



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

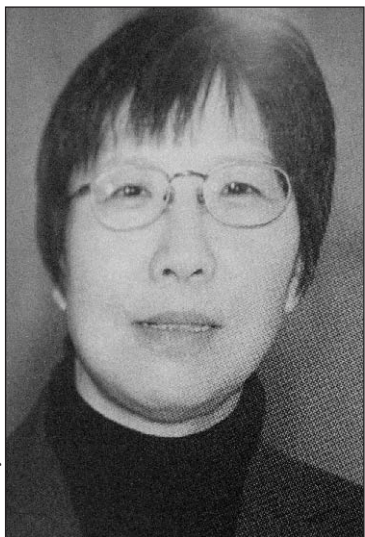
"The pulse
of the
student
body"

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To The Stuyvesant Community

Fee Soohoo, Former Art Teacher, Passes Away



Courtesy of Indicator

By NICOLLETTE BARSAMIAN

Fee Soohoo, who taught art at Stuyvesant for 11 years, until 2005, died on Friday, November 17, at the age of 57.

Soohoo had been struggling with breast cancer. "She had been fighting it for a long time," said art teacher Amy Cappell. "She taught here at Stuy even when she was going through chemotherapy. She was a real trouper."

"We all feel terrible about this," said Cappell. "She was such a dedicated teacher and her stu-

dents were devoted to her. Her students went on to win many art competitions."

Soohoo taught freshman art, acrylic and water color painting, and Multimedia Art, a course she had developed herself that involved working with construction and felt, according to technology teacher Steven Rothenberg.

"She was very concerned about students, their ability, welfare, and what they were going to do with their lives," said Rothenberg. He said, "She was very supportive and did a lot of extra things for students," such as helping out at art fairs or with preparing art portfolios for college.

Assistant Principal Music, Fine Arts and Technology Dr. Raymond Wheeler said that the Stuyvesant community has missed Soohoo since she retired. "She had retired last year, so the art department already had felt the loss. We are all very sad to see this happen to her," he said. "She was so young. We all miss her. She was a great teacher, a great lady."

Cappell noted Soohoo's work in school. "We used to work on exhibits together," she said.

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Teitel Presents Three-Part Security Plan to SLT

Proposal Would Increase Scanner Use, Implement Teacher ID Cards and Enforce Locker Assignments

By PRAMEET KUMAR

Principal Stanley Teitel presented a three-part proposal to make Stuyvesant safer at the November 21 meeting of the School Leadership Team (SLT). At this meeting, Teitel proposed three new safety measures: regulating locker usage with school-provided locks, using ID scanners throughout the day to monitor attendance and requiring teachers to wear ID badges.

Teitel said at the meeting that he has "been very concerned about our own security" after the three school shootings that have taken place across the nation since September.

The first of these proposals would involve the administration purchasing a heavy-duty four-number-combination Master Lock for each locker in the school before the start of next year's fall term. At the beginning of each school year, students would pay \$11 to purchase the lock for the locker assigned to them. If a student decided not to use his or her

assigned locker and instead share with another student, the locker would remain locked.

In the current version of the plan, Teitel said, "you would actually have to buy [one of the school's official locks] each year," he said. "That's the only way I can control all the lockers." Teitel said, however, that he hasn't planned out any other specific details yet, including whether students can trade lockers or sell their locks back at the end of the year.

According to Teitel, the measure is in response to the discovery of contraband in lockers that were not being used by the students assigned to them.

"I am very concerned about the fact that we found some things in lockers this year which I was very unhappy about," Teitel said. He declined to specify what the contraband was, but said that it did not include firearms.

In the October 5 issue of The Spectator, it was reported that two dozen eggs, a can of lighter fluid, a roll of toilet paper and

bottle of vinegar were found in a student's locker.

Many students are opposed to the new locker system. Sophomore Fariha Ahmed said, "I think that it's absurd to have to pay to secure our belongings."

"If students had to pay [for lockers], they'd be carrying their textbooks around all day," said junior Ken Ko.

Teitel also wants to reintroduce the idea of using the ID scanners all throughout the school day. This full-time scanner system, along with a fine for forgetting one's ID card, was to be implemented last year. Following protests by students, however, the Student Union and the administration resulted in a compromise: the scanners would only be used in the morning and there would be no fine.

At the beginning of this school year, however, the administration established a \$1 fine for a forgotten ID card, and now

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Inside the SU: Clubs Selling Themselves Short

By DIANA POON
and ANNIE ZHANG

The Student Union (SU) is an organization run by the students for the students. The SU preamble pledges "to improve student life with respect to education, extra- and co-curricular activities, health service and all other areas of school life." But has the SU lived up to its promise for the improvement of student life?

After several interviews and research on the recent Budget Meeting, we have concluded that the answer is more compli-

cated than a simple yes or no. The SU has been living up to expectations. School-wide events such as the Blood Drive and the revival of Elective Day were meticulously planned and carried out successfully. And during the recent budget meeting, almost all the clubs that requested money received the funds they asked for.

But does all this make the SU a success? The SU is representing the student body to the best of its ability, but it's the students that aren't doing their job. Most Stuyvesant students today are apathetic to the SU and all its

functions: The rather measly turnout for the SU's recent budget meeting served as a distressing reminder of how few students are really interested in the SU.

On some levels, the November 8 budget meeting went without a hitch. Eighty percent of the club fund proposals were passed, and no club left completely empty-handed. On the other hand, only seven clubs, out of the hundreds that exist in Stuyvesant, actually applied for SU funding. Of the seven that

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Tiffany Li / The Spectator

Guidance Counselor Abby Siegel Resigns School to Search for Replacement

By GLENN KIM

Principal Stanley Teitel has begun the search for a guidance counselor to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of guidance counselor Abby Siegel. Before her appointment as guidance counselor, Siegel had worked at Stuyvesant as a college counselor for two years.

This year's restructuring of the guidance department combined the responsibilities of guidance counselor, grade advisor and Secondary School Report writer into the guidance counselor position. Without Siegel, there are eight guidance counselors doing the work of nine counselors.

Teitel said that Siegel never showed up at her new position. "She indicated that she couldn't come in for medical reasons and

asked for a medical leave, and eventually, she chose to resign," he said.

With the absence of Siegel, the remaining eight guidance counselors have had to handle guidance duties for Siegel's assigned homerooms in addition to their own. This "added a burden on them, but they've done a good job," Teitel said.

Siegel was unavailable for comment.

Several guidance counselors were concerned about the effect Siegel's absence on students. Guidance counselor Jay Biegelson said that each counselor has less time to devote to their own workload because they are picking up some of the work left behind by Siegel. "Everyone is affected," he said.

Guidance counselor John Mui agreed. "There's no continu-

ity for students who came in expecting to see Ms. Siegel." Whom they saw instead "would depend on who was available at that time, because every counselor was busy with their own caseload," Mui said.

At the School Leadership Team (SLT) meeting on November 21, Teitel said that he became aware of the vacancy on October 20. During the meeting, he also announced that he intended to create a committee to interview candidates and eventually appoint a replacement.

According to Teitel, it took him one month to decide to form a committee because he hoped that Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie would return to join the selection committee. Archie, who

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Steven Farbstein Retires After Forty Years of Teaching

By JOANNA CHEN
and ZIAD HOWLADER

After teaching for more than 40 years, biology teacher Steven Farbstein retired on Wednesday, November 15. Many of Farbstein's students were surprised at the suddenness and timing of his retirement.

"He didn't tell us anything about leaving," said senior Robert Diep, who had been

taking Farbstein's Advanced Placement Psychology class. "He came on his last day and announced that he was retiring. He told us that he no longer felt that he was able to contribute all his best."

Farbstein retired in the middle of the term, only one week before the end of the second marking period. Assistant Principal Science Elizabeth

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Features

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The Joy of Calculus

Ever think you'd be taking integrals with a disco ball above your head, goldfish swimming from your left, and the Black-Eyed Peas blaring from the teacher's desk? Enter Ms. Schimmel's classroom.

Tiffany Li / The Spectator



Tincey Wang / The Spectator

Arts & Entertainment

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Beta Dance Troupe: Shoulders Don't Lie

Stuy kids learn to shake it like a polaroid picture when an Ethiopian dance crew visits Stuy.

Parents' Association Asserts Support for Suit Against Cell Phone Ban At Press Conference Held Outside Stuyvesant



Supporters of the Parents Association resolution to support the lawsuit against the new cell phone policy met to promote their cause in a press conference on Sunday, November 19.

By GUI BESSA

The Stuyvesant Parents' Association (PA) announced their support for the impending lawsuit to overturn the Department of Education's (DOE) cell phone ban at a press conference held outside of Stuyvesant on Sunday, November 19.

Those who spoke out against the ban included PA co-presidents Lauren Coleman-Lochner and Sumiko Takeda Nakazato, as well as PA Recording Secretary Ellen Bilofsky, one of the eight plaintiffs representing eight public schools across the city. Former New York City Civil Liberties Union lawyer Norman Siegel and Stuyvesant alumnus David Leichtman ('86), who are working pro bono as counsel for the plaintiffs, also attended the conference.

In October the PA passed a resolution in support of the lawsuit to rescind the cell phone ban. The PA believes the new rules violate parents' rights and are excessive.

The DOE ban on cell

Joel Klein before the lawsuit was brought, but Siegel said their requests had been ignored. He felt that the judicial system was the only way they could fight the ban.

Siegel said he hoped that

In October, the PA passed a resolution in support of the lawsuit to rescind the cell phone ban. The PA believes the new rules violate parents' rights and are excessive.

the verdict will be returned quickly after the hearing.

The case will be heard on December 15 by a judge, without a jury, a choice made by the plaintiffs in order to expedite the case.

Coleman-Lochner said that, looking to speed up the process, the press conference was set up in short notice. "The lawyers in particular felt like we need to do the press conference sooner, so basically we threw this together in a handful of days," she said.

The conference drew local media, including The New York Post and Fox 5 News Channel. "We're delighted that there was very good media turnout," said Nakazato.

The Stuyvesant PA was joined by Tim Johnson, the Chairman of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, who offered his support on behalf of the Council, which approved this resolution against the ban in a meeting earlier this October. Johnson said at the press conference, "While we fully support a strict prohibition on the use of cell phones in schools, we insist on our right to communicate with our children traveling to and from [school] in a post-9/11 world."

Student Union (SU) President George Zisiadis, who spoke in favor of the resolution at the conference, said, "I think it was pretty good. We got the message out there that the policy wasn't helping anybody, just creating problems"

Abby Siegel Resigns School to Search for Replacement

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has been away on medical leave since September 19, is in charge of the guidance office. Even so, Teitel said, he has included her in the process. "I sent her résumés, so she's involved," he said.

Last year, Archie formed and chaired a committee to search for and hire new guidance counselors. That committee consisted of her, College Office Director Patricia Cleary, guidance counselor Jan McCray, Assistant Principal Science Elizabeth Fong, former Assistant Principal Chemistry and Physics Dr. Olga Livanis, Foreign Language teachers Milton Diaz and Dr. Patrick Niglio, senior Samantha Reiser, then Student Union President Kirsten Ng ('06) and parents Beverly Marshack and Jill Greenbaum.

Teitel said that he did not know how that committee was formed.

The new search committee will be different from the one formed last year, which Teitel believed "lacked diversity." He said, "You had two Assistant Principals, both of science, as opposed to having one of science and, let's say, one of humanities, and you had two teachers on it both from the same department," he said, referring to the two foreign language teachers on the committee.

At the SLT meeting, Teitel said that he has already looked at résumés of applicants and had selected a few candidates to be interviewed. He said the members of the committee will be personally invited by him and will include, "a teacher, a parent, a student, a faculty member, [...] an administrator and myself," he said.

According to Teitel, the members of the committee were chosen after a discussion with Archie. "We made sure everybody was represented," he said.

The committee, which consisted of Archie, Teitel, Assistant Principal Math Maryann Ferrara, foreign language teacher Milton Diaz, guidance counselor Jan McCray, senior Samantha Reiser, and parent Jill Greenbaum, convened on November 30 to inter-

view four candidates. All members had served on last years committee except for Teitel and Ferrara served on last year's committee.

After interviewing all the candidates, Teitel said, the committee felt that it would be in the best interest in the school to continue the search. "It's not that we said we wouldn't hire any of the people we saw, but we'd like to see if there is anybody out there before make a final decision," he said.

Teitel said he doesn't expect the new guidance counselor to be hired in the "immediate future." He also expects the committee to meet again this week to interview more candidates.

Mui said, "Given the urgency of the situation, I hope that there's a way that this process, without losing any of its integrity, will be able to find a qualified replacement."

Teitel also said that his understanding of the United Federation of Teachers' contract does not allow a guidance counselor to transfer between schools freely during the school year. He said, "If I wanted a guidance counselor who is working at another school, that principal would have to release that counselor to us."

However, if the committee were to select a candidate not currently part of another school, or were to select a candidate in a different school who is released right away, Teitel said that Siegel's replacement will begin work "as soon as possible."

In addition to hiring a replacement for Siegel, Teitel proposed hiring a tenth guidance counselor for the next school year. According to Teitel, he had originally proposed hiring 10 guidance counselors in an SLT meeting last year.

The passing of former guidance counselor Sandra Miller on July 6 and budget shortages forced Teitel to alter his proposal.

"We were a little bit tight on money this year, so I went with nine. Hopefully I'll have enough money to hire 10 for September," he said. He has not yet decided who will participate in the search committee for the tenth guidance counselor.

College Trip Only One Day

By ANGI GUO and ELANA LISKOVICH

Stuyvesant's next college trip will be the first single-day college tour. Juniors and seniors participating will be visiting Cornell University and the State University of New York at Binghamton on Saturday, December 9.

According to Junior Class President Michelle Lee, college trips are usually three days in length and organized by Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie, tour coordinator Richard Shweidel and the College Committee of the

During college trips, students visit various universities, observe student life and the campus, and have their questions about college answered.

Parents Association. Since September 19, however, Archie has been away on medical leave, causing the previously scheduled November 10 trip to be rescheduled to December 9 and shortened. The remaining organizers of the event realized that without Archie it would be too difficult to organize a three-day trip. According to Lee, they still hope that she will return in time for the upcoming college trips in order to maintain their past length.

During college trips, students visit various universities, observe student life and the campus, and have their questions about college answered.

Future college trips will take place in Connecticut and Boston from February 2, to February 4 and in New Jersey and Pennsylvania from March 30 to April 1.

Steven Farbstein Retires After Forty Years of Teaching

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Fong deemed that his was not a hasty decision and that the reasons for his departure were personal.

"It was a decision that he did not make lightly. It was a very long, deliberate and personal decision," Fong said.

Like Fong, Principal Stanley Teitel felt that Farbstein's choice to retire now was the result of careful consideration. "[Farbstein] had no choice. There was no other option," Teitel said. "He wouldn't have done it if there was another option."

According to Teitel, Farbstein had given a one-month notice of his retirement to the administration. Teachers are only required to give a 24-hour notice before leaving their jobs and are permitted to leave during the school year.

Farbstein could not be reached for comment.

Farbstein had been a close friend and a long-time col-

league of Teitel. "I feel very bad about [his departure]," said Teitel. "He was comfortable talking to me as a person and not as a principal."

On top of being a personal disappointment for him,

"It was a decision that he did not make lightly. It was very long, deliberate, and personal decision."
—Elizabeth Fong, Asistant Principal Science

Teitel also felt that Farbstein's departure would be an academic loss for the school. "Mr. Farbstein was a professional. The students loved him," said Teitel.

Fong had similar thoughts. "He was a very knowledgeable gentleman in psychology. Many students wanted to take the course only because of his teaching," said Fong. "We'll miss him."

The effects that Farbstein's retirement will have on students are unknown at this point. However, the biology department has moved swiftly to replace the retiring teacher to make a smooth transition that will avoid any hindrance to the academic process. Biology teachers Dr. Jonathan Gastel and Dr. Bereta Runcie, returning from a leave of absence, volunteered to take over the classes formerly taught by Farbstein.

"It's too early to tell if it will negatively affect the students," said Fong. "But we haven't missed a beat. We arranged to make the change as seamless as possible, everything is in place, and the replacing teachers hit the ground running."

Extreme Makeover: Library Edition?

By YAHAV ITZKOVICH

Little known fact: The Stuyvesant library is one of the few places in the school where a student can catch up on the latest issue of the Astronomy Magazine or The Afro-American.

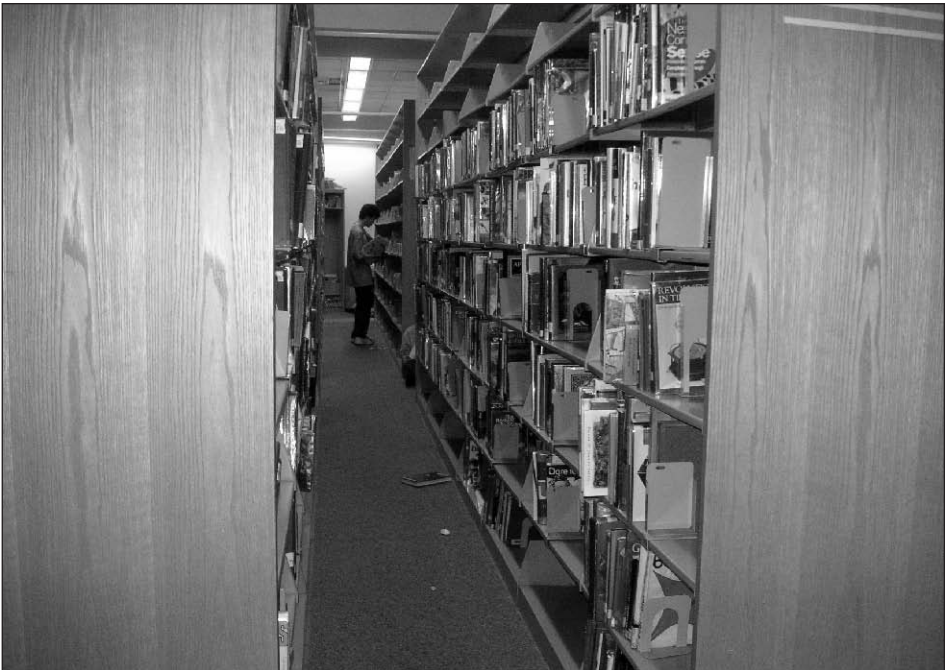
The library, officially renamed the Robert Ira Lewy Multimedia Center this fall, after a donation from Lewy, has undergone some changes in the past year. The donation consisted of an array of new computers that modernized the library and provided students with more opportunities to work online.

However, in an age when public libraries allow people to renew and reserve books from their personal computers, Stuyvesant's library is lagging behind. For starters, some of the books in the library are over 35 years old and aren't used very frequently. Case in point: the book "Pioneers of the Old South" by Mary Johnston has only been taken out eight times since 1968.

The fiction section generally houses the most popular books in the library. Even there, however, the older books are hardly ever taken out. The books in the least popular sections, such as those in the Religious Books aisle, cause shelves bend under their weight as they are hardly taken out at all.

The Stuyvesant librarians have some ideas about what to do with these books. Librarian Susan Kalish was very critical of the books, and said, "I'd like to have books earn their real estate. The format is changing. Books are just information between two covers. I think all that space should be cleared out to put tables there instead."

However, Kalish is aware of some opposition from her fellow librarians. "There are a few points of view on the issue. You're not going to leisurely browse through books when you have four hours



In recent weeks, there have been proposals introduced to transform the physical structure of the library

“Books are just information between two covers. I think all that space should be cleared out to put tables there instead.”
—Susan Kalish, librarian

of homework. [Librarian Chris] Asch wants to keep them, I want to see them go," she said.

Asch is reluctant to let go of the books because he believes that they offer pieces of Stuyvesant history, something the Internet cannot do. Another reason for his desire to keep the books is more practical: "Not all of the books in here are online yet," said Asch.

However, he does believe some changes can be beneficial to the library. He would like to see the long table on the far left side of the library removed in order to add more computers, hopefully doubling the amount the library currently has. Asch also proposed having a few architectural changes, such as setting up glass partitions in front of the bookcases

and the long table on the right side of the library in order to create some "private study areas" for students, he said.

Some students, however, are looking for different changes.

Sophomore Andrew Pratt said, "Nobody uses these books so they should just get rid of them and make some money. I mean who's going to read the 1970 version of 'The Harvard Classics'? That stuff is out-dated."

Students have various ideas about what to do with these books. Sophomore Andrew Labunka said, "The library doesn't need reference books anymore. It's all computerized, so if anything, they should put more computers in instead."

There are other items that take up space in the library aside from the bookshelves. Two large file cabinets, holding decades of New York Times microfilm, are located in the there. This archive, however, is useless, since the library does not own a microfilm reader. "It would be nice if we could view them, not just watch them collect dust," said Labunka.

According to Kalish, all these microfilms along with even more information are located on ProQuest Platinum, a microfilm and electronic publishing program. The school pays over \$7,000 annually for the ability to use ProQuest's database of sources. With this readily accessible information, according to Kalish, there is no need for a microfilm reader in the library.

People have very different opinions for the future of the library. Some prefer a more traditional one with a plethora of books along with other resources, while others believe it should be modernized by acquiring more computers to replace more old-fashioned sources. Regardless of what shape it takes, most believe the library would benefit from a face-lift. However, this will take some time, until the ideas of the librarians and students alike are put into practice.

Fee SooHoo, Former Art Teacher, Passes Away

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"We worked on the big banner [hanging above] the seven-nine escalator."

SooHoo had plans for her retirement. "It was her dream to go to China and climb the mountains. After she retired, that's what she was planning on doing," said Cappell. "Sadly, she never got to do this. Her mother is very sick and Ms. SooHoo was a good daughter. She spent her last years taking care of her elderly mother."

SooHoo taught for 35 years, beginning her career as a substitute teacher in 1971. She began working at Stuyvesant in September, 1994.

Students also spoke fondly of SooHoo. "She was a very fun teacher," said junior Nina Charap. "She was definitely my favorite teacher freshman year. I am going to miss her."

Junior Alex Schneider had SooHoo for Art Appreciation his freshman year, and remembered her for her fun and jokes. "She really loved tennis. She would talk about it everyday. She would say 'You don't want 'love' from Ms. Soohoo,' and would scream 'Ace!' when you got something right."

A memorial service for SooHoo was held on Saturday, November 25 at the First Chinese Presbyterian Church in downtown Manhattan. According to Rothenberg, "some retired teachers came as well as some teachers currently in the technology, art and history departments."

"She was always a supportive faculty member to the students and a wonderful colleague," said Principal Stanley Teitel. "She was terrific."

The Joy of Calculus

By JENNY YE
and VICTOR ZAPANA

Math teacher Joy Schimmel's students occasionally start math class with the Black Eyed Peas' "Let's Get it Started" playing in the background. It may seem farfetched, but "it's a great way to get math started," said Schimmel.

Schimmel got the idea of incorporating music with math from English teacher Frank McCourt at the old Stuyvesant building. "I would hear this wild Irish music coming from across the hall, and I thought that it was a great way to start class," said Schimmel.

Schimmel was born in Westchester, NY, the child of a Marines-trained aeronautic engineer and a homemaker. Growing up in a family where "everyone [...] did math," she studied math vigorously at Scarsdale High School in Scarsdale, NY and later at nearby Roosevelt High School.

Her excellence in mathematics eventually prompted her to pursue it as an adult. She attended City College of New York, majoring in theoretical mathematics.

Schimmel attributes her passion for math to her love for its objectivity. According to her, she did not like English classes and other humanities because they relied too much on one's opinion, of which she had none she was "secure enough about [...] to please the teacher," said Schimmel.

After graduating, Schimmel started to look for work. Turning down the popular option at the time of working in defense at chemical companies, she turned to those she knew. When her friends and family advised her to consider teaching, she set her sights on a school.

"I literally walked into a school in the South Bronx on Saint Anne's Avenue and asked if they needed a math teacher," said Schimmel. "They said yes."

At the school, I.S. 151,

Schimmel taught mathematics and a research class and served in the programming office for seven years. According to her, the experience teaching in the Bronx helped her prepare for the rest of her teaching career. There, she "learned the craft of dealing with kids," said Schimmel.

In 1978, she came to Stuyvesant High School and began teaching upper-level mathematics courses, including Advanced Placement Calculus BC, Differential Equations, Discrete Mathematics, Number Theory, Pre-calculus and Statistics. In her career, she has taught thousands of students, including former Stuyvesant teacher math teacher Boris Granovskiy ('98).

“I could always do math, and there's always a right answer.”
—Joy Schimmel, math teacher

At Stuyvesant, she quickly noticed the change in environment. She was inspired by the tradition of excellence that Stuyvesant carried. At South Bronx, the class atmosphere depended on the character of the teacher, whereas at Stuyvesant the students shaped the class. "At Stuyvesant, the kids were so good. There was, however, [a minimal] amount of personal interaction," said Schimmel.

Because of this, Schimmel has found ways to work together with her students-from merging music with math to bringing cookies and fondue to the class-and has strived to be friendly and kind when she teaches. "I don't want to be someone who is scary, someone who students feel like they can't talk to," said Schimmel.

Her teaching methods have



Math teacher Joy Schimmel asked for her photo to be taken next to a portrait of her "buddy" Albert Einstein.

gained the likings of many of her students. "Ms. Schimmel is great at encouraging students to both work hard and have fun in math," said senior Ada Okun.

"She knows what type of dog I have, her name, where I live and a bunch of other subtle facts other teachers wouldn't care to know about," said senior Daniel Bruno. "It's clear that knowing about her students is important to her and helps her do her job better."

Students have tried to reciprocate her kindness. According to Schimmel, she recalls a time in 1994 when Granovskiy and his first-period class gave her a disco ball for her classroom. The gift was given on the day before Christmas vacation, when Schimmel was "very stressed out and very tired," she said. Walking into her dark classroom in a gloomy mood, she was greeted by an eerie light. "When I opened the door, my students had installed the disco ball," said Schimmel. "It was like a wonderland."

Outside of teaching, Schimmel adores plants and animals. She has two Maltese dogs that she cares for. She also grows African violets and orchids at home and, in school, several leafy plants line her classroom windows.

Schimmel decorates her room not only with these greens but also with Albert Einstein posters. In 1992, with the opening of the new building, teachers received their own classrooms for the first time. Schimmel began decorating her new room with a few posters of Albert Einstein and eventually bobble heads and action figures in addition to math t-shirts and goldfish. "Everything there I cherish in some eclectic little way," said Schimmel.

"Her room decorations contribute to this enjoyable atmosphere. They bring color, energy and life to the room, and to math," said Okun.

Schimmel loves teaching her students and she considers her favorite part of teaching to be "seeing the kids learn, and learning from them," she said.

"Every day, I learn something new," Schimmel said. "I may learn how to solve a problem in a new way [...] or how to care for goldfish. My room is a sharing environment-a two-way street."

Recently, during one of her lessons, Schimmel allowed her student, junior Jimmy Finley, to play bagpipes for the beginning of class, and later asked him questions about the history of bagpipes. "I'm definitely a little quirky," she said.

Tiffany Li / The Spectator

SPARK Ignites a Change Within Stuyvesant

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encounter to simply "sprucing up the room," according to Deuel. Colon feels a large portion of his initial work was "getting the word around" about SPARK. In order to inform the Stuy community about the program, Colon visits classes and gives small presentations on SPARK in his spare time. "He's putting it on the map now," said junior and SPARK volunteer Lauren White. "He networks a lot with teachers and other administrators. He's trying to get connected with the community." Colon currently links SPARK to other Stuy community clubs such as Building Stuy Community, Key Club and ASPIRA. Despite successful efforts to spread the news about SPARK,

there are still many students who have negative feelings about the program. According to Colon, disparaging students have dubbed the SPARK office with derogatory quips such as "the emo room" and "the cutters' room." "I don't think the people who are actually druggies go to [SPARK] for advice voluntarily," said sophomore Sari Sharoni. The fact that the SPARK office is obscure and the location is unknown to the majority of Stuy students doesn't exactly help to counter the negative response. "People just need to know exactly where [the SPARK office] is," said Voronina. "If people were more aware of SPARK, they would be more willing to come for counseling or to be involved in it." The SPARK members do not let the negative response from the stu-

dent body get them down: they simply work harder to inform their fellow peers of the program. Recently, the SPARK program has encountered its share of difficult situations. After the deaths of April Lao and Kevin Kwan last Spring, the SPARK office acted as a grief counseling service for students who were affected by the event. "Students are still feeling the emotion, and once March 17 does get here, it's going to be revisited," said Colon. "You never forget certain dates." The SPARK office has come a long way since its debut 36 years ago. "As long as I have extra students that are willing to get involved and believe in the cause, in the mission," said Colon. "[SPARK will] be great."

The Reel Story of Video Homeroom



Junior Scott Ritter, Sophomore Taylor Shung, and Senior Charlie Damga are responsible for the often static filled videos shown during homeroom, though this issue is through no fault of their own.

By SAMANTHA WHITMORE

Brightly colored flyers line the hallways, all clamoring for students' attention. But when was the last time you were really able to stop and read them? It is much easier to inform students of an upcoming event with a funny video, one which will entertain and educate them at the same time. Student Union Video Homeroom (SUVH) was founded three years ago by Jake Hsu ('04), the then-president of the Student Union (SU). The idea came to him when he saw a television program about a school that had an organization similar to SUVH, and decided to work off of the concept. SUVH itself was originally a special part of the Video Production class curriculum, and is now officially part of the SU. The current forces behind SUVH are senior and producer Charlie Damga, junior and director Scott Ritter and sophomore and assistant director Taylor Shung. Each role has its own responsibilities. "Charlie is the senior so he does carry some authority over us, but we really see each other as being on the same level," said Ritter. "I tend to be kind of an organizer, Charlie is good at being administrative, while Taylor is creative and has a fun side." This collaborative effort keeps the team motivated and allows them to work well together. Ritter, who was on SUVH last year, said that "although last year we had an amazing video homeroom crew, we burnt out too quickly. I feel like this year will continue to be a success." According to Ritter, SUVH has dual purposes. "First there are the announcement video homerooms, ones which promote upcoming SU events. Then we also do 'Happy Holidays' ones, which are more like shows than commercials," Ritter said. The process of creating a video begins with the imminence of an important school-wide

event. "We try to brainstorm a funny idea concerning the event, and work off that," said Shung. The three then meet two to three days a week to write down their ideas, film and edit the footage. Usually there is no formal script, since, as Shung said, "We really improv most of our stuff." There is no formal application process to be an actor, either. For the most

“We’re currently working with Kern [Levigion, machinist] to fix this problem; in about a month, we will have gone through a huge restoration process and hopefully everything will be working again” —Charlie Damga, SUVH producer and senior

part, the three act in the footage themselves, enlist friends to act, or just ask anyone they see around if they would be interested in participating. Onlookers of the filming of SUVH may find themselves quite amused. "For the filming of the episode concerning E-Day I was dressed in a cape and had an emblem on my chest, running around the school. Some people would stand around and watch confused until we told them what was going on," said Ritter. "Another time we had Taylor sitting on the top of a tree and also a telephone booth playing the fiddle for our Fiddler on the Roof segment," said Ritter. When the three finish filming and editing their work, the segment is then submitted to Principal Stanley Teitel for approval. "We didn't used to have to do that," said Ritter. "But I

believe one video made fun of a Bronx Science diver once, and Bronx Science heard about the video and got mad. Then these regulations were put in place." Once the segment is approved, it is aired during homeroom on the television screens present in nearly every classroom. Recently, however, SUVH has had problems with malfunctioning televisions. On any given homeroom day, many students have to run to other classrooms to find a working television, and many are unable to view the show entirely. Damga said, "We're currently working with [Machinist] Kern [Levigion] to fix this problem. In about a month we will have gone through a huge restoration process and hopefully everything will be working again." Shung said that broken equipment poses a huge problem to SUVH's ability to get messages to the student body in a timely fashion. "Homeroom isn't often, and if it's a commercial promotion, it has to go out on certain days," she said. Aside from malfunctioning equipment, another problem that SUVH faces is the lack of participation from the student body, aside from the three mainstays. "I want to make [SUVH] a bigger part of the Stuy community-us three can't keep doing it alone," said Shung. The three allowed interested students to submit applications in the fall to become part of SUVH, but few tried out. The crew of SUVH receives little recognition, despite their efforts. "Students don't usually come up and talk about it," said Shung. Although, she said, "Once my math teacher left a note on my homework telling me how cute our video was." Some students do appreciate SUVH, including sophomore Dylan Levy, who said, "Watching SUVH makes homeroom more interesting, especially if everyone's actually watching it and laughing together." Sophomore Daniel Goldstern agreed. "It definitely helps me become more aware of school events because I usually don't get a chance to look at a lot of the flyers. Plus, it adds a kick of humor into my day. Unfortunately, the television in my homeroom is broken, and sometimes it's hard for me to find another classroom to watch it in," he said. According to Damga, however, the feedback has been "more criticism than positive reinforcement." Although, he said, "We do receive positive comments sometimes." This lack of positive feedback does not upset Damga. "That's the nature of things," he said. "Our main goal is not to be famous, it's to get the message out about events, and hopefully make kids happy, even if it's at the expense of looking stupid ourselves."

Club Feature: Girl's Learn International



The Girls Learn International club serves to promote women's education by being paired with an all-girls school in Kenya.

By ALEX GARABEDIAN and SAMANTHA SGUEGLIA

A little more than half a century ago, Stuyvesant had a strict male-only attitude toward learning. Though this policy has changed, gender restrictive schools are an all too realistic truth for many women around the world. Girls Learn International (GLI) is a new club that tries to remedy this problem, one student at a time. Stuyvesant's chapter of this national organization was spearheaded by seniors and co-presidents Sylvia Abdullah and Colette Biervliet-Schranz. They learned of the GLI organization through a friend at Townsend Harris High School who invited them to the GLI Summit at Edward R. Murrow High School, the organization's biggest yearly event, in which chapters from all over the country come together to celebrate women's education. Abullah and Biervliet-Schranz were touched by the stories of the speakers, including Muktar Mai, a woman who was sentenced to rape as a consequence for a crime her brother committed; Gloria Steinem, founder of Ms. Magazine and a lifelong feminist; and New York Senator Hillary Clinton.

This was Abdullah and Biervliet-Schranz's first experience with GLI, and would become the inspiration for Stuyvesant's own chapter. Abdullah mentioned that many New York City schools, such as Hunter College High School and Bronx High School of Science, gave presentations. Biervliet-Schranz said it was "really inspiring to see girls our own age involved in something so distant from us." Abdullah said, "We were surprised Stuy didn't have a chapter." GLI meets every other week. The goal of the club is to raise five hundred dollars, "but hopefully more," said Abdullah, through fundraisers, in order to aid their partner school in Kenya, the Kajido Academy, an all-girls private school. One letter has been sent to them, which includes an introduction and member profiles. However, it may have not yet reached Kenya. "All the letters have to be hand-delivered to make sure they get them," said Abdullah. "We are going to have two big fundraiser projects this holiday season, one in school and one outside of school," said Abdullah. The money the club will make from these fundraisers "will be sent to [the Kajido Academy] and they will use it for necessities like school supplies, aid for tuition, shoes, and improvement of their facilities like computers and such," she said. Although the club was started only this year, it already has a number of members. The club consists of about 20 active members and Abdullah said that they have "a mailing list of

50 plus people." Biervliet-Schranz said the two co-presidents are "pleased with the participation," especially that of the male members. She said, "There is one member whose family is from Kenya, so his parents really know what life is like there." Not only does GLI have devoted members, but faculty advisor and social studies teacher Debra Plafker plays an important role in the club as well. She attends every meeting and "keeps us grounded. She keeps us focused on our goals," Bitchvilet-Schranz said. Plafker has a special relationship with the struggles of women because she teaches Stuyvesant's Women's History elective, and although she had previously not known of the organization, she was happy to accept Abdullah's invitation to become faculty advisor. "I think it's an important club for Stuy to have," Plafker said. "It's a worthwhile use of my time. It's an opportunity to apply an

“I don’t think selling a bag of M&M’s supports human rights and girls education.” —Debra Plafker, Faculty advisor and social studies teacher

experience of many communities and address that today." Biervliet-Schranz said that Plafker is a faculty advisor who is "not just there to sign papers—she actually cares about the issues and wants to be involved." Plafker has been especially active in the fund-raising aspect of the club, and recently decided against having the members sell candy to raise the \$500 needed for the Kenyan school. "I don't think selling a bag of M&M's supports human rights and girls education," said Plafker. She wants the members to find more creative ways of raising money and said "it would be really terrific if we could promote our mission as we support it." GLI continues to grow in members, plan fundraisers and prepare for this year's summit in April. But for co-presidents Abdullah and Biervliet-Schranz, the victory of the growing club is bittersweet, as they are both seniors and will be graduating in June. Biervliet-Schranz said that she "hopes that this year serves as a stepping stone for future generations of the club," and that although she expects a lot from the club, "right now it's about taking one step at a time, doing what you can at the end of that day, that week, that month."


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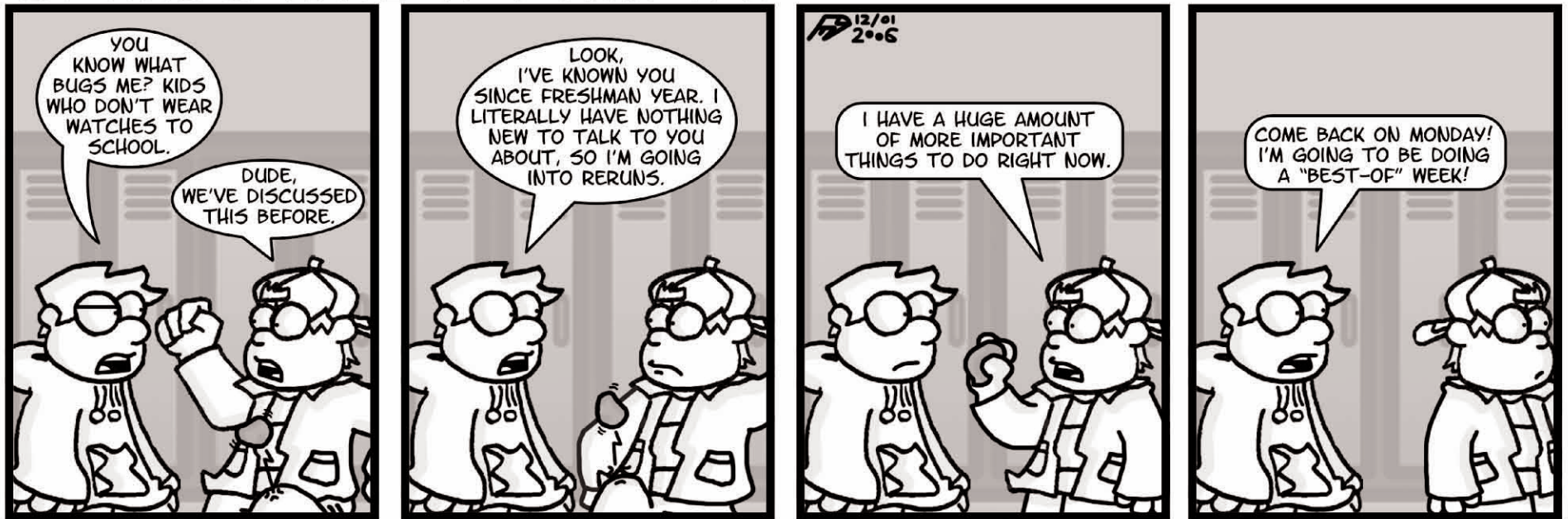
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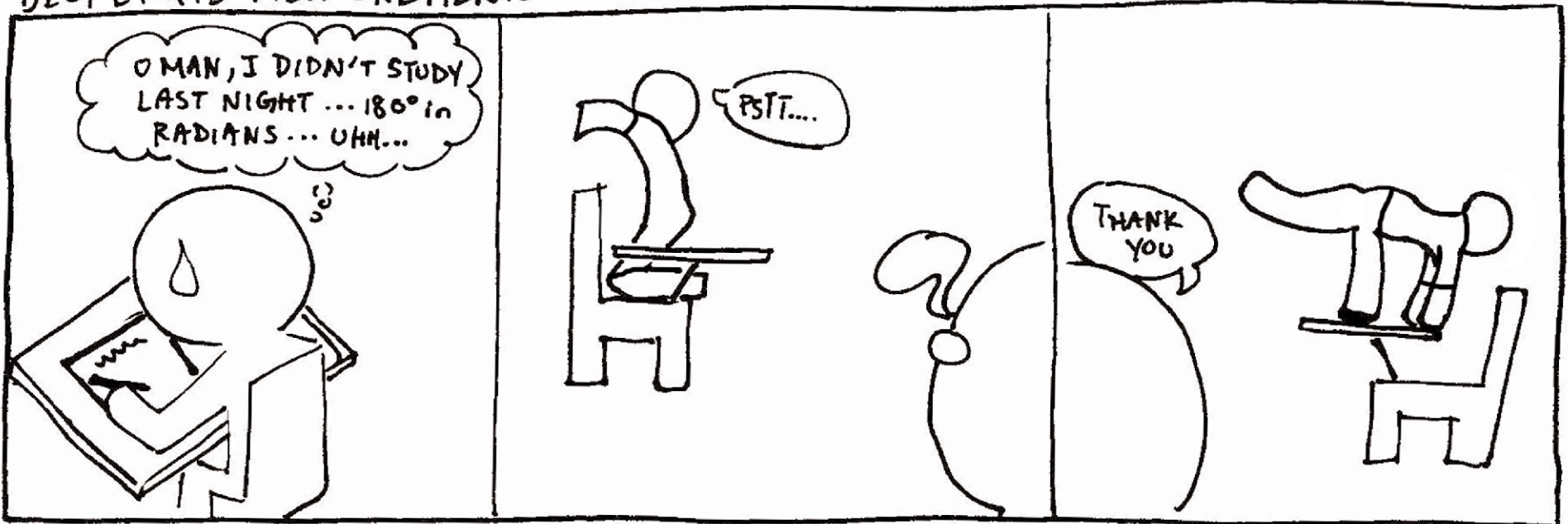
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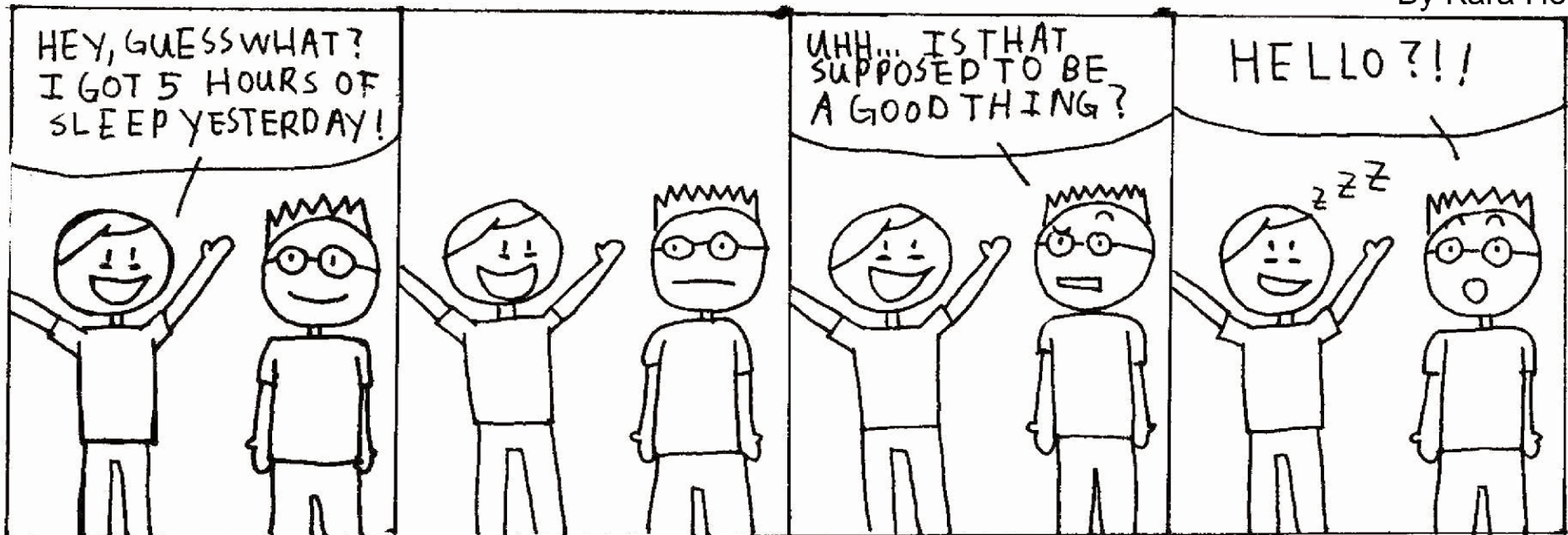


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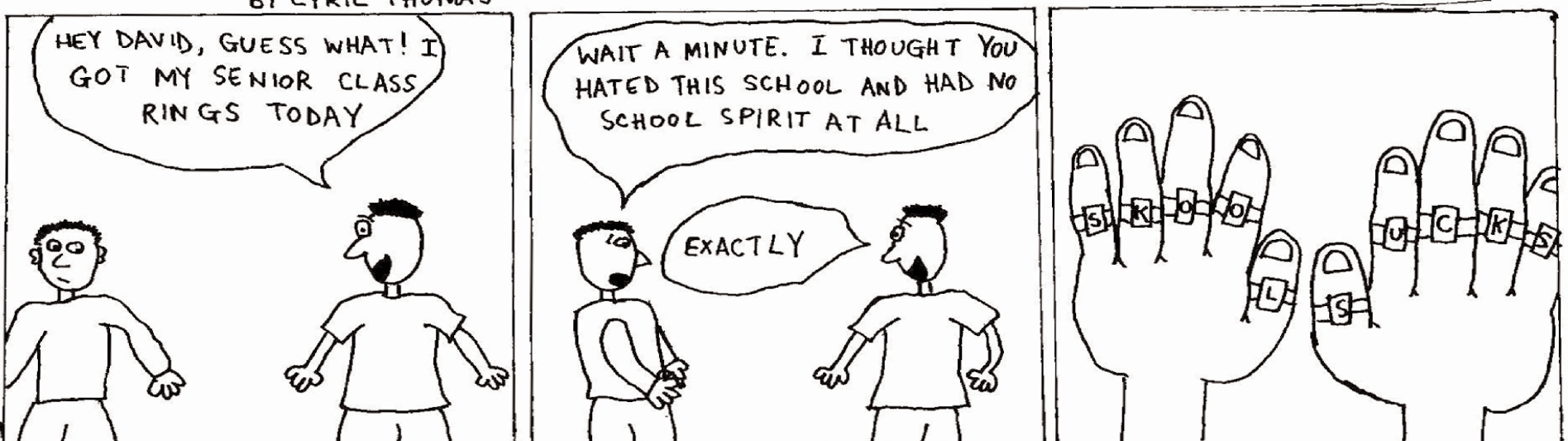


By Kara Ho



SCHOOL SPIRIT

BY CYRIL THOMAS



Editorials and Opinions

STAFF EDITORIALS

The Trident Fails to Pierce the Problem

It’s surprising how much a dozen eggs can effect the best and worst of policies.

During a School Leadership Team meeting on Tuesday, November 21, Principal Stanley Teitel proposed a three-part plan, which is still in its preliminary stages, in order to ensure school security. One part requires teachers to wear identification, another stipulates scanners be used throughout the day and the third would individually assign locks and lockers to students at a cost of 11 dollars per lock.

The proposition starts out innocently enough. An influx of new teachers has raised the concern that security guards may not be able to differentiate between faculty and intruders. Aside from being a possible nuisance to staff, identification badges are a perfectly feasible solution, especially in a building frequented by visitors. However, the latter two components of the plan, namely full-time scanners and assigned lockers, though understandable in their intentions, are logistically impossible.

Full-time scanners would allow the administration to monitor the locations of students. Clearly, the school has a responsibility to know where students are at any given time during the school day. However, the practicality of this system becomes questionable when considering the percentage of students who take part in extracurricular activities.

Given the range of students and activities at Stuyvesant, few students go home at 3:30 p.m., and would be unable to scan out of the building—they would thus be unreliable in determining our whereabouts.

The administration’s answer is to obtain a list of students involved in a particular activity from the respective faculty advisor, and to leave the scanners out until the end of the extracurricular day. But teams, clubs and publications often stay in the school well past quitting time. Moreover, not only do students fail to attend certain activities on a regular basis, but faculty advisors also are not always actively involved in their designated extracurricular. The alternate solution would be to bar student activities at a designated time,

which would hurt Stuyvesant’s student life.

The third part of the plan, which would assign locks as well as lockers, for an \$11 yearly deposit, is just as illogical. Its weakness lies in the fact that locker and lock assignments for over 3000 students will inevitably cause the sharing, transferring or stealing of lockers; thus, the plan fails to alter existing practices. Additionally, a student’s choice of the location of his or her locker usually depends on his or her needs, not by a locker assignment.

Furthermore, it is preposterous that public school students are even expected to pay an \$11 fee—though reimbursed at the end of the academic year—in order to use a locker, especially due to a policy they might not support. The plan also seems to create more security problems than it claims to solve: The administration would need to maintain, as well as continually update and safely store, a list containing the combinations for and locations of all student lockers. But this list in the wrong hands could potentially serve as a student’s key to every school locker. This is not to accuse the administration of ineptitude, but rather to point out that students have been known to steal.

The policies are a response to recent incidents involving the possession of illegal materials in student lockers, which have raised concerns about school security. In Issue 4 of The Spectator, the Editorial Board published a staff editorial titled “Fixing the Holes in Our Safety Net,” which called for greater security measures in response to potential bomb materials found in a school locker. While we support measures that increase the safety of students and staff, implementing a plan that will result in more problems than solutions is not the wisest choice.

Teitel’s plan is simply another illustration of the formulaic policies the administration has a tendency to conjure up. Each proposal always contains components that seem reasonable along with others that seem ridiculous. We appreciate that our calls for increased awareness of school security are being heeded. However, we simply ask the administration: next time, think realistically.

Exit Wounds

This school year, a number of teachers have left Stuyvesant in the middle of the fall term, leaving their students in the lurch. Though faculty may leave the school for valid reasons, there is no plan that protects the students left hanging by their exits.

Each teacher is responsible for roughly 150 students, yet policies concerning faculty departures don’t take the welfare of students into consideration. Teachers are allowed to leave Stuyvesant with as little as 24 hours notice, making extremely abrupt and unexpected departures possible. Loopholes in the system can even reward teachers for exiting in the middle of the term—when students would be affected the most—by allowing them to designate the remaining time as sick days and collect extra pay.

The United Federation of Teachers protects and favors teachers when they leave, but these actions have consequences that adversely affect students, who have the least say in the matter. For example, when

Abby Siegel left the guidance staff this September, many seniors were uninformed about the status of their SSRs, or secondary school reports, which are necessary in the college admissions process.

Stuyvesant is a community of both teachers and students—one of the most important aspects of any class is the rapport built between the students and the instructor. Teachers have the responsibility to provide continuity in educating their students. Even if the course of study is not disrupted by a teacher’s unexpected departure, it is unfair to the students, who are suddenly faced with a new instructor unfamiliar with them on a more personal level.

Of course, teachers cannot be prevented from parting—they have the right to leave whenever they want. But students are impacted the most when a staff member quits. For teachers who are considering leaving Stuyvesant, or any school, the students deserve to be more than an afterthought.

Missing: Library Masterplan



Diane Yee/ The Spectator

By GAVIN HUANG

On the Friday night after Thanksgiving, avid shoppers around the nation lined up in front of shopping mall gates, hoping to be the first ones to enter. The gates open, and the massive crowds of shoppers race around the mall to secure the best deals. The mall is suddenly filled with people. It is noisy and crowded, so crowded that employees can’t handle the congestion. Stuy students don’t have to venture far to experience such a Black Friday. In fact, they can just go to our library on the sixth floor.

Whoever thinks the Stuyvesant library is a quiet place

to sit down and read a book, a newspaper or even to do work that requires great concentration, should think again. It is loud, with students doing homework, talking with friends, playing cards, selling candy or just simply hanging out.

But since November 6, the library has changed. New rules force students to enter only within the first 10 minutes of the period. This rule is supposed to limit the number of students in the library by having those who really want to enter go in during those first 10 minutes.

The problem with these rules is that every student really wants to enter. With seven out of 10 floors off limits and most of the remaining three restricted, the library is one of the only places open to students during their free time. It is such a social hub within the school that the rules won’t stop massive crowds of kids from going in. The number of students and the amount of noise in the library per period has not significantly decreased since the adoption of this policy.

The students have been blamed for a problem that the school has not faced satisfactorily. Even with the library, there is not enough space to hold all the students with free periods.

Librarian Chris Asch said, “There are about 150 to 200 kids in the library in one period.” The congestion is such that, considering the lack of space, librarians have even proposed removing bookshelves to make room for extra tables and chairs.

Rules that restrict student access to the library are not an effective solution to the problem of library congestion. The idea of removing bookshelves is one possible solution, but raises questions about the future and purpose of our library. Asch has suggested creating a partition in the library for people to have “group study” and another for “individual study,” but that won’t solve the underlying problem. That is, there are many adolescents in one building, with a free period or lunch, each and every period, while the administration has simply not given them enough places to hang out.

Many of the people who go to Stuy’s library do so because it’s a place to relax. It’s true that though some are working, it’s also a haven for students whose presence is discouraged on all 10 floors. If the school wants to make the library more professional, they can look to the source of the problem, rather than just clamping down on the students.

The Spectator

The Official Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



“The pulse of the student body”

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STAFF EDITORIALS

Letter to the Community

Letters to the editor, an integral part of the journalistic process, spark discussion, direct attention to certain issues and, in some cases, can be even more interesting and controversial than the articles to which they respond.

Newspapers, magazines and other print media publish letters or e-mails from readers. Radio stations, as well as television shows, air submissions and phone-ins. Through letters, a newspaper’s audience can respond to, correct or question its contents.

Within such a small community as Stuyvesant, the submission of letters to the editor become even more important since each issue discussed is likely to impact the readers. In this context, it is therefore disappointing to note that only one letter (“Re: Stuy’s Neglect of 9/11 Commemoration,” September 20, 2006), written by senior Nelly Mecklenburg, has been submitted so far this academic year. How can a newspaper truly be “the pulse of the student body”

when so many voices choose to go unheard?

As Stuyvesant’s official newspaper, The Spectator strives to be an open forum for discussion. It provides an opportunity for all readers to voice their opinions; while The Spectator is the pulse of the student body, its audience has a much wider demographic.

Students, teachers, parents, administrators, custodians, guidance counselors, college officers, security guards and various other faculty members make up Stuyvesant. All hold opinions.

These opinions, which come in the form of letters, can be angry or even baffled reactions to a published article. They can be an observation on a new policy or a trend in the school. They can have an assured tone of righteous indignation. They can condone or even praise a new direction or action taken in the school.

So react! Get angry. Praise new ideas. Demolish others. Write letters. We can benefit as a community only if you choose to be more than a passive spectator.

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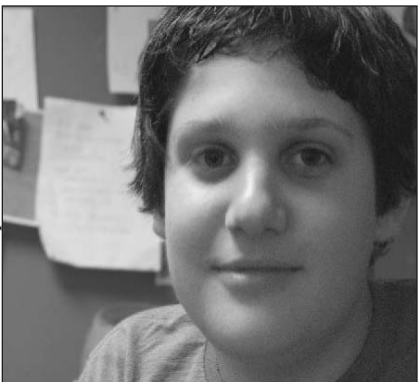
- In Issue 6, it was not mentioned that Clarissa Bushman is a social studies teacher in “Fiddler” Sets the Roof on Fire.” In addition, one of the photos on the front page for that article was missing a byline. That photo was taken by Michel Boyce. Freshman Alex Jaffe’s grade was misreported. Also, it was misstated that senior Kevin Hu’s cell phone fell out of his vest, when in fact it was his microphone.
- Peter Heaney’s surname was misspelled in “Superintendents Mandate Ban on ‘Communication Devices.’”
- In “Dr. Niglio: A Friend of Rockstars and Students Alike,” Niglio’s surname was misspelled in a quote toward the end of the article.
- It was mistakenly reported in “Thoms’s Departure From STC Leaves Advisor Position Vacant” that Timothy Novikoff faculty-directed “The Children’s Hour,” when in fact he was the faculty advisor of the play.
- In “iPods: Weapons of Mass Destruction,” the date of the implementation of Chancellor’s A-412 Regulation was misreported. It took place on November 8.
- In “So You Want to Be a Winner,” the name of the Video Production course was misstated.
- The girls’ volleyball team’s record was misstated in “‘Best Game Ever’ Is Not Enough For Vixens.” At that time, they had won 12, not 10 straight games, for a record of 10-0 in the regular season, not 8-0, as the article stated.

Counting College Applications

We are now at the peak of the long and time-consuming college application process. By mid-December, many seniors who have applied for early admissions will hear back from the colleges to which they applied. Others will soon apply by the January 1 deadline for regular admissions. The Stuyvesant school policy limits seniors to seven applications, while some high schools do not have a limit. Two writers face off on the pros and cons of this system.

Point

Breaking the Limit



Gut Bessa / The Spectator

By EZRA GLENN

By the time Stuyvesant seniors begin the college application process, many have visited several schools and have heard representatives drone on about hundreds of others. From these, applicants must choose seven. However, at a school like Stuyvesant, such advice can be quite limiting.

I found this problem quite relevant when, sometime during my sophomore year, it occurred to me that I might choose to attend an art school for college. My parents naturally disagreed and proclaimed that I must apply to liberal arts schools as well. This strategy leaves me in a predicament. I have only three or four choices in each category, and with only one art safety and one liberal art safety, I certainly don't feel safe. However, choosing more safeties would limit my applications to the schools that, though harder to get into, I really want to attend.

This is the problem—there are thousands of colleges and universities in the United States and countless other international options that Stuyvesant students must narrow down to a choice of seven. Unfortunately, this means that if students see themselves happy at eight universities, they may have to eliminate the choice that is the best fit.

Because of the further fear of not get-

ting into any of these seven, most students choose to apply to at least one safety school, or even two. Granted, students have the option to apply to more than seven schools—some applications, such as the State University of New York and the City University of New York, allow a student to apply to several schools on one form.

But in contrast to Stuyvesant's system, fellow Specialized Science High School Bronx High School of Science does not have an application maximum. Even though Science's class sizes are roughly the same as ours and their college office has a mere staff of two in comparison to our three, it manages to allow students unlimited options when applying to college, a mouthwatering proposition to many Stuyvesant students.

But while the ability to apply to more than seven schools is important to some, a lift or elimination of the cap on applications would not affect every student at Stuyvesant. Last year, in a graduating class of about 785 students, 431 students chose to apply early decision or early action. While only 211 of these were accepted, these accepted students decreased the total number of applications the college office had to process. If the cap were lifted, not all students would necessarily need to take full advantage, keeping the workload of the college officers down.

School officials also need not be alarmed for gross misuse of such an unlimited policy. After all, no student applies to fifty or one hundred schools, simply because he or she could never possibly complete so many applications or even schedule the interviews. If college officers trusted students to make rational decisions during the application process, students would greatly benefit.

For now, however, left at a disadvantage by other schools' application policies, Stuyvesant students must keep their choices limited to seven, sacrificing desired schools in the gamble for acceptance.

Counterpoint

Lucky Number Seven



Jake Newman / The Spectator

By MATT BUCH

Two safeties. Three targets. Two reaches. It seems as if seven chances are all you get to determine the rest of your life. Or, at the very least, the college where you will spend the next four years.

According to Principal Stanley Teitel, the college application policy at Stuyvesant was designed to encourage the student body to apply to a broader range of schools. Given an unlimited number of choices, many students would probably apply to several "name-brand" schools like Harvard and Yale, without any realistic chance of getting accepted. Limiting the number of applications forces students to consider colleges that they have a good likelihood of attending.

It makes students sit down and consider where they would like to go for the next four years. Not everyone belongs at an Ivy, and in some cases, other schools you may not have heard of have just the right program for you. Choosing a school also depends on other factors, including the cost of tuition, location and the type of people who go there; it shouldn't just depend on the name. By forcing students to think carefully about exactly where they want to go and why, the policy helps students avoid applying to schools they may not be happy at.

In addition, the application limit isn't necessarily as much of a hindrance

as it appears—many students do not even approach the limit. Of the roughly 750 students who applied to college last year from Stuyvesant, 431 decided to apply early action or early decision. At least those who are accepted early decision forgo their remaining six applications; even students accepted early action may choose not to apply to other schools. Last year, 211 students—or almost a third of the graduating class—who applied either early action or early decision, got into their first-choice schools without the need for seven applications.

Another fact to consider is that if students could apply to as many schools as they wished, the quality of each application might decrease. The most time-consuming and possibly one of the most important parts of a college application is the essay. The quality of a college essay depends on how much time you have to write it, which can in turn depend on how many you have to write. With a large number of applications, students may not leave themselves enough time to make each essay personal and interesting. But if they applied to only seven schools, their time would be better spent in telling a college who they are and why they would fit in at that particular university.

Furthermore, the application cap lessens the workload of teachers, guidance and college office staff who provide recommendations, write SSRs and process applications. Teachers are able to spend more time on each college recommendation and, when the college office only has to deal with seven applications for each student, they can better focus on each individual and be sure each application is sent out accurately and on time.

Two safeties. Three targets. Two reaches. Sometimes, seven chances are all you need to determine the rest of your life. Or, at least, all you'll need to get into college.

On Campus, Off Stage

By TIFFANY WONG

Nervous and sweating, I walked into the room. Flashing my biggest smile at the judges, I recited the lines with as much confidence and enthusiasm as I could muster. A couple smiled weakly; the others looked right through me. Needless to say, I didn't get a callback.

Another heartbreak, I sighed. Even before coming to Stuy, I had always wanted to be involved in theater. Unfortunately, the two times I tried out for acting roles, I was deemed unfit for the stage. Sometimes, I wonder why I have never been called back. Is it because of the way I carry myself? Is it because I'm not convincing enough? Or, is it because I'm...Asian?

Asians make up about half of our student body, yet hardly any are in the spotlight. Last year's SING! had a total of eight Asian actors distributed among all three casts, not including the dance groups, choruses and bands. This year's fall musical "Fiddler on the Roof" had four actors of Asian descent in a cast of 48.

Clearly, the only way to draw more Asians onstage is for the Stuyvesant Theater Community to adopt the same method of justice and equality that colleges and universities have already put

into use: affirmative action. Just as underrepresented minorities applying to colleges are given a better chance of admission, Asian students need to be given preference when trying out for roles in theater productions. Only these efforts will, as many highly accredited academic institutions might say, "bring a sense of diversity" to the Stuyvesant Theater Community. In addition, a coaching program for Asians (AAAA-Aspiring Asian Actors Anonymous) must be founded to help inexperienced students jumpstart their acting careers. These measures would help students tap into their enormous potential and develop the skills and confidence they need to reach their dreams.

Of course, they would also be ridiculous. But finding a more realistic solution to the problem can't happen without first addressing the reasons for it. How can we explain the huge lack of Asians acting in Stuy theater? Perhaps the blame falls upon cultural differences; it is possible that most Asians just aren't interested in acting. But the answer could also lie in the exclusive nature of the Stuyvesant Theater Community.

As with any other club or activity, there is stigma dictating the type of people who tend to be involved in theater.



Stephanie London / The Spectator

Clearly, the only way to draw more Asians onstage is for the Stuyvesant Theater Community to adopt the same method of justice and equality that colleges and universities have already put into use: affirmative action.

for something that requires such confidence as acting.

Obviously, I was not cheated a role in SING! because of my ethnicity; if anything, I'm just not a very good actor. But while acting is not a field that most Asians traditionally find themselves in, I do encourage more Asian students to try out for theater productions. Though the fear of rejection can be scary, it's no reason for wasted talent. Before we ask others to help us, we must help ourselves.

Arts & Entertainment

Beta Dance Troupe: Shoulders Don't Lie

By IVANA NG

Shakira claims her hips don't lie, but Dr. Ruth Eshel, founder of the Beta Dance Troupe, says the shoulders say it all. Comprised of six Ethiopian dancers, her ensemble flew in from Israel to perform eskesta, a shoulder dance rooted in Ethiopian Jewry, in the Murray Kahn Theater on Wednesday, November 15.

Organized largely by Hebrew and social studies

The shoulder dancing technique was extremely evocative in the dance of the courting ritual.

teacher Michael Waxman, the event played host to such a large audience during eighth and ninth periods that some students resorted to watching from the balcony. "This is probably the first even[t] on a large scale like this. It was a full house, and there was a lot of support and positive feedback," said Waxman. "I've been asked by teachers and students to bring in more Israeli cultural events."

Stuyvesant was just one of many stops on the dance troupe's United States tour. Waxman organized the event in conjunction with the Israeli Consulate in New York. "As the Hebrew teacher, one of my roles here is to bring Israeli culture to this school-not just about the language, but also about the culture," he said.

Director of Academic Affairs at the Israeli consulate Olivia Blechner said, "Beta truly represents the diversity of Israel, a country that is smaller than New Jersey." In the future, she hopes to work with Waxman to bring to Stuyvesant an Israeli filmmaker, a diplomat from Israel and perhaps even a photograph exhibit to follow up with Beta's visit.

During the performance, the troupe performed three dances, and Eshel, also the artistic director and choreographer, discussed the history of the Ethiopian Jews. "Many people are not aware that Israel, like the U.S., is a melting pot. People of all kinds come to this country, and we have the opportunity to keep our own [Ethiopian] culture," she said.

The Troupe used eskesta, a traditional Ethiopian dance that translates into "shoulder danc-

ing" in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, to illustrate the experiences of Ethiopian Jews going from their native homeland to Israel. As the program progressed, the four pieces told the story of how the Ethiopian Jews brought their native culture to Israel and how they coped with the new environment.

"In Ethiopia, there are 80 ethnic groups," said Beta dancer Aman Chole. "Each group has their own culture, their own dance. This is our dance. It's grown up with us. Nobody taught us how to dance-it's natural. But like an artist, we try to create new dances with the shoulders."

The first piece incorporated an African hand drum rhythm in a traditional eskesta dance, with the women wearing white tunics and skirts trimmed with vibrant red bands and the men sporting similar outfits with crimson sashes. The piece consisted entirely of shoulder movements, expressing purely the traditional dances of the Ethiopian Jews.

The next piece incorporated leg and arm movement as well as clapping. Dancers also chanted in Ge'ez, the ancient language of Ethiopian Jewry, while beating the drum. Toward the end of the piece, the male dancers skipped around in a ring, grooming themselves, brushing back their hair and pretending to admire themselves in a mirror. They seemed to be portraying femininity and vanity as signs of adjusting to their new surroundings in Israel.

The final dance referred back to their Ethiopian roots while melding percussive African music and contemporary rhythms. Here, the eskesta technique was extremely evocative in depicting the matrimonial customs of the traditional courting ritual, such as the fact that marriages happened at a very young age in the Ethiopian culture. Though it included contemporary music, the last piece seemed to declare that even though they were living in Israel now, they would always have a distinct, Ethiopian culture.

"In the movement, the traditional is shoulder dance, but then, later, we use techniques of ballet and we use legs," said Gola. "We want to show the change from Ethiopia to Israel. We want to start from origin to end."

Eshel founded the Beta Dance Troupe in 2005, and the six native Ethiopian dancers who make up the group were chosen from the best soloists of Eskesta Dance Group, another ensemble she established 10 years before. Today, the Troupe lives in Haifa, a city in northern

Israel, but each of the six members has a story to tell. Born in Ethiopia, they all suffered first-hand oppression due to their Jewish heritage. In Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, "beta" means "house", and the Ethiopian Jews are known as the Beta Israel. However, non-Jewish Ethiopians also call them "Falashas," an Amharic term that means "strangers." Living in one of the oldest Christian nations in the world, Ethiopian Jews fell prey to persecution and prejudice. "The Ethiopian Jews suffered a lot, so it was their dream for thousands of years to go to Israel," said Eshel.

All graduates of the University of Haifa in Haifa, Israel, the six dancers now teach at the Beta School for Ethiopian Dance. "It is very important to show that Jews are not only white-skinned," Gola said.

Waxman also hoped to inform students of this. "I wanted to bring attention to the Stuy community that there are Jews originally from Africa, that Jews are responsible for one another's welfare around the world," he said.

"Not only is the group's dancing quite amazing, but the individual stories that the dancers have-of walking from Ethiopia through the deserts of the Sudan for months to be rescued by Israeli airplanes waiting to carry them-is an important story of exile and homecoming," said Blechner.

At the end of each performance, the troupe gave students a brief dancing lesson as well. At the end of each period, Eshel demonstrated the up and down, backward and forward shoulder

"Many people are not aware that Israel, like the U.S., is a melting pot. People of all kinds come to this country, and we have the opportunity to keep our own [Ethiopian] culture."
— Dr. Ruth Eshel, founder of Beta Dance Troupe

movements that characterize eskesta. During eighth period, students sat upright on the edge of their seats, wiggling their shoulders along with the dancers, and during ninth period, Eshel invited students up to the stage to dance with her and the Troupe.

"It's too bad I was in the balcony, because I really wanted to go up there and dance with Dr. Eshel, the other students and the troupe," said freshman Alan Sage, who attended the performance with his Latin class ninth period.

"I liked how they mixed modern music with traditional African beats," said audience member and junior Alice Fok. "It was a fun and scintillating show."

"With the shoulders, we can express a lot of freedom," Eshel said during the lesson. She shook her shoulders back and forth to demonstrate. "I love you. I hate you. See? You can say anything with the shoulders."

Scattered laughter lingered for a moment, but in reality, most, if not all, of the students wiggled their shoulders along with her. Move over, Shakira-shoulders don't lie, either.

'Spell' Bound: The Making of the Studio Musical

By APARNA GOKHALE and MASHA GINDLER

The word "musical" often brings to mind an image of lights illuminating the stage at Radio City Music Hall and a large cast, accompanied by elaborate sets and an entire orchestra. At Stuyvesant, however, the annual studio musical skews that image.

Unlike other musical productions at Stuyvesant, such as the Fall Musical and Sing!, the studio musical is performed in non-traditional performance spaces such as the library or the first floor lobby, and the cast usually consists of less than 12 people. "Any show where the entire cast would not be able to fit on the stage together to bow at the end probably would have problems," said senior and Communications Coordinator for the Stuyvesant Theater

"I love the studio musical because of its intimacy among the cast and crew, and between the actors and the audience."
—Charlotte Austin, senior

Community (STC) Ben Alter.

The studio musical, as most studio productions, is also geared towards new talent. "The studio musical gives students another opportunity to demonstrate their musical talents without the pressure of being on the big stage and competing against major Stuyvesant theater players," said senior and STC Studio Theater Coordinator Hannah Freiman.

Each year, students submit various musicals for consideration by the STC slate. The slate is responsible for choosing a musical that will best fit the requirements of studio theater. "Other than just being a good show with a compelling story and good music, we want to make sure that the show is doable and that there is a good balance of male to female roles," said Alter.

This year seven musicals, including Pete Townshend's "Tommy", Stephen Schwartz's "Godspell", Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Jesus Christ Superstar", Mark Hollman's "Urinetown" and William Finn's "A New Brain", were submitted to the STC slate. In previous years, shows such as Alan Menken's "Little Shop of Horrors" and Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods" have been produced as Stuyvesant studio musicals.

Senior Charlotte Austin, who directed last year's production and submitted two musicals this year, "Godspell" and "A New Brain", said, "I love the studio musical because of its intimacy, among the cast and crew and between the actors and the audience. I suppose that's an advantage of studio theater in general."

The STC slate chose "Godspell" as this year's studio musical on November 28, 2006. English teacher and STC Faculty Advisor Annie Thoms, who helped choose the show, said, "One of the main things we looked at was the breakdown of parts. 'Godspell' had an equal number of male and female roles. It also has a great



ensemble feel and requires innovations from all the actors."

Sophomore Jos Diaz, who submitted "Tommy" for consideration, said, "I'm really happy with their decision. I know that, since they were choosing a studio musical, it was easier for a smaller and possibly more controversial work to get through the STC, but that doesn't take away from the importance of something fresh coming to Stuyvesant. It opens up a very promising door."

Though Godspell is now well on its way to being produced-the slate was picked on December 1 and auditions held on December 6 and 7-there were doubts at the start of the school year about whether there would even be another studio musical. "Some people felt that we shouldn't do studio musical[s] anymore because the point of studio theater is to get new people involved and the studio musical wasn't achieving that," said Alter. "According to them, the same 'musical people' were being cast."

Financial problems also plagued the STC and there were doubts as to whether there were sufficient funds for the production. Studio musicals, while less expensive than main stage productions, often cost more to produce than other studio shows. Other concerns included whether the musical could be successfully staged outside of the theater and in a small area.

However, due to the financial success of "Fiddler on the Roof," the production was able to carry on. According to Austin, the limited area did cause problems, but she felt that the directors had been able to navigate around those problems successfully.

"This year, most of us felt

"The studio musical gives students another opportunity to demonstrate their musical talents."
—Hannah Freiman, senior and STC Studio Theater Corodinator

that it was a show that a lot of people in the community wanted to do and all the other concerns weren't enough to overcome that," said Alter. "It is up to the slate to choose a show that can be done in a small space and up to the directors to stage it successfully to use that space properly. But most importantly I hope it's a show that people will come to and will enjoy."

"Godspell" will be performed on Thursday and Friday, February 1 and 2.

Austin said, "It's time consuming, it's difficult, but in the end, it's very rewarding."



The Beta Dance Troupe performed in the Murray Kahn Theater on Wednesday, November 17.

Arts & Entertainment

“Proof” Derives Success

By JAMES DENNIN
and BILLY FERRER

David Auburn’s “Proof,” a play which earned a Tony and Pulitzer Prize, was certainly an ambitious choice for this year’s studio drama, but juniors and directors Susan Augenbraun and Boris Jacobson were able to derive as eloquent a performance as could be expected on Thursday, November 16 and Friday, November 17 in the library.

Produced by sophomores J. J. Russo and Jos Diaz, the play takes place over the course of four years, during which the protagonist, Catherine (senior Michelle Miller), grapples with the fear that she is following in the footsteps of her recently-deceased father, Robert (freshman Wes Schierenbeck), a brilliant mathematician who became mentally unstable after producing his best work. Over the course of the play, which

It was the compelling interaction between the play’s central figures that transformed the play from a simple mathematical endeavor into a gripping, complex attestation of human nature

jumps around from year to year, Catherine attempts to come to terms with her father’s illness and eventual death, as well as the fact that she may be losing grip of her own sanity.

Having devoted her life to taking care of her father, nursing him in and out of health, Catherine has been unable to pursue a career or finish her education. Yet it is with her father that her real education takes place, as she is able to write the proof whose authorship is at the heart of the play’s conflict. Hal (sophomore Zack Feinn), a mathematician, dis-

covers the magnificent proof while rummaging through Robert’s papers. When Hal first declares the proof a work of staggering genius, he accuses Catherine of not being educated enough to have written it. The act serves as a severe blow for Catherine, further weakening her hold on sanity.

The play’s small but strong cast of four allowed it to shine overall. Miller, visibly the most seasoned actor of the four, did a fine job as the play’s central character, playing her role with sincere passion and intensity and delivering the most consistent performance on both afternoons. Throughout the show, Miller’s facial and body expressions were seamlessly subtle, yet wholly persuasive in crafting a character that was easily relatable to the audience.

Schierenbeck made a solid if somewhat raw theatrical debut in the studio drama that added yet another layer of depth to the interaction between characters. Many of Schierenbeck’s lines were delivered with great doses of humor and charisma, though at points he revealed a slight lack of professionalism, by, for example, mouthing his lines before speaking them. While accurately connecting with Miller onstage in a paternal manner, Schierenbeck was also able to cleverly develop his character into one of a mentally ill individual.

Ultimately, it was the compelling interaction between the play’s central figures that transformed the play from a simple mathematical endeavor into a gripping, complex attestation of human nature. It is these scenes that illuminated Catherine’s true emotions, and it is in these scenes that the play is at its wittiest and most passionate.

Feinn, whose character also serves as a love interest for Catherine, played his character well and conjured up some convincing chemistry with Miller, but was visibly most at ease delivering humorous dialogue. Ironically, it is the well-emoted awkwardness of his character that provided much of the humor to the play and relationship.



Senior Michelle Miller’s moving portrayal of Catherine in the studio drama, “Proof,” gave the play its spark.

Lily Schwarzebaum / The Spectator

Freshman Kendra Miller-Rosenberg also made her debut in Stuyvesant theater in the role of Claire, Catherine’s sister and antagonist. Her performance was arguably the most difficult to deliver, as the playwright, Auburn, gives her little to do other than complain and yell, acts that grow tedious after several scenes. However, Miller-Rosenberg shines throughout all of her scenes, not only in developing excellent chemistry with Miller, but also in maintaining her energy even when the spotlight is elsewhere. Not a single word emanating from Miller-Rosenberg lacked energy, a feat essential in successfully portraying the bitter character.

Though the play’s conflict eventually resolved itself, the method in which the production jumped through time isn’t elucidated until the end. Furthermore, “Proof” suffered from most of the same pitfalls that seem to plague many Stuy productions. Sound was at times shaky, with microphones amplifying actors’ voices to uncomfortable levels when they stepped too close and not picking up their voices enough

when they stepped away. On Thursday afternoon, the middle of the second act was witness to a light plummeting from its fixture in the middle of a set. Though production values were lacking, Augenbraun and Jacobson still managed to summon powerful performances

The only genuine flaw in “Proof” - that of its ambiguous set - is a bit misleading, but is at most in consequential to the overall structure of the play.

from their actors. The second afternoon easily surpassed the first-technical aspects were fixed, forgotten lines were cleverly improvised and a more enthusiastic cast prevailed.

Augenbraun was quick to cite the difficulties in the production, especially in getting Wes Schierenbeck, who played Robert, to identify with the character of an aging father. “Working on his character was the most difficult part,” said Augenbraun. “He worked almost as hard as Michelle, who was in every scene.”

The only genuine flaw in “Proof”-that of its ambiguous set-is a bit misleading, but is at most inconsequential to the overall structure of the play. The program lists “Proof” as taking place entirely on an outdoor porch in the middle of winter. Yet numerous questions arise about the play’s only set-why is the porch furnished with a green armchair, why does the table have a table cloth and who would keep an electronic telephone outside in the middle of winter?

Ultimately, though, it is fortunately only such trivial matters that were problems, and “Proof” unquestionably emerged an achievement. Indeed, with a superb cast, this year’s studio drama proved that great acting in Stuy isn’t only found on the stage.

Chinese: More Than Yesterday’s Lunch

By ELLEN LIU

“Chinese people eat everything,” said Shii Ann Huang, the first Asian American to participate in CBS’s “Survivor All Stars.” At “Throwing Down the Gauntlet: What Does It Mean to be Chinese in America Today?” a panel discussion held at the Museum of Chinese in Americas (MoCA) on Saturday, November 18, she and several other prominent, young Chinese Americans discussed Asian stereotypes.

At Stuyvesant, students like to typecast their Chinese friends as geeky, brilliant math students, and the words “fob” (fresh off the boat) and “ABC” (American-born Chinese) are bandied around constantly. At the panel, though, a fair number of the panelists on Saturday admitted to rejecting their Chinese roots in their adolescent years. In response to the question, “Do you feel pressure to remove your Asian-ness when you operate in the

workplace?” George Zeng, an investment banker, replied, “It’s easier to build a relationship when you resonate as a person. But I don’t get how you’d hide your race.”

Aimed at airing out all laundry of the Chinese

“Will a Chinese accent ever be sexy?”

American experience, the panel consisted of eight prominent members of the Chinese American community, including Karin Chien, producer of “The Motel” and other independent films; Melissa Chiu, Director of the Asia Society Museum; Kip Fulbeck, Author of “Part Asian 100% Hapa”; Shii

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The Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) hosted an event, “Throwing Down the Gauntlet: What does it mean to be in America Today?” on November 18.

Courtesy of Museum of Chinese in the Americas

Arts & Entertainment

A New Perspective on a Familiar Museum: Teaching There

By SUSAN AUGENBRAUN

I grew up visiting the Brooklyn Museum with my family, taking art classes and devouring all the special exhibitions after exhausting the permanent galleries. I had seen my favorite painting, a mural entitled “Manifest Destiny” and depicting a terrifying but beautiful vision of New York City after global warming claimed it as a coral reef. I felt at home at the museum, but only as a visitor. That is, until this October.

A friend had told me about a volunteer program the museum offered that trained students to be tour guides. She thought it sounded like something I would be interested in. It was.

I sent in an application, and a few emails and a phone interview later, I had a job: for two hours each Saturday afternoon, the other student guides and I would learn tour-giving techniques. Beginning in January, we would spend another two hours giving the tours we would write.

On our very first day, we met in the boardroom on the sixth floor. Sixth? I had been a museumgoer for as long as I could remember, but I had been unaware of any floor above five. Walking down the hall of this administrative floor, I peered into cubicled rooms: development, preservation. In the boardroom, as Academic Programs Coordinator Eleanor Whitney began to talk, I realized just how much went on behind the scenes at the museum, and that I had just come through to the other side. I was officially a museum employee.

Eleanor, a petite and enthusiastic young woman, explained our project to us: for one academic year, we would serve as tour guides in the museum, researching and writing our own tours on any collection that we were interested

As Academic Programs Coordinator Eleanor Whitney began to talk, I realized just how much went on behind the scenes at the museum, and that I had just come through to the other side. I was officially a Museum Employee.

in. The other student guides were, besides one other girl, all college students. They seemed very well-versed in art history and able to analyze, discuss and teach art. I hardly remembered my freshman Art Appreciation class.

That initial worry was unnecessary. The other student guides weren't nearly as intimi-



Junior Susan Augenbraun has recently taken a job as a volunteer guide at The Brooklyn Museum of Art.

dating as I had thought, and the other museum employees were friendly and intriguing. One week, we went on a tour given by a former student guide named Fay Serafica, who now works in a different department. Dressed in a laid-back punk-rock style, Fay led us through an exhibition of graffiti. “Now, these paintings,” she said, pointing out a colorful splash of stylized letters. “They aren’t technically graffiti, because they’re on canvas instead of on a wall. But this is the kind of thing the boys in my neighborhood used to go out and do. They would always make me carry the paint. They’d say, ‘You have to. We need to be able to run, but you’re a girl; the cops won’t be coming after you!’”

The museum has received some criticism lately for such experimental exhibits and for curatorial changes, but the people who work there seem unfettered. Eleanor distributed copies of critical articles to the student guides, saying she wanted us to be aware of the negative press but not to worry about it. Our job is to engage visitors so that they leave the museum feeling satisfied with their visit and confident in their ability to interpret and enjoy art.

To meet this goal, we use strategies based in objects-the art on display-and in questions. Rather than lecture museumgoers, we try to get them thinking and seeing the art for themselves. The first technique we learned was Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). To demonstrate this technique, Eleanor led us to an exhibit of watercolors by contemporary artist Walton Ford. Stopping in front of a painting titled, “The Sensorium,” depicting monkeys at a table tearing into food and drink left behind by humans, Eleanor began: “What is going on here?”

The technique uses only three questions: “What is going on here?,” “What do you see that makes you say that?,” and “What else can you find?” Simple questions, but we quickly found that they can reveal some very interesting answers. We discovered by using only those three questions that “The Sensorium” used the monkey dinner party

as a metaphor for colonialism. Such a method, though, gradually becomes tiring and repetitive to both the guide and the tour group. Fortunately, this was not the only strategy we learned. Others were much more sophisticated and informative. But as Eleanor has told us repeatedly, “VTS will save your life” if the tour is not going

As museum tour guides, we try to get museumgoers to think about the art themselves rather than lecture them.

well. The emphasis on questioning rather than listing facts and on getting people to talk rather than getting them to listen is what distinguishes our tours from the conventional guided museum walkthrough. Still, we have to know what we’re talking about, so we do research, plan and write our tours, as well as spend time in the galleries, looking closely at the art.

Now, we’re still in the developmental stages. I’m currently planning my tour in the outdated Asian galleries. The unfriendly lighting and displays from the seventies keep people away, which is a shame because the art is beautiful. Hopefully, with my tour, I can coax people back to the second floor to see Hindu goddesses, Chinese calligraphy and a terrifying Japanese warrior head. Eleanor suggested that I give a tour at the February First Saturday. On the first Saturday of each month, the museum stays open late and throws a party, with movie screenings, music, dancing, curator talks and gallery tours. It’s always much more crowded than usual, and giving a talk on a First Saturday is a big deal. This February’s theme will be Lunar New Year.

“I don’t know,” I said. “I might not be ready.” Eleanor smiled. “Oh, you will be.”

Chinese: More Than Yesterday’s Lunch



During the three hour event, a panel of eight participants and a moderator addressed the Chinese stereotypes that plague many Chinese Americans today.

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Ann Huang of CBS “Survivor All Stars”; Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Director of Race & Ethnicity in America at Brown University; David Ren, producer of Shanghai Kiss; Beau Sia, a Def Jam Poet; Jacky Wong, a Chinese American journalist and George Zeng, aspiring doctor turned investment banker.

The three-hour event began with the participants speaking about their experiences growing up as Chinese Americans, but livened up when the panel was opened to audience questions.

Someone called out, “Will a Chinese accent ever be sexy?” The question caught the panelists off-guard, as they expected a more serious question, but Huang was one of the first to recover and was quick to respond. “Chinese men will soon become sexy, masculine Lotharios,” she said. Shortly thereafter, she was called upon her choice to marry a man of Jewish descent rather than a man of Chinese descent. Here, the debate about interracial marriage surfaced. At the end of the day, however, the participants concluded that love is love and we should all be allowed to marry whomever we want.

When the conversation turned to the Chinese chic, Chien was quick to answer. “I say, whatever we’ve got, use it. I can’t deny that I’m a woman, Chinese and tall. I feel like if I don’t use it for me, someone will use it against me,” she said.

Senior Michael Zhang, however, said Chinese fashion styles didn’t exist, simply because “Chinese Americans

quickly adhere to Caucasian styles, such as ‘surfer looks’ or the ‘metrosexual.’”

As the hours flew by, the cavernous, soon-to-be demolished room of the future home of the MoCA overflowed with talk of issues no one dared to discuss in the outside world. The blatant honesty of the panelists and the open-mindedness of the audience created an atmosphere that was instrumental to the depth of the overall discussion.

“What does Chinese mean? To most people, it’s what I had

“I can’t deny that I’m a woman, Chinese and tall. I feel like if I don’t use it for me, someone will use it against me.” —Karin Chien, producer of “The Motel”

for lunch yesterday,” said Wong. But beyond General Tso’s chicken and pork-fried rice, the stereotypes unfold and often have more than one grain of truth. At the end of the day, sophomore Albert Chang answers the question put forth by the panel perfectly. He said, “Why would I be less Asian, when there is nothing to be ashamed of? Asian food is great, language is diverse and I wouldn’t think about being anything else.”

Stuyvesant Theater Calendar

December 6 and 7
Studio Musical Auditions

December 8
Studio Musical Callbacks

December 15 and 16
Winter Drama, Blood Wedding

Flat Acting Grounds “Vertical Hour”



In “The Vertical Hour,” Bill Nighy (second from right) shines, but Julianne Moore (center) disappoints in her theatrical debut.

By WYNDAM MAKOWSKY

The Vertical Hour, a brilliantly written play that premiered at the Music Box Theatre on November 30, seemingly has it all: an Oscar-winning director, a seasoned and widely-respected playwright, a spot on Broadway and a cast headlined by one of the best actresses in the world. However, poor acting and slightly dated subject matter unfortunately keep the show from becoming Broadway’s next hit drama.

Directed by Sam Mendes, who won the Best Director Academy Award for the film American Beauty, the play begins in New Haven, Connecticut where we are introduced to Nadia Blye (Julianne Moore), a professor at Yale who previously worked as a combat reporter. She is a stern feminist who despises most Yale students for their radically liberal views and lack of perspective on

global affairs. Desperate to get away, she journeys to England with her boyfriend, Phillip (Andrew Scott). There, she is to meet Phillip’s father, Oliver (Bill Nighy), a doctor who has become estranged from Phillip and his mother.

Oliver lives alone in a town on the Welsh border. Though his sometimes slurred speech and frequent hand movements lead the audience at first to debate his sanity, he is very much in tune with world events, particularly the war in Iraq. Oliver has protested the war since its beginning whereas Nadia, by contrast, has spent time in Iraq and has advised Bush in the past on how to deal with the aftermath of the invasion. Her more conservative view on the conflict leads to arguments with Oliver throughout the show, and Phillip, who seeks his father’s approval of Nadia, is convinced that the bickering between his girlfriend and father will tear

him and Nadia apart. For a show debuting in 2006, the choice of plot seems odd: after the midterm elections and three years in Iraq, the debate over whether or not the invasion was necessary has died down.

But the plot construed by playwright David Hare, author of The Secret Rapture and The Blue Room, is deeper than the superficial conflicts. Within the inner toils of each character and the more magnified power struggles between Oliver, Nadia and Phillip, lies the true plot of the play. Every scene begins with a main character standing in front of the curtain, reflecting on an aspect of his or her life, and each is different: Oliver is a womanizer turned loner. He has a dark past, and wants nothing more than his son to love him. Phillip has tried his whole life to be the opposite of his father, but has struggled deeply and has become unstable as a result. Nadia, the most dynamic character, tries to rationalize the life she is currently living, which is one of protection because of her position at Yale and her relationship with Phillip. Yet, she feels drawn to the battlefields despite her life as an academic and, through Hare’s dialogue, her inner battle becomes evident throughout the play.

Unfortunately, Moore is unable to carry Nadia to the character’s necessary emotional and intellectual level. The role demands that she be a great intellectual, yet during Nadia’s talks with Oliver, Moore sounded as if she had no clue as to what her character was talking about. This is Moore’s first stage production and it shows, though she has had a brilliant career in film, most notably in the adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s The Hours. She delivered her lines monotonously

and her emotions, when she showed any, fluctuated so rapidly that they came off as entirely unbelievable. In one scene, a student, Terri (Rutina Wesley), confides to Nadia that her boyfriend of nearly four years is leaving her, to which Moore reacts with a bored and quick “I’m sorry.”

Scott, in the role of Phillip, was better, though not flawless. He is Irish, but played an Englishman, and consequently the tone of his accent fluctuated from a high pitch to a low baritone at the beginning of every sentence. Furthermore, his acting was hesitant: he seemed to only

There isn’t enough praise available to heap upon Bill Nighy—he single handedly makes The Vertical Hour worth seeing.

move when Moore or Nighy moved. Still, Scott was able to develop Phillip into the emotionally unstable character that he was designed to be—his outbursts at Oliver and Nadia are chilling and make the audience sympathize with a son who has grown up without a father figure.

In the play, Moore interacts with two students, Terri and Dennis (Dan Bittner). Both actors are young and make their Broadway debuts, and their inexperience is noticeable. Wesley, in the part of Terri, had a quiver in her voice and an overly-deliberant speaking manner. The char-

acter of Dennis, an upper class student with a large trust fund, is written to be pompous and confused at the same time, but, like Moore, Bittner had trouble expressing emotion, and his lines sounded as if they were read off of a page.

The lone bright spot in the show was Nighy, whose performance as Oliver carries the show from a big-budgeted bust to nearly spectacular—there isn’t enough praise to heap upon him, as he single handedly makes the show worth watching. Nighy is known to the younger generation as Captain Davy Jones in Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest, and he certainly took a page out of co-star Johnny Depp’s playbook, as he uses swaying body movements and frequent hand gestures to make himself endearing to the audience. His humor is drop-dead funny, and while his character had no more jokes than any other, his use of pauses and intonation increased the hilarity of his lines exponentially. At the same time, however, Nighy manages to portray Oliver as a deeply troubled man an automobile accident in which he killed two people. Unlike Moore, he transitions from a light-hearted intellectual to a darker figure perfectly, leaving the audience hanging on every word. Nighy carries the rest of the cast throughout the play, and his effort was recognized by the audience when, at the end, he received the most applause of everyone.

As long as Nighy sticks with the show, The Vertical Hour will be enjoyable, but the production may never reach its full potential while Moore and the supporting cast are weak. After this experiment in stage acting, Moore should stick to the big screen.

History Repeats Itself

By ZACK FEINN

Adaptations rarely capture the essence of the source material. This is especially true for plays which follow certain guidelines, such as retaining a single setting throughout the show, in order to achieve a level of intimacy with the audience. Though film can create a similar atmosphere, it requires a masterful hand. Luckily, “The History Boys,” which came out on November 21, brings to the screen the original cast, as well as the infinitely talented playwright, Alan Bennett.

A direct export of the staged version, “The History Boys” utilizes the same cast and director from the Broadway show, which closed just two months ago. The film adaptation opens the story to a much wider audience, because Bennett authored the screenplay, guaranteeing that the plot and message remain unchanged.

Set in a dreary public school in northern England in 1983, the film follows eight boys aspiring to attend the two greatest universities in London: Oxford and Cambridge. The headmaster, desperately wanting to join the ranks of schools that consistently churn out star students, hires a young specialist to coach the boys. The expert, Irwin (Stephen Campbell Moore), takes over the task of teaching history from the boys’ eccentric, overweight General Studies teacher, Hector (Richard Griffiths).

Irwin’s cynical teaching methods conflict directly with Hector’s cheerful perspective on learning, causing questions about education and history to arise. Irwin believes in learning

to serve a purpose and teaches the boys to take an unexpected, dissenting view on their admissions essays. For example, he advises one student to mention in his essay that “Stalin was a sweetie and Wilfred Own was a wuss,” because he believes that it is the only way the admissions boards will pay attention to the boys’ college applications.

At one point, Irwin says, “History nowadays is not a mat-

“The film follows eight boys trying to make it to Oxford and Cambridge, two of England’s most prestigious universities.”

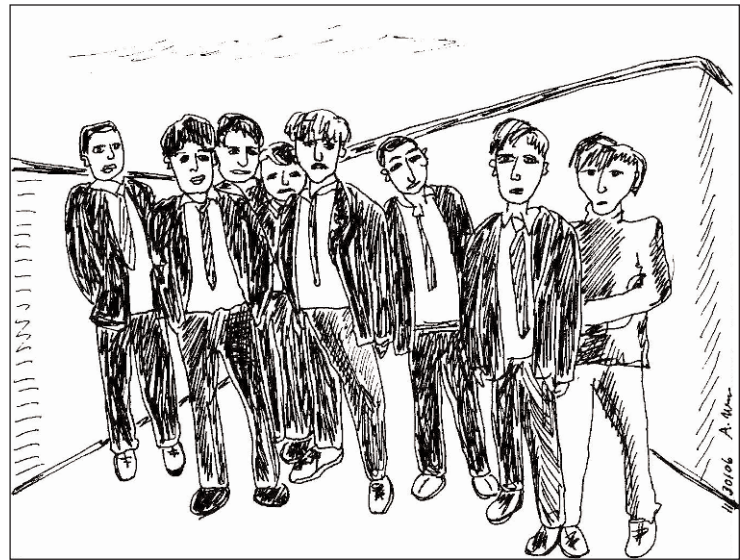
ter of conviction. It’s a performance. It’s entertainment.” Though he views it as show business, he tries to distance himself from it as far as possible. In a particularly heated discussion between Irwin, Hector and the students, Irwin justifies one boy’s discussion of Hitler’s merits by saying, “But this is history. Distance yourselves. Our perspective on the past alters. Looking back, immediately in front of us is dead ground. We don’t see it, and because we don’t see it this means that there is no period so remote as the recent past. And one of the historian’s jobs is to anticipate what our perspective of that period will be [...] even on the Holocaust.”

Moore exemplifies this cold,

calculative outlook on history and, by extension life, flawlessly. His shrewd manner and succinct delivery complement Bennet’s fast-paced language, drawing the audience well in to his affairs and personality.

Hector, on the other hand, believes in learning to better oneself. A verbose optimist, Hector’s love of gerunds, compound nouns and the subjunctive are often mentioned by the other characters. Though his character is sexually awkward and a closeted homosexual, Griffiths chooses to play him not as a sexual predator, but a lonely bibliophile who gropes the boys harmlessly and almost pathetically. The boys accept these ineffectual advances as good-natured, and the audience grows to like Hector’s shambling nature. He teaches the boys a love of words and language, flaunting Bennet’s frequent quotations of film, literature and music, as well the playwright’s witty dialogue. With such sympathetic characteristics, and Griffiths lovable portrayal, it is hard not to hang on to every word he says.

Griffiths and Moore are the obvious highlights in terms of performances, but Frances de la Tour’s portrayal of Dorothy Lintott, the third history teacher and only significant female character, is just as admirable. Wise beyond her years, and probably younger than her sagging features and sour demeanor suggest, Lintott is the mediator in the conflicts between Hector and Irwin, but only once, in an uncharacteristic outburst, does she show her true opinion of history. “History,” she declares, “is a commentary on the various



and continuing incapacities of men. What is history? History is women following behind with the bucket.”

The boys also do a fantastic job. They come off, for the most part, earnest and eager. Thanks to the carry over between the play and film, with the original theater cast being largely intact, there is a great sense of camaraderie between the actors.

However, only a handful of boys stand out in the largely nondescript group of faces. One is the seductive and manipulative Dakin (Dominic Cooper). By far the most charismatic of the eight, he is also the object of his homosexual, Jewish friend’s affection. Dakin’s admirer, Posner (Samuel Barnett), is easily the most emotionally accessible of the boys, and his mouse-like countenance is similar to that of Irwin. He, unlike the other boys, shows sensitivity, especially when discussing literature. One memorable scene has him asking Hector how an author could express the exact emotions he himself was feeling as a Jewish homosexual teenag-

er. Even with the odds stacked against him, though, he is able to be humorous about his situation and, in this way, wins the audience’s sympathy.

The other characters are not so fleshed out. Bennet chose to rid the film of some of its characterizations, but this has no negative effect on the film. The characters are still believable, though the audience spends less time examining them.

Visually, the production is minimalist, with one costume for most characters—mostly school uniforms and suits—and simple cinematography. There is a small variety in location, but they are far outshone by the rapid one-liners, clever dialogue, and wonderful performances, and they do not detract from the audience’s experience. Altogether, it feels and runs like a filmed version of the play.

Though it is unlikely to incite any major changes in the world, the retrospective commentary on history certainly entertains, and, thankfully, is open to one’s own interpretation.

Musical Inspirations And the Athlete



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heard the song for the first time while watching an ultimate frisbee video. “The lyrics are all about beating an opponent and it’s a fast paced song. It pumps me up and reminds me of all the cool things I saw in the video. I tell myself that I’m going to try as hard as I can when I play,” said Mishchenko.

Techno music is what vitalizes Kate Shtchapina, a junior on the girls’ swim team. “I like to be pumped for a meet, so my muscles are working faster and I’m really psyched out. I don’t usually get a chance to listen to music, but I jump around and sing,” said Shtchapina. One of her favorite songs is “Dancing In The Dark” by DJ Zitkus. “It has a great beat, I love the voice. It’s tied to a lot of good memories of fun and carefree times in the summer, which puts things in perspective and makes me want to do my best.”

Although music can range all throughout the spectrum of peaceful to scintillating, some athletes take advantage of both effects. Krystal Lau, a sophomore on the girls’ ultimate frisbee team, experiences both sides of the spectrum. “If the music is really loud and the singer is screaming, it

makes you want to scream sometimes. Since you can’t really scream during the games, then you use that energy in your playing. It helps you become more aggressive,” said Lau. At the same time, she acknowledged that slow, quiet music also helps to calm an athlete down. “That’s imperative when you’re in a game because even though you need aggression, when you actually have the disc, you can’t be freaking out. You should have a clear mind, know what you’re doing and what your next move will be.”

The music athletes listen to varies depending on their mood. Someone might blare fast-paced music for motivation in triumphing over the competition. In contrast, another might settle down by listening to soft and calm music.

Some teams listen to songs together, instead of athletes listening to their individual music. The girls’ varsity volleyball team, the Vixens, sing random songs together before a game. Senior Gina Jang said, “We don’t really have a specific song we sing, but we sing a lot.” They sing whichever songs that are stuck in someone’s head, such as “London Bridge” by Fergie or their own version of “Smack That” by Akon.

Last spring, the girls’ fencing team listened to a boombox on the bus to their playoff games. The songs they sang depended on who was controlling the boombox. According to Vivian Troung, a junior and captain of the girls’ fencing team, last year they sang “We are the Champions” and “We Will Rock You” by Queen, songs that were quite fitting on their run to the championship last season.

Although music can be beneficial for some teams, others feel that it is detrimental. Karol Zieba, a senior on the boys’ cross country and track team, finds music distracting. He said, “You need to focus on what you’re doing and not on what is coming into your head.” Girls’ varsity volleyball coach Philip Fisher has the same mentality about music. He does not let his team play songs before games against tough opponents because, according to him, he wants them to focus on volleyball.

With different sports come different athletes as well as different types of preferences to music. Whether it is the lyrics, the tempo, or the sounds itself, music can affect an athlete on different levels. It may benefit an athlete, distract them, or may not affect the athlete at all. Nonetheless, music has become another dimension to the world of sports.

Boys’ Bowling

First and Last Loss Ends Pinheads’ Strong Season

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base for the future. We bonded as a team and despite all the competition, it’s still bowling, and bowling is always fun,” said Zisiadis.

As the season concluded, one rookie in particular stood out this season: freshman Leo Ernst. He had bowled with the A team since the second game

“We didn’t bowl badly, but we certainly didn’t bowl up to our full potential.”

—George Zisiadis, senior and co-captain

of the season and averaged just over 156 points a game in the regular season and a little below 156 during the playoffs.

However, this season isn’t completely over. In a time-honored tradition, the team must still go to Krispy Kreme for doughnuts and try to break the team record for doughnuts eaten (currently at 12).

Girls’ Basketball

Phoenix Looking To Reborn After 0-16 Season

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Although the Phoenix came close to their only win all season against Walton High School on Wednesday, January 11 in a 37-24 loss, the season was marked

“Everyday, the girls improve, and that’s definitely a plus.”
—Michelle Nicholls, coach

more by games such as their 68-4 blowout loss to Manhattan Center/Science & Math High School on Wednesday, January 18. To make matters worse, senior Nicole Malyarovich hurt her knee in practice and was lost for the season with a torn Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL).

However, it appears that the team has a new start this season. Last year’s coach, Philip Fisher, has moved on to coach the boys’ varsity basketball team. Replacing him is Nicholls, the girls’ varsity volleyball coach from Murry Bergtraum High School. Nicholls said, “We’ve been practicing since October 31. All of the girls on the team love the game and want to compete. They are all determined to atone for last season. Everyday, the girls improve, and that’s definitely a plus.”

In addition, this year the Phoenix have been placed in a new division and given an easier schedule. Last year, the team competed in the same league as the reigning City Champion Lady Blazers of Murry Bergtraum, a team that featured senior Epiphany Prince, who set a national prep record last year for points scored in a game with 113. However, a reapportionment of divisions was made by the PSAL this year in order to

accommodate the new teams in the city and foster a competitive balance within all the divisions. This placed Stuyvesant in the Manhattan A2 division, ensuring that the Phoenix will play against opponents of generally equal skill this season.

Leading the way for the upcoming season are seniors and co-captains Lisha Li, Jennifer Bido and Malyarovich. However, with the exception of the captains, the entire team is comprised of underclassmen, which is still an indication that the Phoenix will have a long way to go in order to reach the level of success seen only two years ago.

The Phoenix took their first step towards reaching that level by winning the first two games of the season, their season opener on Tuesday, November 28 versus the Vipers of High School Health Profession/Human Services by a score of 47-25, and their second game against Hunter College High School on Friday, December 1 by a score of 34-27.

Although the game against

With the exception of the captains, the entire team is comprised of underclassmen.

Human Services remained close throughout the first three quarters with the score 22-22, the Phoenix held the Vipers to only three points while scoring 25 of their points in the fourth quarter. Li and sophomore Tina Khiani led the team by scoring with 11 points each, with Li also dishing five assists and Khiani pulling down six rebounds. It was the Phoenix’s first PSAL win since the 2004-2005 season, and if the game was any indication, it will be the first of many for the team this year.

Rebels Crushed Early, Start Season 0-2

By ALEX BELAKOVSKIY and DAVID DEGUZMAN

Their preseason can be characterized as more of the usual. The team dealt with a new group of rookies, a new coach, an assistant coach and even new uniforms. The Stuyvesant Runnin’ Rebels, the boys’ varsity basketball team, was given a fresh start by winning their three preseason scrimmages. Following a 7-7 season last year, the team looked improved and confident.

But after losing their first league game against A.P. Randolph High School on Wednesday, November 29, Coach Philip Fisher said, “It’s time to go back to the drawing board.”

The 58-52 loss on Wednesday

was characterized as a fast-paced game set up by the Cougars of A.P. Randolph. Both teams also gave up many turnovers throughout the game. Although the Rebels’ were able to adjust to the quick tempo, the team gave up a 10-point lead in the third quarter. The game was decided by crucial free throws and missed three-point shots. “They had it over us in terms of speed, athletic ability, jumping ability and size. [But] that never matters to us. We have to play our style of basketball, which we did for only twenty minutes.”

In order to improve, Fisher stated that the team has to take care of the ball better, and get stronger around the basketball. “If we handle the stress situations that come up in a game a little bit

smarter, we’ll be fine.”

Two days, however, was not enough for the Rebels’ to bounce back and win their next game. The Rebels’ are currently 0-3 following losses at home to A.P. Randolph and on the road against the Titans of Bayard Rustin Education Complex High School on Friday, December 1. They then lost their second road game on Monday, December 4 against the undefeated Eagles of High School of Environmental Studies.

The senior players, however, were optimistic that the Rebels can turn things around even though they have gotten themselves into a three-game losing streak. Senior Eric Knutsen, said, “We definitely have a shot at still having a great season. We just

need to play as a team and we can still make some noise.”

It is apparent that the team was not as prepared as they thought they would be for the competition from their division. They began this season with three pre-season scrimmages against teams with low levels of playing ability, such as Brooklyn Technical High School and LaGuardia High School, both finished last season with losing records.

“None of our scrimmages had enough intensity to simulate what we were going to see today,” said Fisher, who is coaching boys’ basketball for the first time in 16 years. Among other new things is a new assistant coach, Trevor Koob, who is a Stuyvesant alumnus (’02). The

team has also added several players from last year’s 10-2 junior varsity team, including junior and starter Suraj Cheema, and junior Masud Karim.

Senior David Becker said, “We have better chemistry between players this year.”

Experience may be more valued than chemistry, however. “We need to come together as a team and play to everyone’s strengths. If we do that, then there isn’t a team that’s unbeatable,” said senior and captain Tammer Farid.

The team has 15 games left in the season to improve themselves. The Rebels’ have not had a winning record since at least 2004. For now at least, it is going to stay that way.

Tutorial on Wrestling

By JAMES KIM

When most people think of wrestling, one of two images come to mind. The most common image is that of steroid-laden hulks in costume wielding metal chairs in the wrestling ring, while the less obvious image is one of enormous Olympic wrestlers in singlets representing their countries in earnest. However, high school wrestling is far removed from both varieties: the former being more of an acting job than anything else, while the latter is a sophisticated form of wrestling called Greco-Roman.

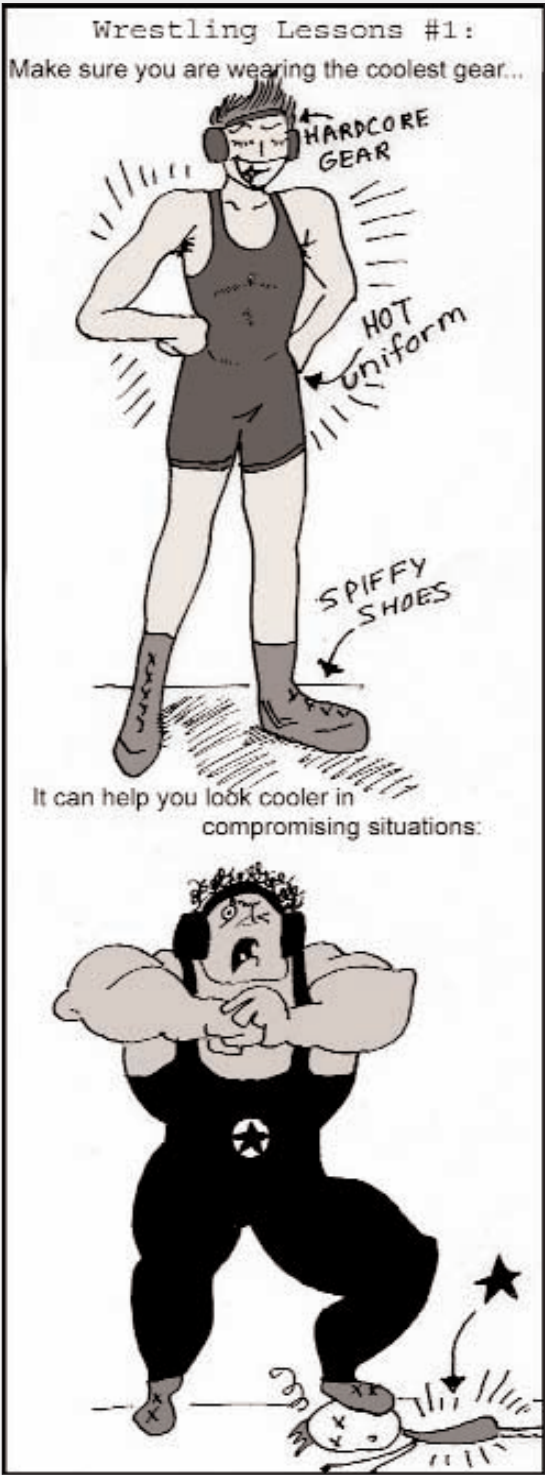
High school wrestling often takes the form of scholastic wrestling, a form common in middle school and high school competition (hence its name), created to prevent the chance of injury while still maintaining the competitive nature of the sport.

The sport is characterized by individual matches consisting of three two-minute periods on a circular wrestling area. A wrestler can win a match by either a pin, in which his opponent’s shoulder blades are forced to the ground for three seconds, a technical fall, in which the wrestler has amassed 15 or more individual points than his or her opponent through the course of the match, or forfeit and/or disqualification.

The different types of techniques for which points are rewarded are the take-down, in which the wrestler gets behind his opponent and knocks him to the ground, the near-fall, in which the wrestler holds his opponent in a near-pin for 2-4 seconds, or an escape, in which the wrestler is able to get out of a near-take down. It’s common for wrestlers to win matches by the technical fall, amassing a large number of near-falls during the duration of the match.

In PSAL wrestling, scoring works differently. A pin is counted as six team points for the wrestler’s respective team, a technical fall is counted as five to six points, and if time runs out and the wrestler is leading his opponent in individual points, his team is awarded three points.

The order of the competition is in ascending order of the fourteen different weight classes, which range from the 96-pound weight class to the 215 pound-pound weight class. The highest weight class, of 275 pounds, is optional, meaning that schools are not penalized for not having a representative in that class. Usually, the best wrestler in each weight class is chosen by the team for each match, and victory or defeat is decided by the team that has the most team points by the end of the competition.



Boys’ Wrestling

Wrestling Team Pins Hopes On Flanagan

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year, however, he accepted the position of head coach of girls’ varsity basketball team at Millennium High School, an opportunity he had “been waiting for,” he said.

Although the team was without a coach for the first two and a half weeks of the pre-season, Stair and Held still held practices on their own. This was difficult to organize, though, because without a coach, they could not secure a gym in which to practice. Stair said it got to the point that “I got yelled at by [Assistant Principal Health and Physical Education Martha] Singer for wrestling on the grass in the park,” he said.

Nevertheless, they held several practices on Mondays and Wednesday at the New York Athletic Club, a club where numerous All-Americans and Olympic athletes, in addition to Stair, practice regularly. Held said, “The practices were mainly conditioning. You don’t really need a coach for that.” These practices had a solid turnout considering the lack of coach and the inexperience of the majority of the students on the team.

The captains believe that the addition of Flanagan, a physical education teacher from Brooklyn and the boys’ soccer coach for Wingate Educational Campus High School, will be helpful for the young team. According to Held, Burrows had little knowledge of wrestling, whereas Flanagan brings more “experience and confidence” to the team.

Stair said that the coaching change “is definitely positive, even though it is never good to start off a month late.”

Despite the team’s inexperience, Flanagan has high hopes for the season. “I think the returners look good, Chris Stair and Thomas Held looked good, and [junior] Brian Lee, who was on the team last year,” he said.

After winning only one match last year in a forfeit by

“We’re not going to be first in the city, but now that we finally have real coaches, I have no idea what is going to happen.”
—Chris Stair, captain and junior

Canarsie High School, the team has nowhere to go but up. “We’re not going to be first in the city, but now that we finally have real coaches, I have no idea what is going to happen. This is the first time we have had real coaches since I started wrestling,” Stair said.

While the team almost certainly won’t leap into title contention this year, the fresh new beginning brought to the team by a new coach may help them earn their first non-forfeit win since the 2003 season.

Boys’ Fencing

Untouchables Get Touched By Hunter

By DAVID DEGUZMAN

After nine straight wins, including two playoff victories, the Stuyvesant

up with Hunter, the Untouchables finished the regular season by beating Hunter with a final bout victory. Besides their rivalry with the Hunter Hawks, Stuyvesant was able to dominate the rest of the season, including the postseason, in their first year as a separate boys’ team.

The Untouchables were able to win the majority of matches in both groups B and C. However, the Hawks swept the bouts in Group A, where the amount of points at stake mattered more than in the other two groups. Junior Angus Armstrong and senior and captain Brian Law were unable to stop the top two fencers from Hunter, seniors Michael Elfassy and Gianni Dicioccio. Elfassy beat both Law and Armstrong, 5-3, in both matches. Dicioccio dominated his two matches as well, defeating Law with a score of five touches to two, and then beat Armstrong, 5-1. Overall, Hunter beat Stuyvesant 5.25-3.75.

Untouchables, the boys’ fencing team, lost to Hunter High School in the championship match on Wednesday, November 15 at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx.

It was the final in a trilogy of meetings this season. After losing their first match-

A Team To Be Proud Of

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on the balls of our feet, ready to condemn if the Rebels should start off haphazardly.

But this year’s team is one to be proud of, a team that disappointed the crowd’s desire to criticize and reprimand. No longer was the game a one-man show, no longer were missed lay-ups and turnovers the norm. Instead, Stuyvesant came out full-throttle against their perennial rival, Brooklyn Technical High School.

The three core senior members of the team looked utterly brilliant, as Tammer Farid passed upcourt to Menley Khuu, who, driving, dished it inside to Eric Knutsen for the uncontested two. Knutsen’s golden hair bounced freely as he ran every which way, jumping and twirling along with Khuu, whose smooth touch rolled the ball wherever he willed it. Farid was, as expected, the solid mainstay of the team, and his calm countenance at the center of the court was an intimidating presence. You could tell that he wanted the ball, that

he knew that you knew that he could do whatever he wanted with the ball, and he kept the trio working effortlessly in tandem, scoring almost at will.

We all wished we were out there playing, and we were on the balls of our feet, ready to dcondemn if the Rebels should start off haphazardly.

The rest of the team was just as impressive. Junior Suraj Cheema made pinpoint passes and quick crossovers to dismantle Tech’s ineffective full-court press, and junior Masud Karim was just as cool and controlled as Farid, calling out directions and releasing his deadly shot for three points. One could only admire the tireless hustling of junior Jake

Lamountain, who dove headfirst after a loose ball, or the noble stubbornness of junior Iqbal Hussain, who refused to yield on his drive to the basket. Senior David Becker was sharp at point guard, scoring and playing good defense, while the big men, seniors Alex Leonard and Izaak Izrailov, fought ferociously for control of the boards.

And the crowd, maybe against their inner wishes, began to get into the game, because the sport they were witnessing was undoubtedly quick and exciting. As one, the spectators began to chant names, do the wave, and groan and cheer at all the appropriate moments. When the game ended and Coach Philip Fisher turned to the crowd, saying, “Alright, we’re gettin’ there,” the final buzzer dismissed any lingering doubts that one might have about the new crew of the Runnin’ Rebels. Even the most reluctant, grudging fan could recognize that this team belonged on the court, and that this team, at last, was destined for great things.

S P O R T S

Musical Inspirations and the Athlete

By MELISSA LOK

After pressing play, an athlete is finally comfortable when their favorite song begins on their MP3 player. As the guitar and bass of the song play on, the perfect harmony soothes an athlete's jitters and the clashing of drums exhilarates them. The blood rushes through the body, and the athlete is ready and anxious to face the archrival.

Physical skill and mentality are always important to the student athlete. Additionally, a popular way athletes have been able to get focused is to use music to pump themselves up. The benefits of listening to music vary from energizing the athletes up to calming down them down.

Scott Ritter, a junior on the boys' bowling team and varsity baseball team, said, "Music gets my mind and my body moving. A good pump-up song is a good dance song, with a lively beat, that just hits you and makes you want to go crazy." Although many athletes like popular hits such as Justin Timberlake's "Sexyback," Ritter chooses unique and obscure songs. "Gravedigger" by The Dave Matthews Band is one of his favorites to listen to. "It is a very soothing song," Ritter said. "I like to concentrate on the lyrics and it helps me concentrate internally so that I can worry about both the mental and physical aspects of the game. It is sort of a slow song—it isn't a fast beat. That helps me calm down, and it is a song that I'm familiar with so it brings me back into a familiar state."

"Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes is a song Natasha Mischenko, a junior on the girls' ultimate frisbee team, listens to before games. She

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Girls' Basketball

Phoenix Looking To Be Reborn After 0-16 Season

By JAMES KIM and JOHN NWAGHANATA



Dionicio Herrera / The Spectator

Senior Lisha Li dribbles past a Hunter defender en route to a 34-27 victory on Friday, December 1.

The phoenix is a legendary bird known in mythology for its amazing regenerative powers. Towards the end of its life, it will burn until only a pile of ashes is left, from which a new phoenix arises. After a dismal 0-16 season last year, the Stuyvesant Phoenix, the girls' varsity basketball team, will be looking to be born again this season with a new season marked by the introduction of a new head coach, Michelle Nicholls.

Last season, the Phoenix entered a rebuilding stage after the core of the team for the past four seasons, a tandem comprised of Ula Kudelski, the leading scorer in Stuyvesant history with more than 2000 points, and Lindsey Newman, who graduated. However, the Phoenix were unable to show that they could bounce back on their own, losing all 16 of their games by an average of 42 points.

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Boys' Wrestling

Wrestling Team Pins Hopes On Flanagan

By AARON GHITELMAN

Some would expect the Stuyvesant boys' wrestling team to have dismal hopes for their upcoming season. Not only are they coming off a season where they went 1-11 and finished second to last in the entire city, to make matters worse, more than half of the wrestlers on their roster graduated last year. On top of all that, the team was unable to hold official practices until Wednesday, November 20, due to the fact that their coach, Christopher Burrows, had quit and a replacement could not be

found. However, despite all of these problems, co-captains junior Chris Stair and senior Thomas Held are optimistic for what the upcoming season holds with their newly instituted coach, Steven Flanagan.

Burrows, the current coach of the Stuyvesant junior varsity boys' football team, said he accepted the position as coach of Stuyvesant's wrestling program in 2004 "as a favor to one of the old football players. They needed a coach, and I had wrestled growing up." This

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Boys' Bowling

First and Last Loss Ends Pinheads' Strong Season

By JEREMIAH HAY

The Stuyvesant boys' bowling team, the Pinheads, had their season ended by a 2-0 loss to second-seeded Staten Island Technical High School in the second and final round of the playoffs on Thursday, November 16. The Pinheads, who had been ranked 18th in the playoffs, had already upset 15th-seeded Fort Hamilton by a score of 2-1 on Monday, November 13.

Although the A team bowled above their average with a score of 690, they still

lost by 92 points. The B team scored a combined 507 and lost by 263 pins. "They bowled about they're average and we didn't bowl badly, but we certainly didn't bowl up to our full potential," said senior and co-captain George Zisiadis.

Junior Dennis Oh said, "Out of all respect, they were better bowlers than us."

This season however, was not a disappointment to the team. "Our veterans passed all their knowledge to the younger players and set up a strong

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Girls' Junior Varsity Volleyball

Roonies Run The Table

By CINDY LATCHMAN

The girls' junior varsity volleyball team, the Stuyvesant Roonies, went undefeated this season, going 6-0 in all of their games under coach Anetta Luczak.

Luczak has led the Roonies to a 23-1 record over the past four years. Four of the last six years, the team has gone undefeated. "They're so eager to learn," Luczak said of her players. "They just want to be there." Unfortunately, she said, "There's no playoffs. That's the sad thing. We just play our six games and that's it."

Out there, she continued, "fun is when great things are happening on the court."

Luczak's strategy this season was simply to "teach [the team] the fundamentals, that's it. That's what JV is all about. The hope is always to get girls who are willing to learn," she said. "They get motivated and tend to do better. The goal for the JV team is always to feed them to varsity [and] get them excited to play, not just here, but outside of school as well," she said.

Those goals are within reach after the Roonies's undefeated year, and Luczak's admiration of her team shines through when she talks about their season. "They really worked hard," she said. "It's such a joy to work with them."

A Team To Be Proud Of



Ezra Glenn / The Spectator

By MARK CHIUSANO

Basketball, more so than any other sport, is a city-bred game. Half the children in New York City grow up playing basketball. The city has more basketball courts

than baseball diamonds, football fields and tennis courts put together, and they're filled from dawn to dusk with kids waiting for their chance to get in, play and prove that they've got the stuff to go all the way to the NBA.

So it's not surprising that these players want to get started on their road to Madison Square Garden by playing on their high school team. As I sat in the bleachers, crowded with students anticipating the first home scrimmage of the Runnin' Rebels, Stuyvesant's boys' varsity basketball team, maybe it was my imagination, but I could feel the tension emanating from the fans who knew in their

hearts that it should be them out there on the court instead.

It was a feeling emitted by those rejected from try-outs-the afterschool ballers, and the casual athletes who only fooled around with hoops on the weekends-sitting restlessly in the stands instead of standing on the court. Even the girl sitting next to me was reminiscing whimsically about her days playing ball. The large crowd seemed to be leaning forward unnaturally, as if drawn by some invisible magnet to the glistening court where the team was warming up. We all wished we were out there playing, and we were

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