time the credits roll. A particularly notable scene portrays the tense stand-off between The Driver and an armed assailant in the middle of an elevator, Irene caught desperately between the two. Refn toys with the lighting, as well as our emotions, romantically swelling the atmosphere for a short tender kiss between The Driver and Irene, and then quickly dropping the brief respite to treat us to one insanely violent ballet.

The film belongs to The Driver, whose role Ryan Gosling fills perfectly. Gosling takes a man with no name and little to say and turns him into a character for whom the audience not only roots for, but cares for as well. No matter who speaks, The Driver rarely responds, choosing instead to hide behind a loonish smile which, thanks to Gosling, manages to express much more than his words ever could.



Lindy Chiu / The Spectator  
When he does talk, he never says any more than is needed, allowing other characters to fill in the conversation.

The ensemble cast is surprisingly strong, with Albert Brooks and Carey Mulligan delivering strong smaller performances that rival Gosling's. Brooks gives an especially fantastic performance, going against type to play a bad guy, yet winding up not far from the whiney nice-guy character that he has perfected over the years in other movies.

The neo-myth of the motorist has been explored through cinema almost as frequently as the cowboy, but "Drive" manages to separate itself from the pack. While lacking a single climactic car chase sequence to rival the likes of action genre classics such as "Bullit" and "The French Connection," the movie goes further than its past contenders by re-examining the genre as a whole. A violent and yet touching exploration of an American folklore archetype, "Drive" is a superbly stunning movie thanks to the skillful work of Nicolas Winding Refn and Ryan Gosling.

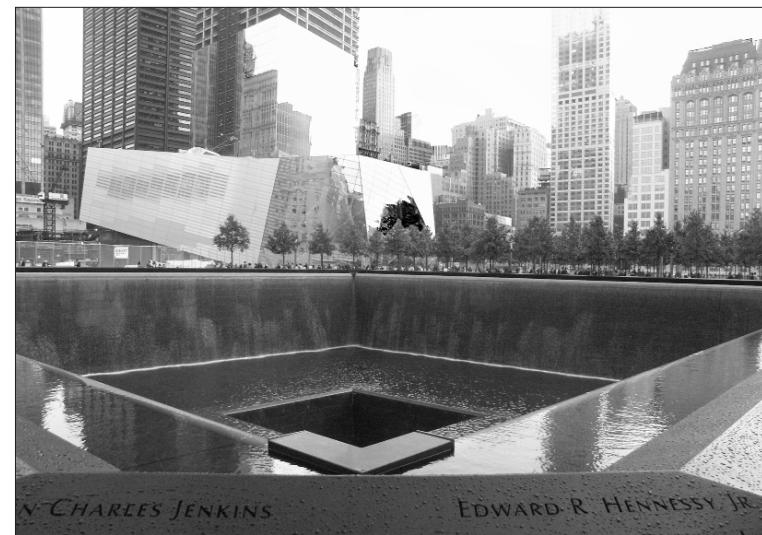
## Reflections and Remembrances

**By JAMES BESSOIR**

At the corner of a plaza of grass, trees, and stone stands a perfectly square, 30 feet deep pit of polished black stone. The pit is ringed with a raised parapet of black metal and engraved with hundreds of names while a man-made waterfall crashes down from the base, trickling out through a hole in the center. The sound of falling water is overpowering; it isolates the space. Even so, the place is not dead—it is filled with motion. Businessmen walk about and chat quietly, and tourists take pictures. For the first time in ten years, the space is occupied by real people.

This pool is one of two at the 9/11 Memorial at ground zero between West Street and Church Street, a mere five blocks south of Stuyvesant. Open from 10 AM to 7 PM on weekdays and 9 AM to 7 PM on weekends, the 9/11 memorial, though still a work in progress, is now partly accessible to the public. It was built not just to commemorate the 3,000 people killed on September 11, 2001 and the six that were killed when a truck bomb was detonated near the North Tower in February 1993, but also those who died during the attack on the Pentagon and on the hijacked four planes as well. Construction of the memorial has followed the same timetable as the new world trade center, beginning in March of 2006.

The memorial, titled "Reflecting Absence," was chosen in the 2004 World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition by a panel of judges including Maya Lin, the designer of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. The title describes the significance of the two large pools that make up the design. They reflect, both literally and figuratively, the absence of the twin towers that originally stood there. "Reflecting Absence" was designed by architect Michael Arad and landscaper Peter Walker, and finalized by World Trade Center reconstruction master planner



The South Pool at the 9/11 Memorial.

Daniel Libeskind.

The memorial is composed of two massive pools that flank a plaza paved with rough, white granite and uneven rectangles of grass. There will be about 400 swamp white oak trees, which will eventually form a canopy of green over the plaza, though only about half are in place right now. One tree however, is different from the rest; this tree, a callery pear, was on the original World Trade Center plaza and was somehow unearthed from the rubble relatively unharmed. The tree was nursed back to health in a nursery in the Bronx and is now planted in a prominent spot near the center of the memorial. The finished memorial will also contain a memorial museum, which will house artifacts recovered from the wreckage of the World Trade Center, located at the center of the plaza between the pools.

These huge pools sit in the exact footprints of the original Twin Towers and are 200 feet wide and 30 feet deep. The north pool bears the names of those killed in the north tower, on Flight 11, and in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The south pool has names from the

south tower, the pentagon, first responder units, and flights 175, 93, and 77. Thanks to a cleverly designed computer algorithm and information provided by the families, the names of coworkers are placed next to coworkers and the names of friends next to friends, while first responders are grouped by their agency and unit. Come nightfall, the names, illuminated from underneath, can be seen glowing through the dark.

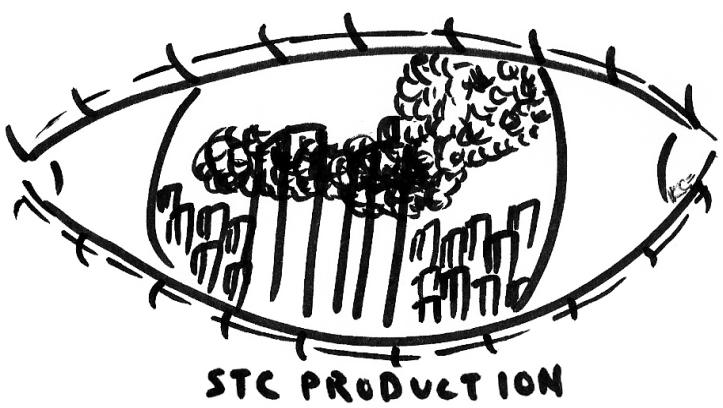
The genius of "Reflecting Absence" as compared to other memorials is that rather than telling the story with words, "Reflecting Absence" makes poignant use of empty space. You do not need to speak English—or any language at all—to see that something once important is no longer there. The rushing sound of the waterfalls drowns out the construction going on around the plaza and adds a sense of isolation. Everyone is there for their own reasons, and the quiet serenity leaves visitors alone with their thoughts. "Reflecting Absence" is a fittingly powerful memorial for two powerful buildings and the 3,000 innocent people who worked there.

Elana Movshovich / The Spectator

# Arts and Entertainment

## Commemorating 9/11 Through “With Their Eyes”

Casey Ching / The Spectator



By NIKI CHEN,  
NINA WADE,  
and MARGOT YALE

On September 11, 2001, the students of Stuyvesant High School started their mornings expecting nothing out of the ordinary. However, the horrendous events that unfolded made the sunny Tuesday morning one to remember.

In an attempt to find information about the state of the school, which had been commandeered as an aid center, Stuyvesant students started sharing their stories through online bulletin boards. The students' forum inspired English teacher and then-adviser of the Stuyvesant Theater Community, Annie Thoms, to create a group of monologues, titled "With Their Eyes," based off interviews with members of the Stuyvesant community about their experiences during 9/11. The interviews were conducted by a group of ten Stuyvesant students, including two freshmen, three sophomores, two juniors, and three seniors.

Ten years later, the STC is revamping "With Their Eyes" for this year's fall drama, which will be performed on October 20, 21, and 22.

However, this is far from the second time that the play will have been performed. Since its original Stuyvesant production in 2001, about 30 schools across the nation from the Upper East Side to Wheeling, Illinois, Kansas City, Missouri, and Orange County, California, have put on productions of "With Their Eyes."

"We really wanted to do a show about September 11th, and we thought ['With Their Eyes'] presented a very interesting perspective of the day and the aftermath," Casey Long, Managing Director of the Chance Theater in Orange County, California, where the play was produced in 2006, said in an e-mail interview.

The Coterie Theater in Kansas City, Missouri, also staged a performance of "With Their Eyes" in 2006. Young professional actors performed the play for an audience of primarily high school students.

"We soon realized that the high school audiences were in grade school those five years earlier, and mostly remembered the event as the first time they saw their parents cry," Jeff Church, Producing Artistic Director of the Coterie Theater, said in an e-mail interview, when asked about the audience's emotional reaction.

West Leyden High School in Wheeling, Illinois also produced the show, just last year.

"I loved working one-on-one with the actors, bringing out emotions they never had before, and really feeling what the characters were feeling, because they were real people and discovering what acting really was," Adriana Pilolla, Student Director of the play at West Leyden High School, said in an e-mail interview.

The ubiquity of the play has

had a deep impression on senior and STC Communications Coordinator Emma Handte. "That just goes to show how unique Stuy was in how it was affected, and that's really important," said Handte. "Clearly a lot of people feel that this close perspective is really important for remembering the history for future generations."

Thoms said that she is very humbled by the many productions of "With Their Eyes." "Many people have found value in hearing the voices of our community, and I think that is very moving," she said.

Thoms has attended three other productions of "With Their Eyes" aside from the original: the performances at the Spence School, the Chance Theater, and the Coterie Theater. "One of the things that was so interesting was that there were different laugh lines. There are some references that the Stuyvesant audience, knowing Stuyvesant, would find very funny that other audiences would miss," she said.

Many who have been involved in a production of "With Their Eyes" remember it as a very sensitive experience. "To hear these stories from people that really went through what most of our performers only watched on television gave me goose bumps,"

**“Clearly a lot of people feel that this close perspective is really important for remembering the history for future generations.”**  
—Emma Handte, senior

Long said.

For the students involved in the original production, the experience was even more moving. "The first night we all read the monologues aloud to each other was very emotional. There were things that resonated, as well as new discoveries about what other people around me were feeling," alumnus Liz O'Callahan ('02), who acted in the original production as former student Hudson Williams-Eynon and Machinist Kenneth Levigion, said in an e-mail interview.

"We didn't have the luxury of falling back on caricatures, be-

cause the people we were portraying would be in the audience. It lent a different kind of anxiety to the performance, not wanting people to feel that they had been portrayed unfairly in any way," O'Callahan said.

For Thoms, who had only been able to guess at the play's potential, this read-through was an astounding success. "I thought that this was an idea that might work, but I had no idea the strength of the stories that were going to come out of it," said Thoms.

Despite the difficult subject matter of the play, O'Callahan said, "We had a lot of fun and had a bunch of inside jokes during the show. I could not have asked for a better group of people to work with. I made friends that I never would have made otherwise. Even now, we're still very connected in a way that I am not to most other people from high school."

Thoms has met with the STC slate and will be meeting with the directors as well, acting as a consultant and offering advice throughout the rehearsal process. She has been arranging a rehearsal day in which the original cast and the current cast can work together in order to further improve the production.

The STC and production slate have also planned a visit to the World Trade Center site with Thoms and several alumni who acted in the original rendition of "With Their Eyes," along with faculty members who were present at Stuyvesant during 9/11, including Levigion, social studies teacher Matthew Polazzo, and former faculty member Katherine Fletcher.

Handte, who was a second-grader living on the Upper West Side when the attacks occurred, feels that the play helps bring the personal side of that day to those too young to remember. "I knew what was sort of going on, but not exactly, so it's really interesting to hear the different sides of the story, and what was happening so close by," Handte said. "Most of my friends lived on the Upper West Side, so I didn't really get that sort of personal story."

Thoms, who teaches "With Their Eyes" in her Women's Studies class, also expects the reactions of this audience to differ from those of years past.

"When I started teaching it, it was with students who had been here on September 11th, and then it was with students who had been in junior high [at the time], and now it's with [students] who were in, like, 3rd grade. Seeing the way that most current students are removed from the events from September 11th, I thought that, in terms of an oral history of something major that happened in our community, it would be an appropriate time to reach back there," Thoms said.

"To know what an event means to a population, I think you have to understand what it meant to individuals. ['With Their Eyes'] tells some of those stories, and they're not the same. That's part of what's so awesome," O'Callahan said.

After ten years, what originally started as an exercise in expression after the trauma of September 11th has grown into something much larger. Having been performed in schools throughout the country, and progressed from a commentary on a contemporary event to a piece of theatrical oral history, the revival of the show at the school at which it was inceptioned is highly anticipated.

## ‘Til Death Do We Never Part

By CHRISTINE LEE

Sitting directly next to a zombie is hardly comfortable, but this is the exact situation that the hundreds of students of the fictional Oakvale High School in Connecticut find themselves in everyday. In this fictional universe, teen zombies have risen from their graves not for a zombie apocalypse, but for a second chance at life as "normal" kids.

Author Daniel Waters redefines the horror genre through his new book, "Generation Dead," a teenage supernatural novel about the social repercussions of the rise of the undead and an unlikely romance between teenage girl and zombie boy. The protagonist, Phoebe Kendall, a high school junior, struggles to balance her involvement with zombie society (mainly her new beau, zombified football player Tommy Williams) and her ties to the living. Water's plotline and refreshing reanimation of one of the horror genre's most classic monster make for an excellent read. While its characters are fairly predictable, "Generation Dead" is a promising beginning to a series with a new take. The second and third of the series, "Kiss of Life" and "Passing Strange," respectively, are also in stores.

In the world of "Generation Dead," deceased teens have been "coming back to life" all over the United States and are attempting to reintegrate themselves into mainstream society as high school students. This is how Phoebe falls for Tommy, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed, football-playing, dead teenager. Meanwhile, fear and prejudice run rampant through the halls of Oakvale High as "living" students segregate themselves from their "dead" classmates, amplifying the intense mix of emotions that Phoebe faces.

Waters' take on civil rights and social discrimination, see through the plight of the zombies, is extremely interesting. Much of the behavior towards the "differently biotic," as they are dubbed, is a reflection of how each minority, particularly African Americans and homosexuals, has been treated in America. In the novel, because individual rights to equal protection under the law do not apply to the dead, zombies are grossly mistreated and even lynched. A powerful example is when Phoebe and Margi, her best friend, watch a video of a zombie getting burned "alive." Relationships between the dead and living are stigmatized and strongly discouraged.

The keystone to Waters' work is his figurative revitalization of the undead. While his zombies do not perform vital human functions, they do not hunger for human flesh. Some are able to act like regular humans, while others have difficulties adapting to their new lifestyle. This is what makes Waters' zombies so striking: they

are almost completely human, unlike so many other incarnations of the species.

Waters pays meticulous attention to creating the zombie-infested world of the novel. Besides focusing on the social effects of the zombie phenomenon, he incorporates a realistic and somewhat tongue-in-cheek projection of what day to day life would be for the hypothetical undead. In the mall, stores designed specifically for zombies have been opened by entrepreneurs catering to the distinct minority. Waters also portrays the political aspect of the zombie issue as conservatives and liberals fight over zombie rights legislation (along with everything else). The Undead Citizens Act, which would give civil rights to zombies, is shot down in Congress. All of these effects combine to help the reader imagine, as realistically as possible, what our world would be like with this one small addition.

Unfortunately, Waters' efforts are consumed in that area, leaving other aspects of his work to suffer. While Water's plotline and zombies are commendable, his characters lack depth. Phoebe is a Goth who romanticizes the qualities of the dead and falls in love with an undead boy mostly for those reasons. Waters tries to employ irony in this situation, but fails. Phoebe is just too much of a caricature, which can be gleaned from stereotypical characterization; she has straight, black hair and wears flowing, dark clothing. Her favorite music consists of songs such as "The Empty Chambers of My Heart." Laughably, writing deep, meaningful poetry is her hobby, which Waters mentions only once.

Phoebe's friends and family are also far too sympathetic of her plight to be believable. While her best friend Margi is disturbed by zombies, she acquiesces to Phoebe's feelings without protest. Phoebe's other friend, Adam, a popular jock who is secretly in love with her (cliché #2), even encourages her to seek happiness in this untraditional way. When Phoebe discusses dating a zombie with her family, her father simply mumbles some words of protests before conceding. Waters depicts a hopeful relationship for Phoebe and Tommy, but the hard-to-swallow reactions of her friends and family make it difficult to appreciate.

For a debut novel and the start of a series, "Generation Dead" has a strong foundation. Waters' amusing dialogue and revamped zombies keep the novel easy to read. Though "Generation Dead" lacks complete depth in many places, the intriguing world Waters has put together is worth delving into. Ultimately, it is refreshing, and although it manages to stray from the usual zombie-based plot, it fails to avoid some clichés.



Christine Lee / The Spectator

# Sports

## Sports-in-Brief

### Boys' Fencing: Stuyvesant 14, NEST+M 1.75 By WASIF ISLAM

The Stuyvesant boys' fencing team, the Untouchables, is used to being a championship contender year after year. The fencers use the regular season games as practice for the playoff games ahead.

The Untouchables faced NEST+M twice last season and came out on top both times. This year, NEST+M appeared to pose even less of a threat, having lost its best fencer, Christopher Dorn, because he moved to Georgia.

"We weren't expecting much of a challenge," senior and co-captain Simon Gurvets said. Nevertheless, the teammates stretched and warmed up with as they would for any other match.

The foil starting line consisted of junior Adam Schorin, sophomore Philip Shin, and senior and co-captain Sho Zren Chen. The épée starting line included Gurvets, sophomore Josef Omar and senior Colin Chik.

Each foil and épée player is entitled to play in three possible matches, or bouts. Unless they are competing in a playoff game, the starters usually participate in only two of their three possible bouts, but most of the starters played one bout to allow the substitutes more playing time. Co-captains Gurvets and Chen each fenced only one match, and both won with five touches. "Both the foil and épée maintained a lead throughout the matches and we were able to give our subs some experience," Schorin said.

The substitutes were mostly able to uphold the lead that the starters had established. The only trouble the Untouchables seemed to have was junior Sason Rafailov's shakiness during his match against NEST+M lefty sophomore Cheng Long Lin. According to teammates, left-handed fencers tend to give less experienced fencers more of a challenge.

Seeing the players, both starters and subs, in action for the first time this season highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the team. "We do have some areas to work on, including how to deal with left-handed fencers," Gurvets said.

With a final score of 14 to 1.75, the Stuyvesant boys' fencing teams enjoyed a solid victory. They hope this first game reflects what is to come. "We have a strong team this year, and I am confident we can win the championship" Chen said.

### Boys' Soccer: Stuyvesant 0, Beacon 1 By YORKBELL JARAMILLO

Stuyvesant FC, the boys' soccer team, was defeated by its archrival, the Beacon Blue Devils, with a score of 0-1 on Monday, September 26.

Stuyvesant came in with a record of 3-1 and Beacon with 4-1. With the win, Stuyvesant could have tied Beacon for second place in division standings, trailing only Martin L. King Jr. High School.

"I thought we were going to come out and play a tough game. This team that we were playing is one of the top in the city," coach Vincent Miller said.

After serving a suspension for lateness to school in the first four games of the season, senior and co-captain Krit McClean was hoping to beat Beacon for the first time in two years. However, in the second minute of the game, the Stuyvesant team earned itself a penalty kick. McClean shot the penalty to his right, but it was easily saved by Beacon senior and goalkeeper Maximilian Brown.

Throughout the game, the player in the left-mid position was shaky. McClean and seniors Ariel Matalon and Jamie Oliver were forced to rotate in that position due to senior Rolando Schneiderman's lingering injury from earlier games.

Even with this inconsistency, Stuyvesant FC slightly edged Beacon in the first half through possession and more shots on goal. However, the game was still knotted up 0-0.

In the second half, McClean made another crucial play in the game. This time though, he received a yellow-card in the 47th minute after sliding into a lone attacker who had a good chance to score.

Stuyvesant's second golden opportunity came in the 59th minute, when junior Asa Conover broke from defenders and had a clear shot at the goal. However the goalie impeded Conover by diving towards his legs and grabbing the ball before he could shoot. Conover immediately felt pain and asked to be subbed out by freshmen Mohammed Haque. From then on, Stuyvesant seemed to lose its composure.

The defining moment of the game came in the 61st minute when Beacon sophomore and forward Ronaldo Charlton passed the ball from the left post to the right, allowing unmarked Beacon senior and midfielder

Ryan Cupolo to score. Goalie junior Maxwell Berkow had no chance to block the shot due to the speed of the pass.

Overall, the game was a physical one. "We expected to play a good game, and they're a top team, but it's conceivable that we could've won this game," Berkow said.

The two teams will meet again on Saturday, October 22, the last game of the regular season.

### Girls' Volleyball: Stuyvesant Vixens 2, Bard Lady Raptors 0

By MAGGIE YEUNG

Stuyvesant's girls' varsity volleyball team, the Vixens, began its quest for a 13th consecutive division title on Wednesday, September 21, with a 2-0 win against Bard High School Early College in its first league game this season.

The Vixens played fairly well, despite missing junior Diane Forrest and senior Ana Slade who were suspended as a result of excessive lateness in the 2010-2011 school year. Sophomore Paula Carcamo, who played on the junior varsity team last year, got the chance to play her first varsity game and performed well, delivering two aces and four service points. Junior Natalie Kozlova was a key defensive player, managing three blocks and eight kills.

"Overall we were able to get the ball back, even when we were put into uncomfortable positions," Kozlova said.

The game started off with junior Anna Wang serving for the Vixens. After playing outside hitter last year, co-captain Lisa Qiu served very well in this season's first game. She had four aces and earned six service points in total. Qiu also played defense as a setter and set several nice plays for middle hitters Kozlova and Slade to score points.

"As a setter, you play well if the rest of the team also plays well. If the girls are passing well, then the game moves faster, I set better, we have better hits. It's like a chain reaction," Qiu said.

The Vixens also had many other standouts in their dominant first set. Senior and co-captain Melissa Chin impressed the audience with her powerful strikes and senior Cecelia Shao received some of the fastest serves to earn four digs.

However, the Vixens could not maintain the same level of performance in the second set. They trailed 0-4 at the start of the set and missed eight serves in total. Though they received most

of the balls, their serves were inconsistent, and the girls [did not communicate effectively between passes.

"We weren't as focused as we could have been and that's something we have to work on as a team," coach Philip Fisher said.

According to Fisher, the biggest challenge for the Vixens is defense, a lack of which cost them many points in the second set. They were leading 24-18 in the final minutes of the game and gave up two points to Bard before winning the last point to end the second set, 25-20,

"Our defense, especially passing, will be vital in our advancement in the season and playoffs," Kozlova said.

Fisher and the captains are satisfied with their first win this season, though they expect to see better performances and more communication on the court.

"The team is still getting comfortable playing with each other and we hope to improve as the season progresses," Chin said.

### Greyducks Excel in PSAL Group Run and Varsity Races

By KATIE MULLANEY

The Greyducks' cross country season kicked off on Saturday, September 24 with the PSAL Group Run and Varsity Races, for both the boys' and girls' teams, in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx.

Going into week one, the boys' team, led by Coach Mark Mendes, was ranked the number one cross country team by the PSAL. However, the team was not expecting to come out on top overall in the Saturday's meet. "The purpose of the group run for us was to begin identifying the seven athletes who will represent Stuyvesant in the PSAL Championship race on November 12," Mendes said.

Furthermore, many of the boys' top runners did not participate in the competition. Junior and co-captain Jack Stevenson and sophomore Jeremy Karson chose to run in a non-PSAL meet, the Xavier Invitational, later that day, in order to face unfamiliar competition. Senior and co-captain Konrad Surkont did not run in either of Saturday's meets due to a suspension from Athletic Director and Assistant Principal of Health and Physical Education Larry Barth for perpetual lateness to school. The next meet he will be able to participate in is the Manhattan College Invitational on Sunday, October 9.

Nevertheless, the male Greyducks placed sixth overall in the citywide meet. Junior Cameron Abma placed 20th overall and first for Stuyvesant in the 5k varsity race. "My time was 18:58 and a personal record, so that was really good," Abma said. He solidified his position as their fifth man.

In the varsity race, seniors Yorkbell Jaramillo and Ivaylo Madzharov, and junior Evan Schechter placed 26th, 31st, and 32nd respectively. In the fresh race, Eric Chen placed fourth, and in the sophomore race, Andy Zhang placed second.

The team is hoping to use its top rank to its advantage this season as the boys face harder competition. "It's definitely tougher than last year. Last year, we knew where we were, but this year we're a lot more unsure," Stevenson said.

Conversely, the female Greyducks, led by Coach Kristyn Pluchino, were not the favorite in Saturday's meet and were not ranked in the top ten cross country teams in the city.

Going into the meet, the girls were excited to begin the season and to see where they stand in relation to the rest of the city. "It's just the beginning of the season so there's not a lot of pressure. It's not City's or anything," junior Helen Nie said.

However, greatly exceeding expectations, the Greyducks came in second overall in the meet. Seniors and co-captains Karen Zheng, Jenny Fung, and Hema Lochan, juniors Helen Nie and Dina Levy-Lambert, and sophomores Stephanie Liang and Vera Pertsovskaya ran in the varsity 5k. Six of the seven varsity runners placed between 11th and 19th with times ranging from 23:52 to 25:06. Nie, who was running with an injured knee, placed 43rd, with a time of 27:08, which is significantly lower than her normal 5k times between 23 and 24 minutes.

Their success in Saturday's meet is important for the girls, because it displays their excellent progress from previous seasons. "This is definitely the team I've coached with the most potential," Pluchino said.

Like the boys' team, the girls' ultimate goal is to use this potential to work toward the City Championships. "It's a nice reward [to show] that our hard work is paying off. Of course we're going to try to get better and improve as a team, so this just motivates us a lot," Lochan said.

## Girls' Bowling

### Dominant Pinheads Hope for Playoff Success

*continued from page 24*

124 points, 453-330. The B and C teams were similarly successful, leading the Pinheads to their first victory.

Senior Victoria Gong, a returning player and member of the A team, bowled the match's high score of 121. Before the game, she held a hopeful outlook on the season. "Hopefully we'll still beat the Manhattan division like last year," she said. "We lost some strong seniors, but I think we'll get some strong underclassmen coming in."

The team's strength is partially due to its dedication; most

players practice both with and away from the team during their free time. "I've gone bowling with my dad, who is my mentor, almost religiously every Saturday at Jib Lanes since I've made the team last year," junior and co-captain Audrey McCarthy said.

The other co-captain, senior Jennifer Huynh bowls "around three times a week, including practices and games," she said, referring to the team's practices as well as her own work.

The teammates hope that their focus will put them at the top of the Manhattan division for another year. "The returning bowlers have worked hard in the offseason to try to become

better," Bologna said, citing the work the bowler's have put in on their own time.

Though the team has held unparalleled success within Manhattan, the playoffs have posed an unwavering challenge. Since 2008, the team has lost in the second round of the postseason each year. According to Bologna, the repeated losses are due to the more competitive teams outside of Manhattan. "Usually Staten Island teams make up the stronger division," Gong said.

However, this year, the Pinheads hope to advance further in the playoffs under the guidance of Bologna and co-captains McCarthy and Huynh. Both of

the captains lauded Bologna as a great coach. "Coach [Bologna] makes a welcoming, friendly atmosphere for the whole team," McCarthy said.

"He'll tell us what's wrong. He's really straightforward," Gong said. "He's really nice about it, so it's very supportive."

This season, Bologna wants to hold more practices to improve the Pinheads' technique. One caveat for the upcoming practices, however, is location. "Manhattan bowling is very expensive," Bologna said. This has limited the team's number of practice sessions in the past.

Luckily, Bologna has a solution to the problem of cost. This

year, the Pinheads "are going to practice in the outer boroughs on the weekends to try to get a little more practice in, because it does cost a lot to bowl in Manhattan," he said.

The bowlers have already started strong, building off of their success in past seasons. The real test will come in the postseason, when the Pinheads hope their additional practices will pay off. Until then, Bologna looks to take the team through yet another undefeated season, a feat it is already on the way to accomplishing.

# Sports

## What Makes a PSAL-worthy Sport?

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PSAL states on its Web site that its mission "is to provide opportunities for educating students in physical fitness, character development and socialization skills through an athletic program that fosters teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship." If it is really so concerned with these stated goals, then every sport with enough student interest

**The PSAL has been ignoring non-varsity sports such as ultimate frisbee despite a noticeable spike in student interest, and it is about time it started paying some attention.**

and support should be officially admitted to its list of established sports. The PSAL should be primarily concerned with fostering a love of sports in students at a time in their lives when self-

exploration and discovery is a given. This means opening doors for students who may not be interested in more traditional athletic opportunities.

No sport should go unnoticed, and it is completely unfair that the PSAL can decide which sports are legitimate enough to receive funding. Most of the league-funded sports (e.g., baseball, basketball, soccer, etc.) have been played in America for a very long time, and while the PSAL has admitted some more unorthodox sports like handball, there are still too many sports that it has overlooked due to their brief histories.

Who really should get to decide that a sport played with a leather ball is more of a sport than one played with a disc or a palm-sized paddle? What makes soccer a more deserving game than ultimate? After all, both are primarily concerned with two teams simultaneously trying to score at each other's end of the field.

Unfortunately, the leagues method of determining sports that are worthy of funding eliminates opportunities for many students. As a matter of policy at the high school level, student athletes should be the ones to determine the legitimacy of sports. This can be done in a multitude of ways: the PSAL could just a commitment to keep track of growing club sports or it could establish a voting procedure in which students directly decide which sports deserve league acknowledgment. The important thing is that the collective voice of the students is heard; this will be the only way to ensure that the PSAL supports every deserving team in the city.

ADVERTISEMENT

## Len Berman's Ascent to National Prestige

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Syracuse University, where he majored in engineering. "[Engineering] was all good until about six months in until I realized how hard it was," he said.

Aside from his academic work, Berman realized the potential in his voice, as he knocked on the door of the headquarters of Syracuse's radio station on one of the first days of his freshman year. Though he first aspired to be a disc jockey, the position was already taken and even had a waiting list, so the radio station offered him a job reading sports scores. After Berman came to terms with the fact that all sportscasters did not have to be athletes, as he witnessed while growing up in New York City, where many former New York Giants players were sportscasters after their playing careers, he decided to accept the job.

A few months later, Berman was not only reading scores on the college radio, but also announcing Syracuse's men's basketball games. "It just grew from there," he said. "I thought I'd just keep doing it as long as it was a good ride, as long as I could somehow find it interesting and somehow make a living out of it."

From Syracuse, Berman went wherever an opportunity presented itself. His first job in broadcasting came from WLWD-TV in Dayton, Ohio, after he interned there during the summer after his senior year. He spent three and a half years in Dayton as a newscaster before getting a job at WBZ-TV in Boston. There, he was the sports director, and he broadcast Celtics games on the air with Celtics Hall of Famer Bob Cousy for five years.

As a native New Yorker, Berman was initially not accepted by the Bostonian audience; TV sports critics hammered him in local newspapers. But he found it easy to be objective about other sports teams and left his Yankee fandom behind, partly because "Mickey Mantle didn't play for them anymore," he said.

Berman's homecoming came in 1979, when he returned to New York City to work for WCBS-TV, and later WNBC-TV. He takes great pride in being the first TV announcer for college basketball in the Big East, and he had the call on many great rivalry matchups between his alma mater, Syracuse, and rivals St. Johns and Georgetown.

Berman especially remembers broadcasting one St. Johns-Georgetown game on Wednesday, February 27, 1985, for ESPN. In front of a sold-out Madison Square Garden and ESPN's largest cable television audience to that date, the St. John's Redmen, ranked first in the country, took on the defending national champions and number two ranked Georgetown Hoyas. Another storyline in the game was the meeting of two United States national team members and future NBA stars, Hoyas Patrick Ewing and Redman Chris Mullin. At the end of the night, the Hoyas came out on top by a score of 85-69. "The excitement and the focus on [that] one event was incredible," Berman said.

As the lead sportscaster for WNBC, Berman covered many Super Bowls, World Series, and even the Olympic Games, but what made him so well known by many people around New York, including just the casual sports fans, was his feature, "Spanning the World," which aired monthly on his sportscast, and continues to air on the Today show.

In the summer of 1981, Berman saw a highlight from a horse race: "As the horses neared the finish line, the lead horse turned and bit the horse running next to him in the neck," he said. It was these quirky and unanticipated highlights from around the world, packaged into a reel with Berman's commentaries and the voice of Saturday Night Live announcer Don Pardo that made even non-sports fans mark their calendars for when "Spanning" would air. "It was half of what you found, and half what you wrote," Berman said.

"Spanning the World," along with the catch phrase that Berman coined, "And nobody got hurt!" enabled him to write five books, most of which were intended for young audiences.

He wrote "And Nobody Got Hurt! The World's Weirdest, Wackiest True Sports Stories," and its sequel, "And Nobody Got Hurt 2!" to share some of the most memorable highlights he presented in "Spanning the World." Berman also wrote "The Greatest Moments in Sports," "25 Greatest Baseball



Courtesy of Len Berman

Players of All Time," and "Spanning the World: The Crazy Universe of Big-Time Sports, All-Star Egos, and Hall of Fame Bloopers," an adult book that included humorous anecdotes about players that were the faces of their respective sports at one time or another.

During his years with WNBC, Berman won eight Emmy Awards, and was chosen as the New York Sportscaster of the Year six times. However, being the sports anchor every day for the six o'clock and eleven o'clock news broadcasts did come with some difficulties. "The challenge was really taking a day when there were no real headlines and try to put on an interesting sportscast," Berman said.

He often jokingly said to his peers, "The best part about my job was that there was another sportscast in few hours, and the worst part about my job was that there was another sportscast in a few hours."

In 2009, Berman decided to move on from WNBC-TV after 27 years. However, he immediately started a new project: www.thatssports.com.

Berman has an "unproven theory" that "there are more non-sports fans than sports fans. But the non-sports fan is intimidated into thinking that he's in the minority because of all the sports that's on the air," he said.

With his Web site, Berman appeals to the non-sports-fan majority with his daily Top 5. The five quick points or updates are about the previous day's sports stories, or those to come later that day. They are written in clear, manageable terms so that even people who have not followed sports a day in their lives can show off to their co-workers in water-cooler talks.

The ideas for Berman's daily update, YouTube video commentaries, and Twitter page all originated from The New York Times article "Finding Political News Online, the Young Pass It On," published on Thursday, March 27, 2008. The article cited the rise of social media and networking, resulting in people not needing to look for news. Berman realized that people want the news to come to them. Now, with 140 characters or less, he can update his over 3,000 Twitter followers with sports tidbits in an instant.

Though Berman has covered sports since his college days, he still lives for the individual moments like Mickey Mantle's "tape-measure," 565-foot home run on Friday, April 17, 1953, which he remembers from his childhood. There was Tuesday, June 14, 1994, when the New York Rangers erased a 54-year championship drought, and clinched the Stanley Cup, with the feelings of "camaraderie, excitement, and exhilaration," Berman said, filling the streets New York City. Or Saturday, October 26, 1996, when the Yankees won the World Series, of which Berman said, "Under the stands, I'm there with a camera, and [Yankees left fielder] Tim Raines was sitting and crying with his wife, drinking a bottle of champagne. Just a little moment like that."

In Berman's expansive career, he has covered and broadcast hundreds of sports events from around the country and the world. He said, "The everyday hum-drum is just a job, but then those moments come along that remind you why you love sports."

# THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

## Len Berman's Ascent to National Prestige

By JORDAN WALLACH

It is easy to see how Stuyvesant alum and former NBC sports-caster Len Berman ('64) was a fan of the Yankees and, most of all, of "The Mick," as he grew up in Long Island City, Queens. In the 1950s, the New York Yankees was by far the best team in Major League Baseball, and had arguably the best decade of any sports team in the history of professional sport. With rosters led by the all-time greats Bill Skowron, Hank Bauer, Don Larsen, Whitey Ford, "Yogi" Berra, and Mickey Mantle, the Yankees of the '50s were the proud winners of eight American League pennants and six world championships.

"The Mick," Berman's childhood hero and a 1974 Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, was one of the most dominant players in his day. Mantle's towering home runs awed Berman as a kid, and in Berman's book, "Spanning the World: The Crazy Universe of Big-Time Sports, All-Star Egos, and Hall of Fame Bloopers," he wrote, "I'd wake up, and before even saying good morning to my mom, I'd ask, 'Did Mickey hit one last night?'

Though most of Berman's sports memories from his early years were of Mantle and the Yankees, he occasionally went to Madison Square Garden to watch the Knicks or the Rangers. And while he mostly played sports in pick-up basketball and stickball games on the streets of Queens, Berman's men's softball team at Junior High School 204 won the Queensborough Softball Championship with him as the backup second baseman.

As with many current and

past Stuyvesant High School students, it was Berman's parents' decision for him to go to the well-reputed specialized school in Manhattan. At first, not only was the academic work a challenge for him at the all-boys school, especially in math, history, and the sciences, but, he says, it also hurt his social development. "It wasn't until I got into college that there were girls in the classes, so that probably set me back a little socially," Berman said of the school, which only became coeducational in 1969.

Though Berman was not involved in athletics at Stuyvesant after being cut from the baseball team after tryouts, he did sing for the All City Chorus, notably at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. He also was part of Stuyvesant's four-man barbershop quartet, which was coached by one of the music teachers after school.

Berman's creative writing teacher, Sterling Jensen, who later helped found the Roundabout Theatre Company in 1965, was among the first to recognize the potential of Berman's voice. After class one day, Jensen suggested that Berman consider acting.

"You have a nice voice. You should consider using it," Jensen said in the conversation, according to Berman. That one comment launched Berman onto the track of his immensely successful broadcasting career.

"That was the first inkling that I could do anything with my voice other than talk on the phone," Berman said.

After graduating from Stuyvesant in 1964, Berman went on to

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## Girls' Swimming

### Penguins Confident Heading into New Season

By ODREKA AHMED

Ask any member of the Stuyvesant girls' swim team about her expectation for this season, and she will surely exude confidence—and with good reason; the Penguins have a streak of championship wins.

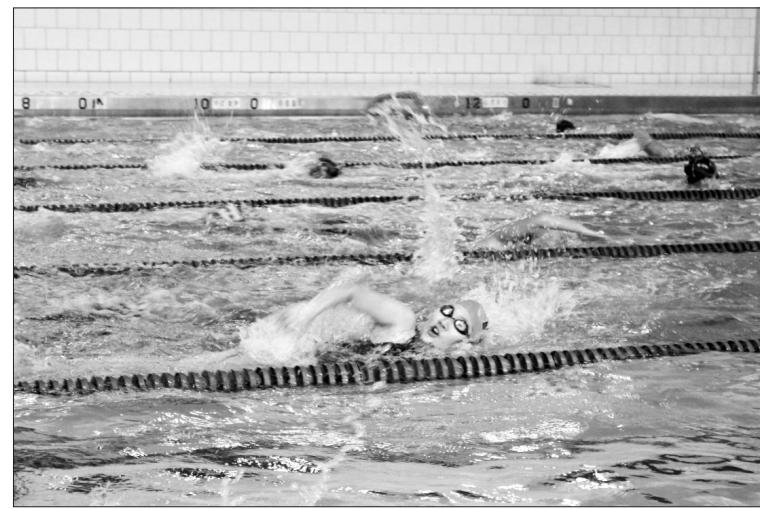
"We've done it for the past three years, and I think our coach is pretty confident we can make it to playoffs and that we can make it pretty far in playoffs this year too," senior and co-captain Hana Yampolsky said.

Unlike most teams, which are damaged by the loss of strong players every year, the talented Penguins have not been particularly affected by the graduation of five members last year. "That's a problem every team has to face," senior and co-captain Sharon Romero said. "We have pretty good freshman, so I'm confident we can make up for that loss. It's not a big deal."

Part of the girls' confidence lies in the nature of their sport. On a swim team, the strength of the team does not lie in a starting 11 or varsity seven, but with every single member. "It's basically like a points system, and we score points in individual races, but it's a team sport. If you get second and third, it's the same as getting first and fourth," Yampolsky said.

Coach Kristen Sabala has drilled that mentality into each swimmer, developing a true sense of commitment from everyone on the team. "Our coach really emphasizes how it's a team sport, and it's different from club swimming, where only the fast people get to swim. In team swimming, everyone swims. It isn't just one person carrying the team," sophomore Grace Sun said.

The fact that the underclassmen realize their sizeable role increases their morale and helps them fit comfortably into the rigorous practice schedule Romero has enforced this year. "It's basically the same routine," Romero said. "We've done dry-lands in the past, but this year we're doing it a little



The girls' swimming team practices everyday for its upcoming season.

Tong Wan / The Spectator

more often."

In addition to regular daily practices from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m., the Penguins hold dry-lands on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during 10th period. Another of Romero's additions to their schedule is team runs every Friday.

Other members of the team find the long practices and frequent out-of-pool training to be beneficial. "The dry-lands 10th period help us get better and help condition our bodies. They're pushing us into the championships this year," sophomore Felicia How said.

Expected declines from their top competition add to the Penguins' reassured demeanor. Their strongest competitor last year, Brooklyn Tech, lost a couple of strong seniors. The loss of graduating members has a larger impact on Brooklyn Tech than on Stuyvesant. Another strong competitor, Townsend Harris, lost several seniors as well.

"This year, our competition is going to be Francis Lewis, who placed third last year," senior Maggie Yeung said. "Francis Lewis still has a decent relay team." Despite losing some key role players, Francis Lewis kept its core of swimmers intact, which will help the team score points in relays.

A relay team consists of four swimmers who swim two laps each. A strong relay team often translates to a strong overall team, because each swimmer can swim in four events. Each competitor selects two relays and two individual events in which to participate with each relay score counting as double that of an individual race toward the team's total.

The Penguins' relay team proved to be its dominant strength in its 51-44 win against Hunter College High School on Tuesday, September 27, in the first regular season meet, finishing first in two relays and second in the third relay.

In the future, the Penguins want to counter the successful Francis Lewis team—amongst other teams from different divisions that usually make it to the playoffs—with what they believe to be a talented roster. "We have good depth," Romero said. "We have enough girls who can place for each stroke, so I'd say we're pretty confident."

Until then, they hope to breeze through the regular season. "The important thing is that we do our best and we have fun doing it," Romero said.

## What Makes a PSAL-worthy Sport?

By MICHAEL SHELDON

Walking the halls of Stuyvesant the past few years, I've noticed that the members of the ultimate Frisbee team are omnipresent obstacles. Much like the annoying men on the subway, they weave their way through the crowds, attempting to sell candy to every passerby.

However, this mildly annoying practice is not the team's fault. The athletes have been forced into this petty form of fundraising for one reason; the PSAL refuses to recognize their activity as a "sport." Without school funding, teams like the Sticky Fingers have no other option but to employ cheap fundraising methods on the side.

The PSAL has been ignoring non-varsity sports, such as ultimate frisbee, despite a noticeable spike in student interest, and it should start paying attention.

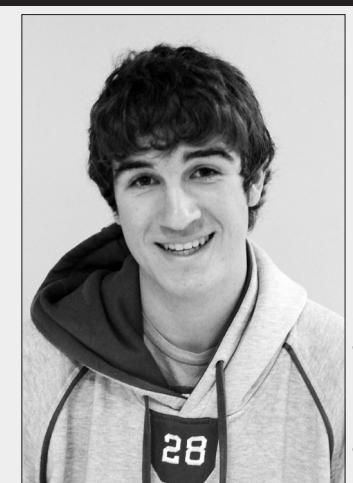
Ultimate does not face the issue of being deemed "unathletic," as many other borderline sports have been. During the season, Stuy's ultimate team members go through intense workouts and practice sessions for many hours multiple times a week. Anyone who has ever

played with a frisbee knows that it takes a great deal of time and practice to even get a successful throw. If anything, the level of conditioning and many hours of training the sport requires should prove its validity to the PSAL.

Furthermore, in recent years, ultimate has gained a lot of interest, especially amongst high school and college students, and is even played professionally. Schools including, but not limited to, Bard, Beacon, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech, and Stuy have ultimate teams. Stuy's ultimate team is actually one of the biggest teams in the school and is one of few non-PSAL teams divided into junior varsity and varsity teams.

The members of the Sticky Fingers are also dedicated sportsmen, frequently traveling out of state to play in weekend tournaments. Such a rapidly growing sport certainly deserves at least the attention of the PSAL. Its admission into the league would allow players and coaches to stay focused on the sport rather than fundraising to cover travel and other expenses.

When looking at other PSAL sports, it is quite obvious that



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

## Girls' Bowling

### Dominant Pinheads Hope for Playoff Success



By NOAH HELLERMANN

The Pinheads, Stuyvesant's girls' bowling team, is comprised of 15 dedicated members who have managed to go undefeated the past two years. Even with such impressive credentials however, the team is still struggling to accomplish one thing: win a match past the first round of the playoffs.

The Pinheads' domination of the Manhattan division is not something new. In the past four years, they have lost only one match overall and have accumulated 40 wins. "The wins are predicted to keep coming," physical education teacher and coach Peter Bologna said.

"We are still going to be a solid team and a good program, and we should be very competitive this year."

The Stuyvesant girl's bowling team is divided up into three units of four bowlers known as the A, B, and C teams. Team A is made up of the most able players who, this year, are all returning athletes.

In the first bowling match of the season, the Pinheads defeated the University Neighborhood Lady Panthers 3-0. To win the first of the three games, Stuyvesant's A team defeated University Neighborhood's A team by

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the activities the league deems as "sports" are not at all based on the interests of students. PSAL-supported sports include golf, bowling, and cricket. While these are all sports that deserve the PSAL acknowledgement and funding, the teams are all quite small and ignored by non-member students.

The fact that the PSAL supports these sports but not others, despite the interest these overlooked sports have garnered, sheds more light on the league's inherent problem; it is not providing its service to everyone who deserves it. The

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