



# The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"

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## Newsbeat

- The 37th International Annual Food Festival was held on Thursday, May 3. Headed by the World Language Department, the festival was intended to educate students about the food and culture of people all around the world. All proceeds received will be used to fund the World Language Department.
- The Stuyvesant Locks of Love club held a hair drive on Monday, April 30, to support children battling long-term illnesses. All students were invited to donate hair.
- Stuyvesant hosted its own Model United Nations Conference (StuyMUNC) on Saturday, April 21, and Sunday, April 22. Over 300 students from the tri-state area participated in the conference.
- A memorial plaque ceremony was dedicated to former chemistry teachers Dalia Bulgaris and Robert Rodney after school in the ninth floor foyer on Monday, May 5.
- Juniors Ava Myint, Mohan Hasan, and Christine Park participated in New York History Day Competition and won second place in the Group Competition for their project on New York City draft riots. The group was mentored by Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri and will compete in the national competition in June.
- At the Seventh Japan Essay Competition hosted by Stony Brook University, Emma Alexandra Berniczyk won an honorable mention award for her piece titled "Thank You."

By ANNE CHEN,  
EUGENIA SANCHEZ  
and THOMAS ZADROZNY

In an attempt to better inform voters for the upcoming Student Union (SU) election, the Board of Elections (BOE) held a debate, open to all students, between the two tickets that passed the primaries. The debate, which took place on Tuesday, May 1 in the school library, was organized and moderated by BOE Chairman and senior Bumsoo Kim in conjunction with The Spectator's Editors-in-Chief juniors Leopold Spohn-gellert and Adam Schorin.

Presidential candidate junior Adam Lieber and his running mate sophomore Tahia Islam debated their platforms and policies with junior Calvin Ng and sophomore Edward Zilberbrand, the opposing ticket. The event was part of the BOE's effort to increase voter turnout this year, along with social media campaigning and an additional voting booth. Around 50 students attended the one-hour debate. This was the first debate to happen in four years, and was made available to students via YouTube and The Spectator's website ([stuspectator.com](http://stuspectator.com)). The video currently has over 700 views.

The candidates were seated at separate tables, with a podium and microphone between the two. The candidate, his running mate, or the ticket, would stand up at the stand to answer the questions. Each candidate

had two minutes to respond per question, with extensions given for particular questions.

The debate began with opening statements from both candidates, outlining their respective platforms. Ng focused on his record as SU Special Events Coordinator under SU President Edward Cho, and promised to promote school unity and to change the school dress code by compromising with the administration. He also discussed the idea of implementing a new dress code policy in which students are allowed to wear dresses or shorts that follow either the current fingertip-length rule or a new midway-through-the-thigh addition, whichever is shorter to account for discrepancies in the policy's current implementation. Ng also proposed to reform the long-standing free period rule only allowing students to be on the first, second or fifth floors through open communication with the administration.

In his statement, Lieber criticized the current SU administration for lack of action on the school's major issues and called his own lack of experience in the SU a sign of fresh ideas and new perspectives. Lieber mentioned his proposed SU YouTube channel, a one-minute grace period for students travelling to or from the 10th floor, and a college fair where students could speak to Stuyvesant alumni representing their colleges.

The first question posed to the candidates asked what



Juniors Calvin Ng and Adam Lieber, candidates for next year's Student Union presidency, speak at the debate on Friday, May 4.

they would do if negotiations with the school administration, in this case specifically regarding students' ability to exit the building during their free periods, broke down. Ng said he would support a student petition, and work to spread awareness among the candidates. However, Ng considered it necessary to understand the administration's reasons for prohibiting out to lunch during free periods, and said he believed that the school would have to accept it. Lieber also supported the use of student petitions, but included the use of what he called "teacher endorsements," which would allow teachers to weigh in on the issue in support of the students.

The candidates seemed to have similar answers to many of the questions, often repeating points at the podium. However, the most significant difference between the candidates came when they were asked of their opinion of the current administration's record. Lieber and Islam both articulated a strong critique of the Cho administration, suggesting they were only good at planning events. "They are aesthetically nice, they have streamers, they decorate the lunchroom," Islam said. "However, we do not admire how no one attends these events." Islam singled out Zilberbrand, the current Sophomore Cau-

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## Stuyvesant MSA Competes At MIST

By SOULIN HAQUE

During spring break, while some students traveled across the globe and others caught up on their sleep, the Stuyvesant Muslim Student Association (MSA) participated in the Muslim Interscholastic Tournament (MIST) of the New York region. The event took place at Hofstra University from Friday, April 6 through Sunday, April 8 and New York City schools, including Bronx Science School of Science and Brooklyn Technical High School, attended. "Noor Al Stuy," Stuyvesant's team name, means "The Light of Stuy" in Arabic. This year, the MIST competition in New York, with 48 participants from Stuyvesant and 413 members in total, was more than double the size from last year.

Students competed in different events, including debate, culinary arts, basketball, writing, and knowledge of the Quran. The theme for the competition, which varies each year, was "Family: Reconnecting Our Hearts to Home." Students signed up for individual and group competitions, gaining points for each competition won.

This was the first time SPARK and MSA advisor Angel Colon attended the competition. He

was excited to learn the different aspects of Islam. "I was going into it with an open mind," Colon said. "I knew I was going to come out of it with new found knowledge in better understanding the importance of the Muslim community: love for Islam/Allah, their beliefs and cultural/religious concerns and anything else that I was allowed to sit in, witness and observe."

Although the competition was based on Islamic concepts, non-Muslim people were welcome to attend and participate in competitions. "People from schools all over New York came to compete and learn about Islam at the same time," junior and MSA events coordinator Menna Elaskandary said. "Muslims and non-Muslims joined together to create bonds of friendship that went beyond the competition, especially between the three specialized high schools—Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, and Brooklyn Tech."

Non-Muslim students had non-religious affiliated workshops and competitions available for them, including fashion, basketball, and poetry. The first day of the three-day competition consisted of art workshops, the MIST quizbowl, debate

rounds, and a math Olympics. The second day saw most of the group competitions, such as the science fair and the individual competitions, which included poetry and Quran tests. On the third day, there was a basketball tournament for each gender, a talent competition, and the award ceremony, where the top three teams were announced.

This year Stuyvesant placed second, a step down from winning first place the last two years. Yeasmin believes it may be because there were many underclassmen competing this year. "People weren't as experienced," she said. "But it's great knowing that in the future, Stuyvesant will hopefully continue to have competitors who now are experienced and can help next year's newbies."

For senior Miraj Alam, this was still an enjoyable experience in his last year at Stuyvesant. "I really enjoyed all the energy, and camaraderie that one could feel at the competition," he said.

"I didn't know what to expect of MIST, but after experiencing it my expectations were exceeded. Prior to MIST I have never been in such a unique Islamic gathering with so many people my age," freshman Razwan Miah said. "I am very excited for next year."

## Day of Silence: An Unspoken Voice for LGBT Youth

By ROBERT HE

Purple duct tape was a symbol of the wordless protest on Wednesday, April 18. Students taped their mouths shut and vowed not to speak, commemorating the Day of Silence. The silent stood out among a crowd of ordinary students, commanding the attention of students walking in the halls. Though they refrained from speaking, the students' message was seen and heard throughout the halls of Stuyvesant.

The Day of Silence, organized by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), is an annual day of action protesting anti-gay bullying and harassment. The event began as a school wide event in 1996 by a group of students at the University of Virginia. Since its creation, it has been celebrated na-

tionwide each year by colleges and high school. This year, students went silent in more than 9,000 schools in more than 70 countries. Participating students vow to remain silent for the entire day to represent the silencing of LGBT individuals and their supporters. Participants will either draw a little black "x" or wear tape over their mouths.

"It's a student-run event but the point of it is to raise awareness," said Emma Lesser, junior and co-president of GLASS, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Spectrum. "This is what it's like when you can't communicate with the world; this is what it's like when your voice cannot be heard, for just one day."

Though the Day of Silence is officially on April 20, the Stuyvesant community cel-

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## Opinions

Article on page 8.

Election 2012

The Spectator's student government endorsements for 2012.



Article on page 18.

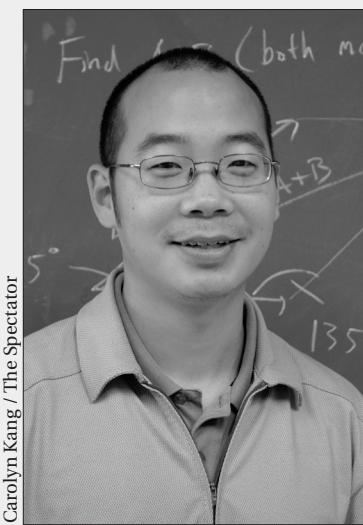
## Arts and Entertainment

Tribeca Film Festival Coverage

Reviews of nine features and shorts from this year's festival.

# News

## News-in-Brief



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

Alumnus Michael Cho ('00) now teaches math at Stuyvesant.

### **Stuyvesant Graduate Replaces Math Teacher Stern**

By SAMUEL MORRIS

Mathematics teacher and Stuyvesant alumnus Michael Cho ('00), replaced former mathematics teacher Joseph Stern on Monday, April 16. Stern left the school because he suffers from chronic fatigue syndrome, an autoimmune disease that causes him one to be continuously exhausted.

In his senior year at Stuyvesant, Cho was captain of both the swim team and the math team. He began college at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) before transferring to UC Irvine. He worked at a small hedge fund for almost four years before deciding that he wanted to teach. "I really love teaching. It is what I have always wanted to do," he said.

Cho then began working towards his master's degree at Columbia and is currently completing his degree. During the last school year, Cho worked as a substitute teacher at Stuyvesant and at the Mott Hall School, a well-regarded middle school in Upper Manhattan.

When Stern's illness forced him to resign, Cho was not working at the time. Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara offered him the job, which he soon accepted. Cho took over all of Stern's classes: two sections of Precalculus and three Geometry classes.

Though he is currently filling a long-term position, he is unsure how long he will remain at the school. Despite the uncertainty, Cho is optimistic. "I

would love to teach here [on a permanent basis]," Cho said. "It's been great so far, the kids are intelligent and they ask interesting questions."

### **Kivi Returns From Medical Leave**

By GABRIEL ROSEN

Chemistry teacher Dr. Jeffrey Kivi has returned to Stuyvesant after a four-month-long medical leave. Dr. Kivi went on medical leave after carrying heavy luggage at LaGuardia Airport caused his left leg's quadriceps tendon to tear on Sunday, January 1.

"It was great coming back," Dr. Kivi said. "I felt very welcomed by both students and staff."

Immediately after the accident, he was rushed by ambulance over to Elmhurst Hospital, where he remained for a week before being transferred to the orthopedic wing of Beth Israel Medical Center. There, the doctors determined that one of the tendons had previously atrophied due to trauma that occurred during Dr. Kivi's college football career.

Doctors had to surgically reattach all of the other tendons in order for recovery to be possible. Once Dr. Kivi was in an improved state, he started going to hydrotherapy. "I learned how to walk again in a swimming pool," he said.

Dr. Kivi still needs to use a walker when travelling long distances, and a cane for short distances; he cannot walk on stairs, and has to drive to work instead of taking the subway. Despite all of this, Dr. Kivi has a positive outlook about his injury. He said, "The silver lining for this accident is that I have a bigger scar to brag about to Ms. Pluchino."

### **Stuy Celebrates Earth Day**

By ALEXANDRINA DANILOV

For this year's Earth Day, Stuyvesant held its own celebration to raise awareness and appreciation of nature. The annual Earth Day Festival was held on Wednesday, April 25, in the cafeteria. It was organized by Stuyvesant's Environmental Club and Stuy UNITY, a club that works towards a united Stuyvesant community and environment.

The festival was meant "to make Stuy kids more aware about environmental issues

and to make them more interested about the subject because right now people don't really care," senior Aarthi Kuppanan, president of the Stuyvesant Environmental Club, said.

The festival was free for anybody who wished to attend. For the event, clubs were asked to contribute Earth Day themes or activities. Some clubs, such as Stuyvesant Global Citizens Corps, used this opportunity to promote their own clubs or other upcoming events such as Project Energize. The event was similar to the Health Fair held earlier in the year. Some clubs also held fundraisers to raise money for environmental charities.

The Earth Day Festival has been erratic over the years. "There have been a lot of inconsistencies over the past years. Environmental initiatives were lost at Stuy. Nobody was interested in rebooting. Now, starting last year, we have begun to bring back environmental initiatives," SPARK Counselor Angel Colon said.

Many faculty members are supporting new environmental plans for the school, such as redesigning the cafeteria, promoting recycling, and establishing perennially held events like Earth Day. In particular, biology teachers, such as Dr. Jonathan Gastel, Dr. John Utting, Marissa Maggio, and Jerry Citron have been vocal in their encouragement.

Maggio, who is also the faculty advisor of Envirothon and Ocean Bowl, hopes that Earth Day will succeed in bringing back environmental interest to Stuyvesant.

### **Holocaust Survivor Visits Stuyvesant**

By GABRIEL ROSEN

Eighty-four year-old Holocaust survivor Ilie Wacs, co-author of the recently published Holocaust memoir entitled, "An Uncommon Journey: From Vienna to Shanghai to America," visited Stuyvesant on Friday, March 16, in order to share his story with the students of Social Studies teacher Dr. Lisa Greenwald's classes.

Wacs gave his presentation in Lecture Hall A during ninth and tenth periods, where he began with a question and answer session with Dr. Greenwald, which eventually was opened to the students. This session allowed the students

themselves to guide the presentation, and to have their own personal interactions with Wacs.

Many students remarked that Wacs's presentation provided insight into the struggles faced by Holocaust survivors. "For outsiders peering through the looking glass, it's hard to understand the monstrosity of the Holocaust. But Wacs brings these moments alive - the fear, the courage, the excitement, and the sadness," sophomore Mandy Wong said. "His story is inspiring and he's a very charismatic speaker."

Dr. Greenwald, a close friend of the Wacs family, organized the event. "I thought [Wacs' presentation] was an interesting way to bridge the two worlds together for my students - the war in Europe, and the war in the Pacific," Dr. Greenwald said. "I have always wanted to hear his story."

Wacs and his immediate family managed to escape war-torn Austria and the Nazis by securing a visa with the Japanese government to seek asylum in the Japanese occupied city of Shanghai. While there, 12-year-old Wacs had to help his father provide for the family by working as both a sketch artist and tailor. After World War II ended, Wacs and his family immigrated to America using the Displaced Persons Act to enter. Wacs would go on to become a well-established fashion designer in the 1960s and eventually start his own company. When he closed the firm in the 1970s, he became an artist and moved to New York City, where he currently resides.

### **Getting The Ace**

By LILY LIN

Senior Sarah Soo-Hoo recently appeared on news channel NY1 as an award recipient of The Health Plus/NY1 Scholar Athlete program. The program, which is done in conjunction with the NYC Department of Education, was established to recognize high school seniors for their academic as well as athletic success. It grants approximately 50 awardees annually \$2000 dollars to be used for the school that the student chooses to attend in the fall.

Soo-Hoo finds the scholarship meaningful because it recognizes her academic as well as athletic excellence. She attributes her success to Girl's



Danny Kim / The Spectator

Golf Coach and English teacher Emilio Nieves. "Not only is he an amazing coach on the golf course, but an extraordinary mentor off the golf course," Soo-Hoo said. "Working alongside Coach Nieves has been a humbling and most certainly memorable experience."

Nieves reciprocates this opinion when considering Soo-Hoo's work ethic. "She is arguably the most motivated athlete I have ever had the pleasure of coaching," Nieves said. "She was just as equally motivated in my AP class, and never wanted to be treated differently because of our previous relationship. She was able to meet the rigorous challenges of my course and maintained a level of consistency despite playing a sport at the same time."

Soo-Hoo started golfing in fifth grade and has played ever since. Over the years, golf has taught Soo-Hoo invaluable life lessons as well as defined a part of who she is. "Golf has taught me to never give up and lose sight of your goals no matter how distant they may seem. It has taught me not to fear challenges in life, but instead embrace them as opportunities to grow," Soo-Hoo said.

Although Soo-Hoo does not plan on pursuing golf as a career because she is interested in the medical field, Nieves expressed his belief in her ability to succeed. "If she does [pursue golf on the college level], I am sure she will succeed at that. It is simply in her nature to work hard in everything she does," Nieves said. "She definitely embodies the term 'student-athlete'."

## Board Of Elections Hosts SU Debate

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cus Vice President, saying that no change has come under his watch. Lieber also suggested that the Cho administration has made no effort to reach out to the student body.

Ng and Zilberbrand responded by praising the SU's work on events such as SING! and Junior Prom. They suggested that the Cho administration had made an effort to reach out to the student body, but apathy from the school prevented the enthusiasm needed between the government and the students. Zilberbrand pointed out that there was "a lack of dedi-

cation" from some members of the administration, who had not attended daily meetings as diligently as he and Ng would have liked, he said.

The final questions from the moderators addressed what changes Ng or Lieber would make to the government, SU constitution, and school as SU presidents. Both supported a larger student government, with more departments to focus on each issue. Ng proposed eliminating the position of Freshman Caucus President and Vice President, due to the lack of time for freshmen to get to know each other prior to elections. "What I would advise instead is a Freshman Advisory Council for the

Sophomore President," Ng said, which would work with the Sophomore Caucus on the issues that affect underclassmen.

After forty minutes of moderated questions, candidates were able to answer questions from the audience. These concerned how they planned to bring about their promises, which both candidates responded to with plans to communicate with the administration and promote student involvement.

Despite a relatively low turnout, the debate may prove to be an important step in the BOE's campaign to familiarize the student body with the election process and educate it on its candidates. With a

twelve percent increase in primary voting numbers, the BOE hopes that, with the help of this debate, the trend spreads to the general elections, to be held on Friday, May 18.

Candidates expressed satisfaction with the way the debate was organized.

"Although turnout was not tremendous, I feel as though the debate legitimized the SU elections," Islam said. "For once, we could talk about our policies in a professional light for all of the student body to see. It's a great way for students to make informed decisions and remain involved throughout the process. Hopefully, the debate showed everyone that

the SU can become an important factor in Stuyvesant [...] and provide a voice, rather than remain in the background."

The opposing ticket agreed. "The debate was a great experience and ran extremely well for its first time. It's something that should happen every year from now on. Despite not having the greatest turnout, I'm sure that next year more students will come and the students that came this year got the information they wanted," Zilberbrand said. "The elections showed the entire school that the SU does mean something, and I feel as if that's a success in and of itself."

## StuyPulse Attends Robotics Championship

**By REBECCA CHANG  
and STANCA IACOB**

The Stuyvesant High School Robotics Team (Team 694 or "StuyPulse") traveled to the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Missouri to participate in the annual FIRST Robotics Championship from Wednesday, April 25th to Saturday, April 28th. In order to qualify, the team participated in district competitions and regional competitions held from January to April with their robot, JOEBOT.

The FIRST Robotics Competition aims to inspire young people ages six to eighteen across the world to be science and technology leaders through mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills, and inspire innovation, foster self-confidence, communication, and leadership. Young people in FIRST programs master science and technology concepts through robotics, while gaining valuable career and life skills that carry them to higher education and to science, technology, engineering and math professions.

At this year's competition, there were 400 other teams present from locations such as Brazil, Israel, and Australia. The tournament was composed of three sets of matches: "Practice Matches," "Qualification Matches," and "Elimination Matches." Practice Matches were randomly assigned on the

first day of competition to allow teams to run their robots on the fields before the start of the competition. Qualification Matches were assigned follow-

**"In principle, everything is very simple... But in practice, the devil was in the details. It was very difficult for us to get all those details down," —Jake Potter, senior and StuyPulse President of Engineering**

ing a predetermined algorithm so the teams could be ranked for Elimination Matches.

The teams were broken into four divisions: Archime-

des, Galileo, Newton, and Curie. Each division had their own field, known as the "pits," where teams worked with two other teams in alliances. The alliances were expected to discuss strategy with their group members and work together during the game. Two alliances composed of three teams each competed in each match. For the Qualification and Practice Matches, alliances were predetermined. At the culmination of the Qualification Matches, teams were seeded by match results and the eight highest seeds picked alliances to move on to the Elimination Matches.

The game that the robots competed in was called Rebound Rumble in which the robots were tasked with shooting balls into four baskets of different heights. Robots were expected to play both defense and offense. In addition, in the final 30 seconds, each robot balanced with another on a series of three bridges to see which would last longest.

One of the main aspects that StuyPulse worked on this year was producing a strong robot. As a result, JOEBOT was able to push other robots in competition, which proved especially useful during the balancing portions of the qualification matches.

StuyPulse was in the Curie division, in which they placed 54th as opposed to 5th place last year. They were not picked to enter the Elimination Match-

es. "In principle, everything is very simple," senior and StuyPulse President of Engineering Jake Potter said. "But in practice, the devil was in the details. It was very difficult for us to get all those details down."

The team had previously

**"We have a really well-rounded, devoted and well-organized team," —Doris Tsang, junior and StuyPulse Vice President of Marketing**

won the Chairman's Award at the 2012 Northeast Utilities FIRST Regional Competition at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, Connecticut on Thursday, April 5th. This is the third year that StuyPulse has received this award.

Regarded as the most prestigious award that a FIRST robotics team can receive, the Chairman's Award commends outstanding research, team organization, outreach by teaching elementary school kids about technology and helping other FIRST teams. "We have a really well-rounded, devoted and well-organized team," junior and StuyPulse Vice President of Marketing Doris Tsang said.

StuyPulse was recognized for demonstrating and inspiring greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology through outreach. Notably, they were recognized for their Idea Drive for which their marketing department interviewed and videotaped other teams at championships and regionals about techniques, and tips. In addition, StuyPulse won the Best Website Award in recognition of the team's "excellence in student-designed, built, and managed team website: stulpulse.com," according to the team's press release.

The international FIRST Robotics Championship was an event that closed StuyPulse's season. Despite their performance, the team agreed that the competition was an enriching, learning experience. "There are some really top teams out there," Shapiro said. "It's incredible to go to another team that has won seven regionals in a row or something and see how they do things."

## Features

### Day of Silence: An Unspoken Voice for LGBT Youth

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ebreated it on April 18. Upon swiping in to school, students saw participants of the Day of Silence distributing pamphlets explaining the cause on the second floor. The Day of Silence was entirely run by GLASS, but anybody was welcome to participate. One only had to walk up and receive the tape to be a part of the protest.

While it is a protest against LGBT bullying, the Day of Silence is not intended to demean those who bully LGBT youth. Rather, it is to show those who have been bullied that they are not alone. It is meant to help schools have a safer, more accepting environment in which everyone is respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Participants in the Day of Silence were enthusiastic to bring attention to the discrimination that the LGBT community has to face. "It's a good way to help LGBT youth because it brings attention to what they have to go through every day," junior and participant Jamie Sarmiento said.

Lesser, who is a firm advocate for human rights, agrees. "Love is love. If nobody's getting hurt, it's nobody's business to step in," Lesser said. "It's a basic human right to be allowed to have feelings. You can't pick or change how you feel.

She estimates that there were at minimum 50 non-vocal supporters and around 400 vocal supporters. "I think it was incredibly successful. We raised a lot of awareness; a lot of people have come up to me and my members and said how meaningful it was to them or how they thought it made them feel more accepted," Lesser said.

"Teachers have come up to us and said how great they thought the idea was. We've gotten a lot of good feedback about it." Though the Day of Silence certainly caught people's attention, Sarmiento feels that it could have been executed better. "I wouldn't say that it's very successful because not a lot of people knew about the Day of Silence," Sarmiento said. "It was poorly planned in my opinion and a lot of teachers didn't even know that there was a Day of Silence. There wasn't prior word on the announcements or anything."

In addition, protests against harassment of LGBT individuals by abstaining from speech had the potential to create conflicts with teachers and their classes. The right to demonstrate was reserved to when a student was outside of the classroom. Most teachers allowed students to observe the Day of Silence, but others did not feel that they had the right to refuse to speak if called on.

On the whole, most stu-

dents did not encounter much difficulty participating. "I had one teacher who wasn't thrilled about the whole idea of a Day of

**While it is a protest against LGBT bullying, the Day of Silence is not intended to demean those who bully LGBT youth. Rather, it is to show those who have been bullied that they are not alone.**

time and I'd given speeches in a few of my classes telling people about the Day of Silence. So I felt like it was respected by all my teachers." Sarmiento also did not have much difficulty, presenting her teachers with a Day of Silence pamphlet detailing her participation in the event.

The Day of Silence is just one of many events catered towards helping the LGBT community. It is part of a series of events called the Days of Action that deal with LGBT and non-LGBT issues. Ally Week, an event part of the series, is held in October and is a student-led campaign to identify, support and celebrate allies to LGBT youth. SPARK at Stuyvesant had its annual Respectful for All week in February, with LGBT issues as one of its topics. On the last Wednesday of each month, an event called The Gathering is held. Managed by the organization Live Out Loud, The Gathering is a meet up of LGBT youth from Gay-Straight Alliances throughout the city to talk and have fun. Stuyvesant's GLASS sends two to five representatives to The Gathering each month.

Anyone can join GLASS or participate in events that help the LGBT community, regardless of sexual orientation. "We want to let people know that it's okay to be straight, to be a part of a GSA club," SPARK coordinator Angel Colon said. "We want to get rid of the stigmas."

the impact that it has made the Stuyvesant community, both students and teachers alike.

Silence, but all of my teachers let me observe. Nobody gave me a lot of issues," Lesser said. "I warned them all ahead of

# Features

## To Dorm or Not to Dorm



Myra Xiong / The Spectator

**By TASNIM AHMED**

College is a chance to obtain a one-way ticket to freedom: a life without parents hovering over our shoulders, without curfews, without rules. Adulthood holds its arms wide open for college students. Many students cannot wait to get into college so they can leave home. Dorm life is an attractive option for high school seniors, but few people consider the severe change in lifestyle that occurs when they make their college decisions. Though living in a dorm has its perks, there are also a few surprises that we don't tend to anticipate before getting to college.

### Pros

#### A quick commute

Because most residence halls are located on the college campus, classes are simply a short walk or bike ride away from one's bed. This means that there is no reason to plan ahead for train or bus delays, or wake up two hours before class starts. James Law Thompson ('11), who attends Columbia College, said, "Since I do live in the city, getting to classes would be inconvenient if I didn't dorm. I can wake up right before classes and not be late." Lucy Qian ('11), who attends Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) in Pennsylvania, agrees that as a former Stuyvesant student, the extra hour is invaluable. "Whereas it once took an hour to get to class, [at CMU] it takes you 15 minutes," she said.

#### Roommates!

Usually, the college administration will assign a student his or her roommate. The roommate assignment that a student receives is typically determined by a personality survey. A student is paired up with someone who answered the survey with similarly. Some schools, such as

CMU, allow a student to request a roommate, and if both agree to this, they will most likely be paired up. This is true in Qian's case. She is currently living with two other Stuyvesant graduates. In other colleges, not everyone will have a roommate. For example, Thompson lives in a dorm by himself. Whether or not a student will have to room with someone depends on how early he or she applies and it is often decided by a lottery. Though "in freshman year, it is significantly easier to get a dorm [in Columbia]," Thompson said. Samira Siddique ('11), who attends Wesleyan University in Connecticut, lives in a dorm where rooms are "two room doubles, which means

I have my own room, but it's still basically connected to my roommate's room," Siddique said in an email interview. This way, she still has the privacy of her own room, yet has the opportunity to be with a roommate.

Living in a dorm assures that you will never be lonely. If you choose to dorm, you will be with people who attend the same or similar classes to you, and often those who live on the same floor as you will become your closest friends. "It's distracting, but most of your friends are in your class, and you get to study with them," Qian said. "We have floor meetings where everyone in one floor hang out together and socialize."

Siddique agrees and said, "It's pretty awesome to just wake up and have 120 of your peers to hang out with."

#### Boredom is a thing of the past

Aside from having friends and classmates just a wall away, dorms offer several recreational opportunities. In CMU, like many other universities, there are gyms on campus for students to use for free.

"My dorm regularly books outside bands to come and play

in our basement event space, and a bunch of other performances (art, theater, etc.) go on there too," Siddique wrote about Wesleyan. In addition, colleges are often surrounded by restaurants and parks in which students can relax. For those who would rather stay inside, colleges usually offer free WiFi and cable for television.

Though not as crazy as movies may make them seem, dormitories may have parties on weekends for people to mingle and blow off some steam. "If I want to have fun, I go to a dorm having a party," said Shilpa Agrawal ('11), who attends Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Procrastination can be less attractive when you are living with your fellow students. Many college students avoid the boredom of being alone by studying while living in a dorm. "I get to be with people who love learning and living with people so passionate about learning is very powerful," Agrawal said.

#### School food isn't so bad

If you live in a dorm, you're most likely going to eat in the dining halls or the many restaurants nearby. Unlike the school food that is known to be less than delicious in high school, colleges try to accommodate students with a variety of palates. There are many healthy choices, but it all depends on whether or not the student will make that choice. Often, the stress coupled with the array of food causes freshmen to experience the "Freshman 15" in which they gain 15 or so pounds after starting school.

For students who have eating restrictions due to religious or other personal reasons, most schools offer a halal and kosher section, in addition to other vegetarian choices.

If students live in a suite, they will most likely have a kitchen to themselves, so if they

have the right cooking skills, they can always make their own meals.

For students who'd prefer to eat out, colleges usually have various restaurants bordering them. Siddique said there are "delicious and diverse places to eat in town, which is saying a lot since I'm used to great food while living in New York."

### Cons

#### Money doesn't fall from trees

With the luxury of living in a dorm comes a hefty price tag. Thompson, who received a full scholarship to pay his tuition, must still pay \$17,000 a semester for his room, his dining plan, and books. The cafeteria requires that students pay for a certain number of meals, which varies for each college. Even if a student decides not to eat in the dining hall, eating out in a restaurant every day can be even more expensive.

Colleges also don't supply students with everyday commodities such as a television, refrigerator, computer, and more. Students must buy these things themselves or coordinate with a roommate and split the costs. However, for students who have no choice but to move away from home, dorms are still a cheaper option than living in an apartment.

#### Roommates...

Sometimes you may be unlucky and end up rooming with somebody who clashes with you. "If you get a roommate you don't get along with, you'll have a horrible time," Qian said.

In some colleges where roommates must share the same room, roommates might seem intrusive because there is little privacy. In addition, it can be difficult to live with someone who doesn't clean up after herself. In general, roommates must make several accommodations in order to adjust to the new lifestyle.

Even if you don't live with a roommate, the other students on your floor can be a nuisance if they play loud music and interfere with your studies. For Thompson, hygiene tends to be the biggest problem when it comes to other students on his floor. His floor has one kitchen that everyone shares and "it can get really disgusting because the people that use the kitchen often don't take care of it. The person next door to me found a mouse in his room," Thompson said.

Living with somebody you don't know very well requires many adjustments that you must be willing to make if you choose to live in a dorm. However, rest assured, "any college does a good job in making sure students transition easily from home to college," Agrawal said.

#### Public restrooms

Most of us try to avoid using public restrooms, which are notorious for being unclean and often too small to be practical. Though the architecture of bathrooms varies depending on where you go to school, it is safe to say you will probably have to share it with at least one other person.

In Columbia, the bathrooms have stalls, are co-ed, and have two showers, though this may change depending on the dormitory. This may present some privacy issues and may cause long lines to form for the bathroom. However, because students have different class schedules, it can be avoided. "It can get disgusting, but they do clean it every day," Thompson said. It is still a student's responsibility to be clean and take others into consideration when he or she uses a bathroom that is shared by so many others.

#### Missing home sweet home

Despite the eagerness Stuyvesant graduates have to leave home, it is still a milestone in one's life that requires a lot of work to adapt to. Once you've moved into a dorm, you must look after yourself and cannot expect your parents to pick up the pieces for you. The transition can be very difficult, especially having to say goodbye to your parents.

"I was sad that my parents had to leave. I realized I had to live in this room with two people I didn't live with before," Qian said.

"It's always hard being away from home. I miss New York, because it's a hard place to transition from since it's such a vibrant place," Agrawal said, agreeing that though the newfound freedom is exciting, it doesn't come without nostalgia. Students begin to realize the responsibilities they now have that they previously threw onto their parents, such as doing the cumbersome task of laundry, Agrawal noted.

Of course, moving away from home is a mountain that everyone must climb at some point in his or her life. Although it is very difficult to do so at such a young age, colleges help students overcome the obstacles.

Among the many changes students must become accustomed to when they leave for college, living in a dorm may be one of the biggest. Often people tend to underestimate just how much of a change living in dorms can be. However, it shouldn't be part of an intimidating unknown. Though living in a dorm comes with its impediments, it also offers many opportunities that students would otherwise be unable to experience. Living in a dorm is simply another unique part of the college experience.

# 1644

# 1647

# 17

# 1664

# 62

Year Stuyvesant lost the lower part of his right leg to a cannon ball while at war

Year Stuyvesant arrived in New Amsterdam

Years Stuyvesant served as the Director-General of New Netherland

Acreage of Stuyvesant's farm in Harlem

Sources: www.stuy.edu, "New York: An Illustrated History" by Ric Burns and James Sanders

# Features

## Rethinking Asian-American Identity

By YING YU SITU

Linsanity. Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize winning book, "Interpreter of Maladies." Kal Penn. Amy Chua's Tiger Mom. Whether it's good publicity or bad publicity, there's no denying that the Asian American community has been acquiring a kind of recognition that's never existed before. The sixth annual New York City Asian American Student Conference (NYCAASC) was held on Saturday, April 21 to draw attention to this new trend and to empower Asian American youth to be a part of it.

NYCAASC is a grassroots conference planned entirely by New York City college students. The goal of the conference is to educate students on the history and issues surrounding the Asian Pacific American (APA) community on a "local, national, and global scale," as the mission statement of NYCAASC states. To accomplish this, the NYCAASC committee organizes and hosts a number of educational workshops. This year's conference featured workshops like "What Does it Feel Like to Be a Problem? NYPD Surveillance of Muslim Students and Social Justice Groups," "The Case of Private Danny Chen: Hate Crimes and Why America Should Care," and "Linsanity: What Jeremy Lin Reveals about Race, Sexuality, and Asian American Masculinity." The committee also invited

prominent members of the APA community to speak on panels and lead workshops. Councilmember Margaret Chin, Korilla's founders, Angry Asian Man's Phil Yu, and YouTube actress and

**During past conferences, students have questioned their own identities as Asian Americans and have been encouraged by NYCAASC to form definitions of their own.**

comedian Jen Kwok were among this year's guests.

During past conferences, students have questioned their own identities as Asian Americans and have been encouraged by NYCAASC to form definitions of their own. The conference

emphasizes the students' abilities to "INK" (imagine and rethink) their own stories.

Though only some of the issues presented at the workshop have affected Stuyvesant students directly, they still have relevance to students as members of the Asian-American community.

"When I got my program, I was looking through the lineup for the day. At first, I couldn't decide on which one to attend because none of them seemed relevant to me," senior Evan Gao said. "But when I was scanning through again, I realized that all of them were significant to me. I have a lot of relatives who live in Chinatown, so the gentrifying one was important. My parents aren't registered voters, even though they should be, so the voting workshop was important, too. It was all these little things I kept finding that made it impossible for me to choose which one to go to in the end."

Senior Cheng Ma agrees. "The topics are things you see on the news, and you want to find out more about. Normally you wouldn't talk about these things on your own. The workshop helps to start the conversation," he said.

Those who walked away from the conference were able to gain much more insight into their own culture. Stuyvesant students were also given the opportunity to discuss the afore-

mentioned issues with other students from colleges and high schools from all over New York City. Specifically, Stuyvesant students learned about issues regarding racial stereotypes that they otherwise do not encounter, coming from a school with an Asian majority.

"I attended the microagres-

**The conference emphasizes the students' abilities to "INK" (imagine and rethink) their own stories.**

Often, Asian students here are not exposed to such derogatory remarks. "You wouldn't feel targeted as much as you would in places where you're the only Asian in school," Ma said.

"We go to a school full of Asians," Gao said. "Who's going to make fun of you for being one of the crowd?"

Guest speakers at the workshops expanded on their own life experiences as Asian Americans. One was a slam poet, "who encouraged us to do things like singing, writing, and speaking out," Lei said. "Jen Kwok was the MC at the talent show, and she was loud, vulgar, and funny." Speakers showed students that they didn't necessarily have to stick with cultural or parental norms in their career paths, but could find success in any field they were passionate about. For example, last year, the conference hosted Christine Choy, Academy Award-nominated director of "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" She discussed why there are so few Asians in Hollywood.

Perhaps the greatest gain for participants was the heightened morale among the attendees. "[NYCAASC] boosts my Asian pride," Ma said. Not only did the conference give students the chance to understand the difficulties Asian Americans face due to racial barriers, but they were also empowered to make changes that previous generations could not.

## Maggio Takes On The Envirothon

By PAULINE HUANG

While environmental awareness has steadily inched its way into the mainstream, only so much can be fixed with the motto, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." Greater challenges require more intricate solutions, which can only be designed by those who truly understand the subject. While the high school curriculum has limited space to focus on the environment, Stuyvesant's Envirothon club helps to fill in the gaps, encouraging students to learn about delicate ecosystems and compete against other schools for the best solutions to current challenges.

Though Stuyvesant had participated in the Envirothon for years, its team dissolved in 2001. However, after ten years of inactivity, biology teacher Marissa Maggio decided to get the team started again in 2011, after coaching the High School for Environmental Studies' Envirothon team left her wanting more.

"I just think that it is a wonderful competition," Maggio said. "It's one of the best experiences that gets city kids out into nature learning about trees, soils, and fishes."

Because the newest incarnation of Stuyvesant's team is so recently formed, its members are made up of underclassmen, mostly sophomores and Maggio's former students or other curious individuals.

"I really wanted [to] explore something—something new. This is a new team formed by last year, so I wanted to see if it really worked out," sophomore Brian Wei said.

According to its website, the Envirothon, previously known

as the Environmental Olympics, dates back to 1979 and was first sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. Since then, the program has spread to other states, eventually becoming a national academic tournament. It is intended to be a hands-on competition that would help spark an interest in environmental issues and conservation among

**"I think that it is a wonderful competition. It's one of the best experiences that gets city kids out in nature."**  
—Marissa Maggio, biology teacher

high-school students. To compete, teams must educate themselves in five subject areas: aquatic ecology, wildlife, forestry, soils, and a current environmental issue, which changes every year. Normally, a team consists of five people, each of whom specializes in one subject area. The whole team takes part in a presentation in which it attempts to solve an assigned environmental dispute.

The New York City Enviro-

thon was sponsored by the New York City Soil and Water Conservation District. This year, it took place two days before Earth Day on Friday, April 20, in High Rock Park, Staten Island with the topic of discussion being non-point source pollution.

To prepare, students on the Envirothon team met at least once a week as a club and made multiple field trips to parks so that they could immerse themselves in nature and have hands-on practice. "We had to do really long training sessions for soils. Soils is the hardest test. We have labs for soil to identify different soil types, chemicals, and composition," sophomore Fauna Mahootian said.

Because the club did not form early enough to prepare for and compete in the 2011 competition, they instead spent the extra time preparing for the 2012 competition, which two teams representing Stuyvesant High entered along with approximately 15 other teams. At the competition, teams had to travel to different areas and answer 25 multiple-choice questions on each subject area, at least half of which were based on hands on tasks. In addition, they had to present solutions to an assigned environmental problem in oral presentations in front of a panel of judges.

Despite years of inactivity, the hard work and preparation of the team paid off, as Stuyvesant's teams claimed first and second place in Manhattan and second and third place in New York City.

"They worked really hard and they did very well for their first time out," Maggio said. As a result of their victory, Stuyvesant's Envirothon teams will



The Envirothon club consists of two five-member teams that have been preparing for an environmental competition that tests students knowledge in aquatics, soils, forestry, wildlife, non-point source pollution and groundwater contamination.

progress to the state-wide competition, for which the team is already preparing.

"States are going to be soon, [on May 23 and 24]," Wei said. "We'll be camping in the Catskill Mountains soon as a preparation for states. Again, we're going to bond with nature. We're going to test waters for contamination. The competition has hands-on work so we

should be able to know how to use the equipment and interpret the results."

The winning teams at the New York State Envirothon will qualify to compete in the 2012 Cannon Envirothon in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, along with teams from other participating states and Canadian provinces.

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# Neighborhood Profiles: 34th Street, Herald Square, and Korea Town



By Nicholas Fung, Justin Strauss, and Jeany Zhao

# Staff Editorial

## Student Union Endorsement



Adam Lieber and his running partner Tahia Islam speak at the first annual SU debate.

For the past few years, each pair of Student Union (SU) leaders has failed to achieve most of the great reforms they have promised. From grand avowals of active protests to simple commitments of unity, SU candidates have consistently campaigned on change—a promise to do what their predecessors have not and a willingness to stand up to the administration. Unfortunately, nothing has been done. As this

board noted in its most recent staff editorial, titled “The Race to Nowhere,” the elections continue to yield a “confusing, ineffective, and extensively restricted [SU].”

With the trite promises of “experience,” ringing in our ears from previous campaigns, we’ve chosen a platform that doesn’t rest on the basis of continued incompetence and do-nothing government and instead put our faith behind a duo

that backs promises with methodology. The Spectator Editorial Board has chosen to endorse junior Adam Lieber and sophomore Tahia Islam for SU President and Vice President.

The Spectator is not interested in preserving the lackluster status quo. We’re sick of inactivity, a dearth of ideas, and an overall feeling that most of the SU officers are more interested in college-

pading their resumes than affecting change in the school. We want change, and we want change in the form of a presidency interested in expanding the size and role of the SU not just by proposing ideas, but by implementing well thought-out reforms such as a more committee-specialized SU, a one-minute grace period, and a new alumni-based college night. We choose Adam and Tahia on the basis of their preparation of these ideas and readiness during the debate. When asked how they would work with an unwilling administration to gain the student body out-to-lunch privileges, Adam said, “We would create a specific committee within the SU [...] We would get student petitions advocating for going out to lunch [...] We would get endorsements from the teachers.” Calvin also suggested forming a petition, but focused largely on learning the administration’s through the generally ineffective SLT meetings. In addition, the Calvin/Eddie ticket indicated that they had not fully developed their policies when they repeatedly contradicted each other during their Spectator interview.

We hope that Lieber’s active use of Facebook, Formspring, and other online Q&A clients will continue so that for the first time in student memory, there will be an effective portal of communication between the student body and its government. Along this line, we would like to see a greater push for student

wants and rights. And while Calvin and Eddie also support more communication they, as with most of their policies, are largely unspecific, citing a possible monthly newsletter or mailbox for questions. Adam’s online Q&A is more constant and more effective.

Granted, Calvin and Eddie have SU experience, a fact that, to their credit, they repeated throughout the debate and interview. But their time in office serves mostly as a reference for not getting things done. As head of the special events committee, the greatest among Calvin’s achievements is likely the Fall Festival, which very few students even bothered to attend. Eddie, with current Sophomore Caucus President Thoasin Bari, organized an unpopular boxers drive, a blunder he acknowledged in his interview.

In light of their creativity, planning, and their opponent’s lack thereof, it is the strongly held opinion of The Spectator Editorial Board that Adam Lieber and Tahia Islam are the best candidates for SU President and Vice President. That being said, this statement should be considered less an affirmation of success than a challenge for the coming year; anyone can campaign for change, but it takes something else to enact it. We believe that you, Adam and Tahia, are capable of what you’ve promised. If elected, we hope that you will do whatever it takes to prove us right.

## Senior Caucus Endorsement

When the Class of 2013 looks back on its senior year at Stuyvesant 30 years from now, there’s no doubt that right after finding out about college acceptances, SING!, prom, and their keynote graduation speaker will most stand out in their memories. The Student Union senior caucus has the massive responsibility of helping organize each of these milestones in a Stuyvesant student’s career. The Editorial Board believes that juniors Jennifer Zhou and Erica Chan are the best candidates to fulfill the many roles that the senior caucus entails and to make sure that next year’s senior class has the most memorable experience possible.

Zhou and Chan have both had experience and success in each of the Class of 2013’s three caucuses so far. As the freshman class president, Zhou brought back the Soph-Frosh Semi-Formal, initiated a creative fundraising event called Popsicle Day, and effectively communicated with the freshman class through a grade-wide Facebook page—providing it with an outlet to address its many first-year concerns. Chan was the vice president of her sophomore class and most notably created a Sophomore Advisory Council that expanded the reach of her caucus. Though the Soph-Frosh Semi-Formal never panned out after she began planning it in late April, she has learned from her mistakes, and that slip-up has inspired many of “Jenniferica’s” policies in their agenda for senior caucus.

Working together as the junior president and vice president, Zhou and Chan have shown their dedication to working for their classmates since September. Not only have they kept the junior class well-

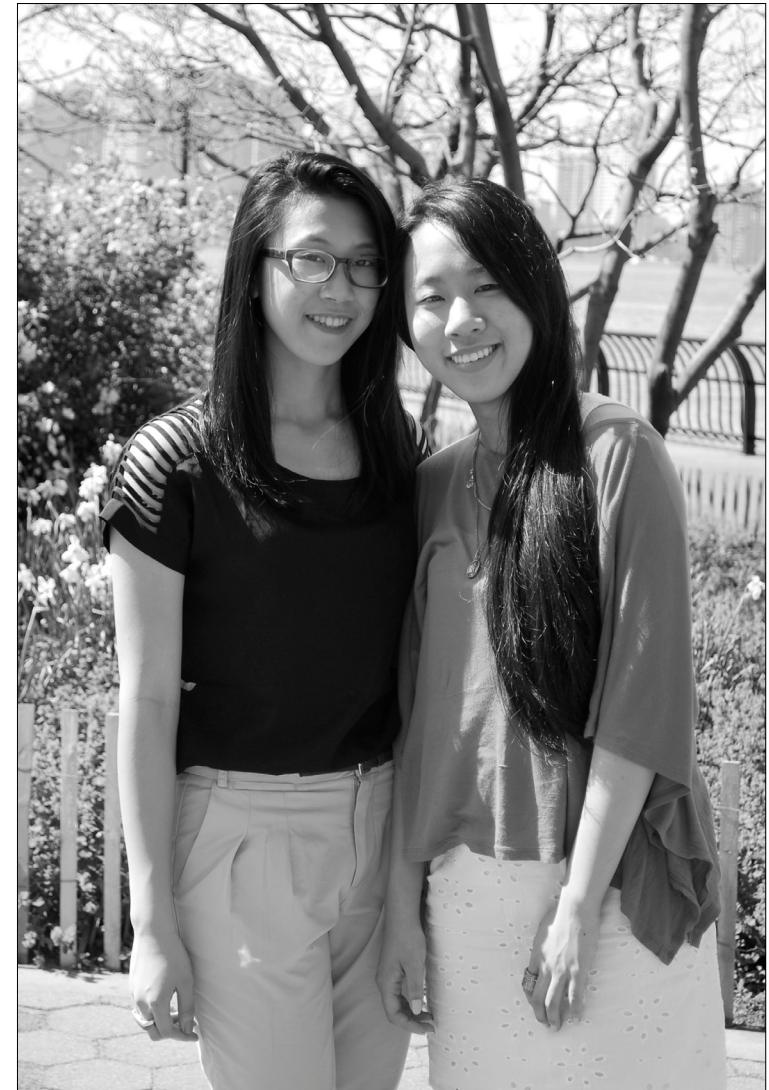
informed about all major events through a Facebook group, but they’ve given the juniors decision-making power regarding college trips and an end-of-the-year celebration through a Junior Advisory Council and the distribution of homeroom surveys. In addition to having organized three successful college trips with some of the visited colleges having been chosen by the juniors themselves, Zhou and Chan have revived Junior Prom. After 2011’s Junior Prom put the school thousands of dollars in debt, the administration was hesitant to approve another one that less than a quarter of the junior class would attend. But after making multiple visits to Principal Stanley Teitel’s office and then calling 30 boat companies in order to ensure that they had the lowest possible price, Zhou and Chan’s persistence led to Junior Prom’s approval with a lower price than in years past. With the creative idea to hold a contest that will award free tickets to the couple with the best proposal, voted on by juniors, as well as advertising throughout Facebook and in the school, they are looking to improve the reputation of Junior Prom and encourage more ticket sales.

Their plans for senior caucus are just as innovative. Senior spirit days are among the best days at Stuyvesant—when upper and underclassmen alike can marvel at the imaginative costumes that the seniors put together. However, it’s problematic when the seniors themselves don’t find out about the spirit days until the night before or don’t find out at all. Zhou and Chan plan to have a set day for every senior event (i.e., the first Friday of every month), in order to avoid confusion, and plan on us-

ing homeroom surveys to pick the day itself. They also plan on beginning SING! preparation early in the school year and starting to narrow down graduation speakers early in the year to avoid a potential slip-up. Lastly, their most ambitious idea is to negotiate with the administration to allow only seniors to leave the building during their free periods as a sort of test run or experiment. Because they have formed relationships over three years in the Student Union through open communication with Teitel and Coordinator of Student Activities Lisa Weinwurm, talking with the administration about this plan will go much more smoothly.

The other candidates, George Ding and Ellie Shanahan, are running on a very similar platform, but have less experience with student government and less concrete ideas of what they plan to do when they take office. They have various new policies like securing discounts for seniors planning trips over spring break as well as giving seniors a way to sign out of school to take college tours, but little to back them up with. According to Shanahan, their main talents that set them apart from Zhou and Chan are that she and Ding are “approachable” and that Ding is “awesome at Photoshop.” And though they plan to be assertive with the administration in order to enact their policies, they don’t have the advantage of already having established relationships with Teitel or Weinwurm.

Zhou and Chan’s significant experience, including their knowledge of the inner workings of the Student Union and their relationships with various members of the administration, will help make their transition into their senior cau-



Jennifer Zhou (right) and Erica Chan are running for Senior Caucus

their class will give the Class of 2013 a memorable senior year.

## Junior Caucus: An Endorsement Is A Privilege

Student government at Stuyvesant has fallen into an unfortunate cycle of inadequacy, lack of creativity, and pure laziness. Every year, when a new group of students is elected to represent their grade, it is implied that they have earned the position and have what it takes to improve the quality of life at Stuyvesant. Unfortunately, this is quite often far from the truth. Most elected student leaders are either apathetic or incapable. They may hold a couple of events and occasionally reach out to the student

body, but on the whole, most students wouldn’t notice if they didn’t do a thing.

This is a culture that needs to change. In order to truly have an impact on the students, government members have to be organized, attentive, and strong-willed. Above all, they need to have concrete ideas with detailed plans to make them a reality. Unfortunately, neither ticket for Junior Caucus has indicated that they have the attributes that are necessary to have a real impact on our school.

The members of the Editorial Board believe that endorsing a candidate who does not deserve the position is the equivalent of endorsing an ineffective student government. We are unwilling to support the better of the bad. Neither candidate has indicated that he or she has policies that can truly change the Stuyvesant community, and most of these merely build on the typical duties of past caucuses—planning a fun Junior Prom doesn’t count as ground-breaking. Those policies that could be con-

sidered unique to their campaign hold no weight. The ideas may make sense, but there is nothing to indicate that they could be implemented if the candidate is elected. In fact, many of the things that candidates have emphasized are more akin to wishes or desires and cannot be considered policies. A desire to connect the student body, or a plan to do the best job possible as president, indicates nothing about what a voter should expect from a candidate. It’s just empty rhetoric. In short, these candidates

promise more of the same. It’s not that they don’t care about the position—all four of the candidates have displayed a legitimate desire to help Stuyvesant. However, history has shown that this is not enough. Their ideas indicate that they haven’t truly considered what it takes to make an impact on the school, and an impact is exactly what we need right now. We’ve chosen not to endorse anyone for Junior Caucus for this election season. Candidates, let this be your wake-up call.

# Staff Editorial

## The SU Needs You

Just under two weeks ago, our school's library was the site of Stuyvesant history. Spurred by a legitimate interest in the issues affecting their school and a desire to learn more about the candidates contending to be their representatives to the administration, dozens of students scorned the alluring park to witness the first-ever Student Union (SU) debate on Friday, May 4. This event was one of many that have distinguished this SU election season from previous ones. The changes this year certainly reflect the concerted efforts of individuals working behind the scenes of the election, but also seem to indicate a body of voters that is more concerned about the issues of the school, an encouraging phenomenon which should be commended and supported.

This year's turnout in the primaries reflect a major change from previous elections: 22 percent of eligible voters participated in the election, up from last year's 10 percent. We attribute this increase to a series of changes in voting and campaigning policies from the Board of Elections (BOE). For the first time, candidates were able to utilize social media, such as Facebook or Formspring, to interact with voters. Better regulation of campaign managers and official endorsements were also introduced, allowing for voters to have a better idea of who the candidates were, and what they stood for. The BOE also made an effort to streamline the voting process, whose sluggishness has been one reason for such low turnout in years past. Following this editorial board's suggestion of multiple voting booths, the BOE established a voting booth on the fifth floor in addition to the table by the bridge entrance on the second floor. Recording votes became easier with the use of a Google document that could be simultaneously operated in both booths.

While we commend the BOE for these changes, there is still much that they could do. It is often difficult for students to find time during the school day to vote—wouldn't more voting booths and longer voting times over multiple days would make the process

more accessible? More debates and open forums could also serve to inform the student body of the candidates' platforms while giving those running the opportunity to hear from students about the issues that really matter. It's easy to sit here and pat ourselves on the back for the higher turnout the elections have garnered this year,

**Many students have been outraged by reductions in electives, quiet attacks on the arts, and the crudely enforced dress code, but they remain without an effective medium to turn their collective outrage into tangible results.**

but a measly 22 percent is nothing to be that proud of. We've gotten better—but we were in really bad shape to begin with.

Unfortunately, the truth is that the remaining 78 percent of the electorate cannot possibly be reached by simple improvements

in the election process. It seems more and more that the vast majority of the students don't vote in the student elections because they don't have faith in the efficacy of their current representatives. Indeed, in times of tranquility it's understandable for the average student to overlook the importance of an institution like the SU. School is busy, and it's not always clear what the SU is actually doing or why it matters. But the subtle changes that the administration has been able to build up during the reign of the current SU leadership have snowballed into not-so-subtle ones, ones that have taken some time getting used to for the entire school population. The administration has been able to implement any changes it wants with impunity, and we, as the student body, have so far been unable to effectively protest any of the changes through our government or our own actions.

To be sure, many students have been outraged by reductions in electives, quiet attacks on the arts, and the crudely enforced dress code, but they remain without an effective medium to turn their collective outrage into tangible results. This kind of powerlessness can be fixed by empowering the SU and making it a truly representative organization, through increased voter turnout. With the added heft of the majority of students behind it, the organization has the potential to become a powerful negotiating force, and even a means of organizing collective student action.

It's true that 10 percent is a good start, but we still have a long way to go. This era of apathy towards the SU must end for all students concerned about the administration's ability to freely impose their will on us. With the right action, the SU can change from a quiet and largely mysterious organization into what it always was intended to be: a powerful force protecting the interests of the students. The only way to facilitate this change is to provide the new president and vice president with an overwhelming mandate from the electorate to stand up for their interests in the general elections on Friday, May 18.

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"

EDITORS IN CHIEF  
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## The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of past issues.

We are looking for issues published before 1995.

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## A Note to Our Readers:

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

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

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

## FOR THE RECORD

- In Newsbeat, Stuyvesant's Model UN team also won a Best Position paper award in addition to the previously mentioned awards.
- Jack Cahn wrote the Letter to the Editor, not David Cahn.

# Opinions



Sam Kim / The Spectator

By DANIEL TEEHAN

"Yay! I did it!"

The cry of success pierces the air and is met by clapping and by the clamor of congratulations from the other students sitting at the table. The outburst cry is accompanied by what I can only assume is that feeling of pride and accomplishment so commonly felt in classrooms at Stuyvesant. I myself feel a sense of excitement for my friend who has just done so well. But what yields this great triumph? My friend hasn't just aced an AP test or grasped a particularly challenging concept in one of her classes; actually, she just managed to match up the last two red images of Spiderman to win our latest round of a matching memory game we've been playing. Also, rather than a classroom, we're sitting in the cafeteria, about 60 feet away from where you and your friends enjoy your lunch. In fact, the group of friends that I'm playing the matching game with aren't Stuy students at all, they are students of P.S. 721, those the invisible cohabitants of our school whom you may have noticed but have probably never interacted with.

The students from P.S. 721 are teenagers who have special needs, and they share our great learning space largely to interact with a high school community and form social bonds outside of their family and few classmates. But it's not your fault that you've never talked to them and don't really know anything about them—there's little reason you would. For most of the time that the students are here they are sequestered away in their classrooms, adhering to a different schedule than ours and in general, not traversing the building freely. In fact, you've probably only ever seen the P.S. 721 kids on their way to the elevator or outside one of your upper-floor classrooms. There have been essentially no mechanisms in place for us to interact with our fellow Stuy-dwellers, a fact that makes it all too easy to forget about their existence in the bustle of our all-important academic lives.

It was only at the beginning of this semester, the second of my junior year, that I became acquainted with the students. Around this time, ARISTA sent out an email announcing a peer partnership with P.S. 721 and detailing what it would entail, namely spending time with the students during their lunch period. Both of my parents work with kids and adults who have developmental disabilities similar to the ones some of the students of P.S. 721 have, ranging from cerebral palsy to autism and Down syndrome, so I was immediately interested

in the program. My lunch period coincided with theirs, so I signed up to spend that period with them, playing games and having conversations.

The next week I reported to Mr. Colon, beloved SPARK coordinator and architect of the program, to begin what I had been told would be two days a week of volunteering. As Mr. Colon explained to me and senior Bernice Chan, the only other volunteer who had shown up, the history of the students being in our school, from the purported purpose of mainstreaming to the utter failure of previous interaction programs, I couldn't help but feel a little ashamed that I, with all of my experience with people with special needs, had never reached out or tried to learn more about those who often took classes just across the hall from me.

My feelings of guilt were compounded when we went down to the lunchroom for introductions and I saw many of the students, long finished with lunch, sitting idly by with their attendants looking similarly wearied, all but counting down the minutes until the period was over. The students' desire for social interaction was immediately evidenced by the eager and interested looks that many of them gave me and my fellow volunteer when we walked over with Mr. Colon, their sole liaison with the Stuy community. As Mr. Colon explained the reinvigorated partnership program to the students, many looked excited at the prospect, while others looked warily at us strangers. As I went around introducing myself, I did my best to make as good a first impression as I would with any social encounter, but it was clear that I would need to do more to prove myself to some of the more cautious students through persistence and reliability.

After lunch was over I went outside and discussed the program with Bernice. We talked about how moved we were just

by the introductions and wondered whether we would end up spending more than the prescribed two days a week with the students. It seemed likely, given the small number of volunteers and our newfound desire not to have the students subjected to the state of tedium that we had found some of them in that day. We agreed to return the next day, along with the two volunteers who have joined us since then, and with one or two exceptions,

recently started discussions on gender and social issues to help the students learn the ins and outs of a functional social life.

My fellow volunteers have been strongly affected by the time that we spend with the students at lunch. Ezra Louvis, another junior who comes daily, also became involved through ARISTA, but has developed an emotional tie to the program. "A person can only stand so much competition and so many tests; participating in something that has a real world effect on people's lives helps put the rest of what we do in school in perspective," he said about the partnership. Ezra also feels that the students have benefited from reliable social bonds. Speaking of the value of these relationships he said, "This program gives them the opportunity to socialize in a different way than they can in their classes or at home. It's basically unconditional friendship that many of them don't have access to."

Bernice has also seen the program become a significant part of her life. When she heard that I was writing this article, she was very eager to share her personal experience with the program, saying that, "These students are a big reason of why I bother going to school—I'm a second term senior. We have so much in common through the simplest things: love of food, drawing, joking, laughing." Bernice has made her mark by bringing various arts and crafts activities to the lunch tables, which have been very successful in connecting with some of the more shy students. The variety of personality of the Stuyvesant students who come to lunch has proven to be essential in engaging all of the P.S. 721 students, a fact which makes the expansion of Stuy's side of the partnership vital.

The importance of being exposed to a wide range of peers cannot be overstated, and it constantly saddens me to think of this group within our school,

who has for so long gone about their business alongside some of the most intelligent students in the country without being able to benefit from their acquaintance. As it is now, the program can still use more participants who need not be ARISTA students hungry for credits—just regular Stuy students who care about something besides grades and college.

The population of people in our country with special needs and developmental disabilities is already a socially ostracized and largely ignored group. The insecurities and stigma that they often feel on account of the poor hand that has been dealt to them start with their experiences in high school. Through my involvement with the students of PS. 721, I have learned that by giving up a little bit of your time, you can greatly improve their quality of life, while getting a humbling daily reminder about what is really important and how little the low grade you got on your last exam really matters in the scheme of things. I'm not telling everyone who reads this to spend an hour every day with these students, but I am asking you to consider those whose lives briefly brush against yours and make an effort to give them a smile or greeting in the hall instead of ignoring their existence and continuing on in your lucky and privileged lives. It's a small gesture that can go a long way in giving these students, our peers, the place they rightfully deserve in our great school community.

**Those 40 minutes have consistently been the most enjoyable of my day.**



SPARK coordinator Angel Colon (pictured: third from left) addressing the peer partnership group during a weekly co-ed discussion of social and gender issues.

Victoria Stempel / The Spectator

# Opinions

## A Path to Our Future



Alice Li / The Spectator

By TAHMID ALI

The term "community" is bandied about nowadays with a nonchalant attitude, often used interchangeably with "group" or "club," just a bunch of people who happen to share an interest. The true purpose of community, its reason for being, has been lost. Clichéd as it sounds, I discovered the true meaning of community when Stuyvesant's Muslim Student Association (MSA), of which I am a proud member, went to compete in the Muslim Interscholastic Tournament (MIST) this year.

MIST is an annual tournament where MSAs from around the country compete in many different types of competitions, such as Writing and Oratory (writing essays, poetry, extemporaneous speaking, etc.), Debate, MISTBowl (Jeopardy by another name), and basketball. Taking place over the course of three days, MIST also features many keynote speakers who address different issues that affect Muslim youth today, such as the lack of connection with family and the need for knowledge about Islam.

In my first year competing, I was understandably nervous, worried about how I would have to act and behave around others who were not just my friends, but of the same faith. To be honest, this was the first time that I was surrounded on a daily basis by people my age who were Muslim, like me.

My worries, though, were completely unnecessary. It turned out to be a fantastic experience. Just being there, around fellow Muslims, made it so much easier to be a Muslim: I could act in an Islamic manner with people I knew would not make fun of me because they would be doing exactly the same thing, I could pray alongside friends without fear of being laughed at, I could speak freely about Islam with people who would talk back just as earnestly. For once, I did not have to miss a single prayer just because I was not in a Muslim setting. I did not have to turn down food offered to me just because it was forbidden under Halal. I could greet my Muslim friends properly, with "Salaam," knowing that they would respond just as zealously.

For once, I felt at ease. I was

safe, protected and perfectly fine with just being myself, something I don't normally feel outside of a Muslim community. I made new friends from other schools quickly and easily because we already had so much in common, so much to bond over: our faith.

During one of the keynote speeches, the speaker was talking about the troubles Muslim youth face today and he said that to overcome them, we must join as a community, an Islamic community that would promote the faith among the young.

I realized, then, that this idea did not only pertain to a religious community, but to any community, whether it be one of faith, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. My personal experience, so moving to myself, can easily be extrapolated to the rest of the world. It is a given that we will always encounter the innumerable petty and malicious beings who judge us by the color of our skin or the way we look or the way we speak, rather than by the content of our character. These malevolent people have and will always exist as obstacles on our path and the task of addressing them and pushing past them is the goal of community.

Groups such as MSA, the Japanese Culture Club, and the Black Students' League give students the opportunity to come together and join new communities that are united by bonds of culture, ethnicity, and religion. This is fantastic, but we, as a student body, must do more. Sure, we have these tight-knit communities that protect and foster unity and understanding, but these communities are also subject to discrimination and bigotry. Racial jokes and epithets, discriminatory language and abuse exist, and are not as rare

as we may make them out to be. Such intolerance of certain communities, be they black, Jewish, Japanese, etc., undermines the foundations of that community, preventing understanding and growth. If these communities are subjected to such abuse, how can we expect them to thrive? How can we expect them to nurture their members and prepare them for the future? This is a time for us to find our way and learn who we truly are and what we want to be. In order to become individuals in that sense, we must have space to do so, not bitter words and whispered threats.

If we do not nip such bigotry in the bud, what hope do these communities hold for the future, when the intolerant will be far greater in number

and the intolerance more widespread? The world out there is full of boundless hatred of "others" and by allowing this to fester, no matter how innocent we may think it to be, we step aside and let the ignorance run rampant. It is, then, our duty to stamp out such bigotry, first by removing it from ourselves and then by spreading the word.

As we move through adolescence, struggling to understand our own place in this vast world, it is important to remember the purpose of community. We, as the new generation, must remember to foster these communities and aid them in any way possible. After all, by nurturing community, we better our own future and that of our posterity.



Niki Chen / The Spectator

## Oppressed by Stress and the Price of Success



Justin Straus / The Spectator

By TAHIA ISLAM

My family and I closed a significant chapter of our lives on Thursday, March 29 and moved away from the home where I was born. The home where my brother got into college, the home where I discovered my severe nut allergies, the home where I held that fifth birthday party with the malfunctioned piñata, and the home where I celebrated my Stuyvesant acceptance. That afternoon I came home to a wide-open door with moving men coming in and out, grabbing beige cartons holding sixteen years of my possessions as if they weighed two ounces each. It was unsettling to know that all the items you deem most important can be packed away into two old medium-sized Doritos boxes in an hour.

I walked past dust and the corner which used to hold our grandfather clock to my bedroom. I stopped at the door. For

the past ten years, I have written on that door phrases reflecting on my most momentous days. Skimming over them, from "I finally talked to him today!" to "Jonas Brothers <3," I stopped at the one dated the spring of eighth grade, "I finally got in!" As I looked at this door graffiti two years later, I realized that these four words didn't excite me; they just reminded me of why I came back to my bedroom for the last time anyway.

Not for that last sentimental parting, but to pack the bit that was left. My textbooks.

I left most of those for the last day, so I'd have them within grasp through the chaos of moving. After hastily packing them up, I threw a couple of quick parting glances at my old and cherished home and ran out to the car. I figured that the quicker I left, the quicker I could get to the new house and begin my mountain of homework. My dad left soon afterwards, looking grim as he handed over the old

keys to the landlord. My mother sat next to me, sniffing and discreetly wiping her eyes, while I felt on the verge of tears myself because of the terrible math test I took that morning and the history essay looming over me.

That day was when the true impact of Stuyvesant hit me.

An unfortunate truth is that we, as Stuyvesant students, compromise our personal well-being for academic achievement. My lack of sentiment about the monumental move is one sign of my gradual assimilation into the constricting Stuyvesant attitude. We are here for laudable reasons. We are here because we're determined and motivated students with high expectations for ourselves. But the emotional sacrifice and mental instability that we endure for high numbers should be unacceptable.

The competitive nature of Stuyvesant is a motivational tool academically, but it can be equally detrimental emotionally. As I strive to excel with grades and activities, the constant pressure to work harder, get higher test grades, and place higher at Speech tournaments has consumed my life and altered my attitude. My demeanor has shifted from freshmen year, and though I can praise maturity, I cannot help but question the catalyst behind the change. It has been positive thus far in terms of work ethic, but I've remained reserved due to the workload. I feel that I've lost not only the qualities I used to praise myself for, my sentimentality and sensitivity, but also my social and emotional bonds.

I've always prided myself on my exceptional relationship with

my parents, but as the amount of sleep I get each night lessens with every marking period, so does my patience. One night, as I sat at my computer toiling away, daylight long gone, I heard a knock on my door. I snapped a quick and angry "Whaaat?" as I broke away from my keyboard and saw my mother tiptoe in with a steaming cup of coffee: one sugar, two milks—my favorite. The embarrassment I felt for my reaction was overwhelming. But there was no time to waste apologizing, so I muttered an acknowledgement and returned to my work.

I have neglected to prioritize more important issues due to the inundating workload. I have detached myself from friends, family, and personal goals for the sake of academic growth. Stuyvesant students have grown to accept this 'fact,' labeling it a taste of reality before the real world: college. However, high school is not just a pit-stop and precursor to college. It's a critical stage of my maturity that should not be compromised. With the workload never-ending and vacations simply becoming more time to study, I have lost my personality and become another piece in the Stuyvesant game. Is my main goal to get a 100 on tomorrow's Chemistry exam or to spend my most crucial years of maturity developing my interests and enhancing my knowledge? The drive for success at Stuyvesant should not consume one's being, but for me, it has done just that. Even my previous safe havens, afterschool activities, have been compromised due to work. 'Enjoy' is just not

in my dictionary anymore.

Though I would love to provide a solution to this mental consumption that seems to be the price of success, I am still in search of one myself. To some hardworking Stuyvesant students, this detachment from outside life because of school is acceptable and necessary. However, high school is an experience that I want to cherish and not taint because of increased stress. Tarnishing my relationships with others and altering my previously happy-go-lucky attitude is an adverse effect of the Stuyvesant attitude.

The detachment I felt about my move has helped me realize that emotionally isolating myself for a number on a piece of paper is unacceptable. As determined Stuyvesant students, we let these four years fly by, obscured by advanced classes and packed schedules. We often forget that while our number one priority should be school, we cannot let it consume our entire personalities. At Camp Stuy, Mr. Teitel might say, "Choose two out of three: grades, sleep, and a social life," but I refuse to continue my high school career with that mentality. I need to balance all three, while keeping my emotional stability in check. I want to turn my new bedroom door into another graffiti mecca, with new experiences highlighted on there that do not have to do with school. I don't want the only monumental result of my high school life to be college and a puddle of tears. Instead, I want the memories to stand strong as a true testament to a healthy, happy maturity.

# Opinions

## The Solomon Column: Israel's Boomerang



By DANIEL SOLOMON

In her landmark work, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," Hannah Arendt posited that fascism had its roots in European imperialism. The expanding bullets that would rip up the bodies of countless World War I soldiers were first deployed in Africa. Concentration camps had their start in the Boer War, an internecine conflict between Dutch-descended Afrikaners and the British. Most importantly, a modern racism was what emerged from colonial rule.

Arendt, a German Jew who sat on the University of Chicago's prestigious Committee on Social Thought, argued that it was this prejudice that had a boomerang effect. Pseudoscientific biological studies that justified eugenics were close cousins of genocide; if Africans were untermenschen, so were Jews; there was only a small jump from the Kurtz of "Heart of Darkness" to Hitler.

To Arendt, World War II and the Holocaust represented Europe's chickens coming home to roost as ugly ideologies: that ra-

tionalized conquest and exploitation consumed the continent's otherwise liberal countries. Her thesis, then, is a warning to the contemporary world. Evil is never too far away. It is a worm searching for the cracks in the edifice of a free society.

Israel's structure is starting to show signs of decay, ones linked to its 45-year occupation and settlement of the West Bank. This is not due to conflict with the Palestinians nor the country's near-pariah status among the international community, but because the entanglement is leading to an erosion of the state's founding values and allowing radical elements within Israeli society to strengthen and entrench themselves within the political system.

Theodore Herzl, considered the founder of Zionism, was a non-observant Jew, as were most of his contemporaries who immigrated to the Holy Land under the British Mandate. Except for a few, prayer was ancillary to their agenda; they drained swamps, planted forests, desalinated the water, established kibbutzim, started cities, and built

institutions of mutual aid and government. When the state was declared in 1948, David Ben-Gurion envisioned a Jewish, democratic, and secular Israel.

But Ben-Gurion was a pragmatist above all, and he saw the need for compromise with a noisy minority. Ultra-Orthodox Jews, or Haredim, were given control over the rabbinate, which sets marriage and divorce policy, all government institutions were made to conform to Jewish law, and yeshiva students were exempt from military service. This accord, while distasteful to many, was acceptable to the majority.

In 1967, the status quo would begin to unravel after Israel romped in the Six Day War and won the West Bank, along with East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. Israel wanted to trade land for peace, but the Arabs refused to negotiate with the triumphant Jewish State. Under Golda Meir, Israel began its Civil Administration of the captured territories, a regime that had undeniable benefits: in the West Bank, between 1968 and 1972, agricultural production doubled and per capita income increased by 80 percent.

Meir, a member of Israel's left-wing Labor Party, permitted small-scale settlements in the West Bank for security reasons. The right-wing Likud Party, when it came to power later in the 1970s, had different intentions. Likud encouraged a massive wave of settlement-building and, with low property prices, lured many mainstream Israelis to neighborhoods just on the other side of the pre-1967 lines. The Haredim were motivated by something other than economics. With the same fervor of the

imperialists' who took up the white man's burden, the ultra-Orthodox sought to establish a greater Israel, a state that would have the same borders as did David's ancient kingdom. The West Bank was their Africa, the Palestinians their savages.

The communities they founded, a good number constructed illegally, were hotbeds for extremism. The residents rejected the trappings of a free society—democracy, pluralism, openness, the rights of women and minorities. Their retrograde views became a blight upon the land. They seized the fields and burned the groves of Palestinians; some even defaced Muslim places of worship.

And the Israeli government did nothing to stop them; in fact, it helped by perpetuating a culture of occupation in the West Bank. It forced Palestinians to travel on separate roads littered with checkpoints, authorized the use of administrative detention against West Bank inhabitants, and erected a separation barrier between Israel-proper and the territory.

Through successive right-wing and left-wing leaders, the settlements grew because governments needed the support of small, radical parties to control a majority of the seats in the Knesset (Israel's House of Representatives), and today, 300,000 Israelis live in the West Bank, an arrangement that has drawn the ire of the international community and arguably violates the terms of the Geneva Conventions.

For years, the Jewish State, like Europe's great powers, was able to maintain a free society at home and an occupation abroad. Now, the West Bank

cancer is metastasizing. As the Haredi population explodes, the group is able to exert more political and cultural influence. The Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu, bolstered by alliances with xenophobic and religious parties such as Yisrael Beiteinu and Shas, has pushed legislation that undermines Israeli democracy. Bills that allow Jewish communities to establish anti-Arab covenants on property and subject domestic non-governmental organizations to heavy fines if they advocate for a boycott of Israeli products or institutions have been enacted. Currently under consideration is legislation that would expand the definition of libel to include some criticisms of the government.

Then there is the raging culture war. Jerusalem's Western Wall has been turned into a Haredi synagogue from which women and Reform Jews are chased away, where Christian clerics are attacked. In some ultra-Orthodox communities, the national transportation service has begun to run segregated bus lines. Haredi have even tried to impose dress codes. Last December, in an incident that attracted international attention, a gang of ultra-Orthodox men accosted an 8-year old girl on her way to school, cursing at her and spitting on her for her supposedly immodest attire.

These facts are not easy to point out. They will lead some to charge that I am a self-hating Jew. But I write these words out of love for Israel, for what it has represented in the past, and for all that it stands to lose. Europe kept its colonies. Israel should not.

## iProcrastinate

It's easy for students to navigate away from a note-taking application in lieu of something like Angry Birds—and that's assuming they even bother to open a word processor in the first place.

The tablet—the iPad and the innumerable other look-alikes that have since followed it—is undeniably a cool and incredible feat of technology, but we're using it all wrong. All the signs point to tremendous strides in education, but in execution we've done nothing but take advantage of this new innovation. In my experience, it's rare to see someone on an iPad that isn't playing a game or videochatting with a friend in another room, and, to be frank, it's detrimental to my education.

It's all too easy to bypass the Board of Education network and access censored sites, and after a stressful night of studying even the most dedicated student may waver at the temptation to take a ten minute break from class and surf the internet. Procrastination spills over into school hours as students make the decision to do homework during the class itself. They appear to the teacher to be busily taking notes on a lesson while bs-ing the previous evening's work instead.

With so many distractions at home, Stuyvesant aims for a concentrated learning environment for a reason, and instead of fostering that, the use of tablets has merely served to undermine it. It promotes laziness and allows students to tune out, and it's a distraction for everyone who can see the screens.

But this isn't just about me being petty about how other

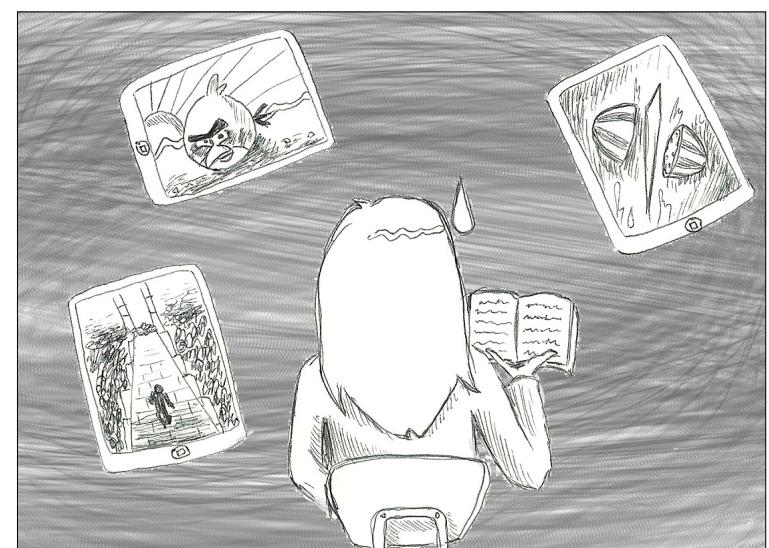
people spend their time in class. To be frank, I don't really care about other people wasting their time—it's just a point of frustration. I can deal with frustration. What I absolutely can't deal with, however, are the academic habits tablet-toters have begun to develop. We've all had that one or two times where we've hastily scribbled out a few sentences for English before class or filled out a Spanish assignment on the way up the escalator, but the internet on tablets allows students to complete homework in class, without a protective backpack covering their desk to block the wandering eyes of an oblivious instructor. If the work gets checked, they just show them the tablet, claiming it was done the night before.

During a lesson, they look up facts and spit them out during discussion, much to the impression of the teacher. Practices like this undermine the students in class

who printed their work out the night before and have dutifully brought it to class, those who are legitimately mitted to learning and participating and don't rely on the speed of the worldwide web for their answers.

The tablet has incredible educational potential—there are some really innovative applications that can certainly enrich the school experience. But, as students, we have taken advantage of this new technology to the extent that we hardly deserve to use them within the building. You're not beating the system; you're hurting your own education.

So to everyone reading who is guilty of this crime: stop. It's obnoxious and unfair and detracts from those who still make an effort to work hard. Go back to using a laptop, or do what the rest of us do: write. With a pencil and a notebook, the old-fashioned way. Do you even remember how?



Judy Lee / The Spectator



By OLIVIA FOUNTAIN

When Stuyvesant's current seniors were freshmen, the iPad didn't even exist.. In the four years that have passed since, words like 'iPad' and 'tablet' have become so integrated into teenage culture that it's difficult to imagine life without them.

When the iPad first appeared on the market in 2010, possibilities for its use in education were endless. Textbooks could be loaded onto a piece of metal lighter than just a notebook, writing could be stored and shared effortlessly no matter where you were, and information would be cheaper and more widely accessible than ever. News stories circulated about entire schools getting iPads for their students, as we who remained relegated to the land of pens and loose-leaf waited enviously until a school as large as Stuyvesant could finally something like that for us.

As expected, this has yet to happen. There's no way a public school like ours can afford to buy a couple thousand tablets—but that hasn't stopped students from going out and getting their own. The rising trend of integrating technology into daily life has seen more and more kids toting their apple-banded birthday presents into the building. Every single one of my classes is peppered with students bent over their sleek mini-computers, jabbing away at the screen as they take notes—the very picture of education in the twenty first century.

That's what it looks like from the front of the classroom, but the back row offers a very different perspective. A quick sweep of the screens facing my direction will almost always find the majority of them displaying a game or a chat room, and none of the teachers have a clue. Since many tablets also have gaming capability (and a lot of it,

# Opinions

## Diary of A Mad Senior: You Can't Always Get What You Want

Mark Zhang / The Spectator



By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

Dear Student:

Congratulations! I am delighted to offer you a place in the Class of 2016 at [Desirable University]."

That's the ultimate goal, isn't it? When you receive your acceptance letters at the end of the college application ordeal, there is that sigh of relief and the thought that you have finally gotten what you deserve.

It makes sense, because the Stuyvesant mentality is that if you are an intelligent, driven, hard-working student, then you will be rewarded after three and a half years' worth of toil by an acceptance letter to Desirable University (you know, the names that grace not only the top of the U.S. News and World Report's rankings, but also the flags that contemptuously stare at you from walls of room 407), and thus you will be set for life. And so you do all of the following: you become a test-taking machine and ace all things SAT,

### the diary of a mad senior

all of this, when you are finally accepted to Desirable University, you think that you, Well-Rounded Student, are entitled to that education.

The problem is that these days being admitted to Desirable University isn't enough. I was Well-Rounded Student, as a scholar-writer-musician-volunteer. During my junior year, I thought getting into college would be the hurdle; during my senior year, I learned the hard way that the race doesn't end there.

Here's my situation: I applied to a wide range of reaches, targets, academic and financial safeties; I was accepted to nine, waitlisted at four, and flat-out rejected from three. Just based on my results, I had narrowed my choices down to three dream schools, so I sat back and waited for the financial aid award letters to arrive. All of the officers my parents had talked to said that a middle-class family with our Estimated Family Contribution probably wouldn't receive that much, but with a combination of federal grants or loans and me making some money on my own, it would be tolerable.

When I finally received those letters, I was shocked at the dollar signs and digits staring back at me. At each of the three, I was given a negligible amount in either work-study or academic stipend, and a series of unsubsidized loans (essentially, nothing that would really help my family pay for my education). There was no way my family could come up with enough money to cover \$60,000 worth of full expenses each year. I looked at it as nothing more than a mistake, and shoved the letters into a folder, hoping the matter would work itself out later.

But later became soon, and I realized I had to take some kind of action. I did everything I could to remediate the situation, because I felt I deserved that big-name-school education. I contacted financial aid officers at each respective college (perhaps pestered is more appropriate) to see if there was any way they could reconsider my award. I wrote a series of appeals letters, explaining exactly what we could and could not afford and specifically why this was the case, offering to send them as much information and documentation as was necessary to verify the claims I was making. The long and short of it was thus: attending either of the schools would give my family over a hundred thousand dollars worth of debt after four years, and I could not ask my near-retirement-aged parents to take money from their life savings to fund my education, forcing them to sacrifice a livelihood which already was being made difficult by the high tax rate and

cost of living that plague New York City residents.

Their response? Sorry, but we can't give you anything. Times three.

Translation? Well, if you can't pay, then we'll take a wealthy private school kid from off the wait list and offer him your spot, because he can. And no, we aren't sorry.

First, I cried. Then, I screamed bloody murder and punched the wall a few times and proceeded to cry some more. I felt the Stuyvesant dream slowly slipping through my fingers. I did everything that I was supposed to do and fought tooth and nail with tens of thousands of other kids to earn that spot at Desirable University, and I felt like it was all for naught. To think that they were willing to

ny how not five months later, someone from that same office apologized for not being able to work out a deal that would make it possible for me to attend. The truth is, these universities are businesses that want to maintain their sizeable funds as well as their reputation of having a diverse student body, so most of the class is comprised of students from opposite sides of the financial spectrum. And at a time of huge economic downturn where the interest on federal loans to pay for college surpasses the rate on mortgages and the student debt loan crisis is the new housing bubble, it's incredibly hard for students whose families are stuck in the middle to decide how much is too much, and whether the investment is worthwhile.

It didn't help for me that my peers were all committing to their dream schools. I began to wonder, with jealousy and a bit of disdain, if they came from extremely low-income families and were being offered free or highly subsidized rides, or if they were a whole lot wealthier than I thought they were. As I spoke to more of my peers, though, I was hearing the same thing: "Oh, I'll have to take out a bunch of loans, but the education from [Desirable University] is so worth it." But the financial aid officers and college counselors told me, "You don't want to graduate with that much debt; it isn't worth it regardless of the school." When you hear contradictory things like that, you can't help but be conflicted.

For me, it was a catch-22 either way – I could either take on the debt for a brand-name school and pray to the deities of the job market that I'd get a job lucrative enough to pay it off (which is what many of my peers are doing, I learned), or I could graduate debt-free from a less prestigious school and hope that I'd get hired despite my not-nearly-as-impressive-but-decent undergraduate credentials. Then, even though my major is currently Undecided, I started throwing graduate school into the mix, which adds a whole new layer of complexity. All of it was way too much for me to wrap my seventeen-year-old mind around as I oscillated back and forth; it was like a war in my mind that I couldn't win.

But eventually, after extensively weighing the pros and cons, I decided to kiss my idealistic view of Desirable University goodbye. I opted for a public university that would provide me with an extensive education for half the price tag (and allow me to graduate without a small suburban house's worth of debt).

At first, I regretted my decision. Whenever anybody brought up the subject of college, I would get oddly quiet and there would be an awkward pause after which I'd mutter something about not wanting to talk about it. It was painful for me to have to answer questions about which Desirable University I would be going to with the name of my Chosen College. The thing that I hated the most though, were the trite comments like, "You'll be fine wherever you go," or "Hey, that's a great school," which were intended to make me feel better but only made me feel worse. I couldn't let go of the could-have-been that was so obtainable yet

unobtainable.

I'll admit that I still have to convince myself every day that it is going to be okay. I wake up each morning and tell myself that Desirable University is severely missing out (while

**While I may not be sure of where it is exactly that I'm going to be in four years, I'll find my own way there.**

### Their response? Sorry, but we can't give you anything. Times three.

### Translation? Well, if you can't pay, then we'll take a wealthy private school kid from off the wait list and offer him your spot, because he can. And no, we aren't sorry.

turn me away so easily in favor of a less diligent kid whose rich daddy could buy the school a new wing of the library (maybe even a whole new library) made me want to scream, "there's no such thing as meritocracy!" I wasn't sure with whom I was more enraged – Stuyvesant for setting me up with a dream that would be crushed, or the Desirable University-types who did the crushing.

What's ironic is how they so blatantly deceive people. I remember attending a fly-in at one of the three colleges I was accepted to, where the director of financial aid said something along the lines of "We have hundreds of billions of dollars in our endowment, which is comparable to huge institutions, but we have a small class size – that means that if money is an issue, don't worry about it because we can work it out for you." Fun-

**I wasn't sure who I was more enraged with – Stuyvesant for setting me up with a dream that would be crushed, or the Desirable University-types who did the crushing.**

you study hard even while taking a rigorous course load and wind up in the top five percent of your class, you devote all of your sparse spare time to a variety of extracurricular activities and programs, you spend hours writing and proofreading essays before submitting, and you wow your alumni interviewers with your conversational skills and spunky personality. Because of

composing passive-aggressive messages to the financial aid officers in my head, of course), and that in the long run, everything I have done will eventually pay off. Judging by the fact that I refuse to rule out the possibility of transferring to Desirable University after a year or two, I'm still dealing with the problem of actually believing it.

But I also vow to myself every day that I'll make it work. So I may be going to school with Strong Island lax bros and girls who are convinced that Queens is not part of New York City, but at least I know that there are some bright kids who, like me, are there because of financial reasons. I may not have access to a super-intensive interdisciplinary program my freshman year, but I'll certainly get special treatment and make useful connections as a Presidential Scholar. It may sound a bit cliché, but where there's a will there's a way, and while I may not be sure of where it is exactly that I'm going to be in four years, I'll find my own way there.

The long and short of it is that no, you don't always get what you want – I didn't, and believe me, it nags me on the inside every day. But with all the uncertainty in my future, it's nice to know that my finances won't be the thing that screws me over. So in ten years when Rich Boy's father drops dead (from a heart attack after seeing the 8-figure digits owed to Desirable University for undergraduate and graduate studies) and leaves him penniless with tons of loans to repay, I'll be living in a house that's worth his debt, making money from the job that I got because I was the top of my class as an undergraduate and that helped me get into a top-notch graduate school. And I'll be saving up so that my child can go to the Desirable University of his or her dreams.

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# Humor

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

## Administrators Sack Senior Prom



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

This year, the administration has mandated students to dress more puritanically and wear potato sacks to senior prom.

By LISA HUANG

Stuyvesant administration stoked the flames of the controversial dress code debate by recently mandating that students dress more puritanically. "We want a modest look for our kids, something like a classy burlap potato sack," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "So that's what we did. Everyone must now have

sacks." According to faculty, the potato sack mandate will be extended to senior prom. Prom chaperones will deny entry to anyone that is in violation of the dress code.

Following this announcement regarding senior prom, Stuyvesant students have expressed their unanimous disapproval. In an act of defiance, the student body has refused

to let the new dress code put a damper on its end-of-the-year celebrations. In discovering a clever loophole, the students have set off a fierce race to see who can wear the raciest potato sack to prom.

While many students will be creating their potato sack outfits at home, there are a few committed seniors who have commissioned renowned fashion houses like Dolce and Gabbana to design the skimpiest sacks allowed within the new guidelines. "It's not easy making a potato sack look sexy," a spokesperson for Dolce and Gabbana said. "But our sacks are known to push the envelope. We're talking micro-minis, cut-outs, plunging necklines, the works. You'll love the way your sack looks, I guarantee it."

The students now view the mandate not as an impediment, but as a challenge. "The administration probably thinks that they're really clever by making us dress in potato sacks, but joke's on them. I have the slickest silk sack that's guaranteed to drive the girls wild," senior Edward Li said. "My date can't decide on what kind of potato sack she wants."

Potato sack manufacturers are ecstatic about the large increase in sack sales, but have issued a nationwide warning about certain possible side effects that may result from sack to skin contact. "Our sales just began to skyrocket, but now we have a mob of lawsuits. There are boys and girls complaining about 'skin problems.' The only problem they have is that they don't know how to take care of themselves," farmer Gerald Fitzgerald said. "The moral of the story is to use protection when you wear potato sacks, kids."

## Dear Ms. Leading

By MS. LEADING

Dear Ms. Leading,

1) I've been late to my English class every day this week. Do you have any advice on how I can wake up in the morning on time?

Never use an alarm clock. Nor should you ask someone else to wake you. Rely entirely on yourself; you're a Stuyvesant student. Your sheer intelligence should jolt you awake when it's time to go to class, like a blistering hot needle puncturing your skin. It won't do that if it's insulted by the presence of an alarm clock.

2) The indecent pop-ups that plague my computer have been distracting me! How do I stay focused as I do my homework?

Put off all your homework until fifteen minutes before class. The exhilarating pressure of having to complete your assignment in such a short window of time will ensure that your thoughts never leave your work. Be warned: awesome grades ahead.

3) I am new to this school and I am having trouble making friends. Why does everyone run away from me, and how can I get people to love me?

Patronize new people immediately upon meeting them. Proceed to inform them of all the ways you are superior to the underlings. They will think highly of you and desire to be around you at all times. Make sure to never make direct eye contact with your new friends, only look down at them and remain aloof. This will also make them want to bask in your glorious, powerful aura. If they run

away in tears, it is to inform their friends of your awesomeness; this will happen regularly.

4) I haven't been able to get a prom date for the past two months. How can I get a girl to accept my corsage of love?

Swagger. It's all about the swagger. Your swagger will serve as your colorful tail that makes the other peacocks look like pigeons. It all begins with a generous application of the finest selection of Axe body spray from the local Rite Aid. The aroma of the Axe will display your evident taste for the finer things

**Ensure that your shirt is adorned with at least four differently colored rhinestones.**

in life. You must also don a flamboyant Ed Hardy t-shirt. Ensure that your shirt is adorned with at least four differently colored rhinestones. This colorful display will exhibit your love of keeping things spicy. As you approach the woman, show off your sensitive side by serenading her with a romantic version of Lil Wayne's latest release. Make sure to integrate a few "YOLO's" into the proposal, and she will instantly be enthralled by your infinite swag-level. You may have 99 problems, but getting the ladies isn't one.

## Herman Cain Enters Race For Student Union

By TIMMY LEVIN  
and DANIEL TEEHAN

In the face of escalating accusations of sexual misconduct, pizza magnate and former Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain entered the race for Student Union (SU) President. Cain went on to win the primary election in a landslide, receiving 64 percent of the popular vote with 17 ballots cast in his favor.

Cain attributes his entry into the race to new, more relaxed regulations recently instituted by "the prestigious and not-at-all illegitimate Stuyvesant Board of Elections (BOE)," senior and BOE chair Bumsoo Kim said. On Friday, April 20, Cain announced his candidacy and launched his Facebook campaign page "Hermy 4 Prez <3."

"The new rules were just the push I needed," he said, "I am so glad to finally be campaigning for a position where I won't have to worry about doing any work once I am elected. I think

**"I am so glad to finally be campaigning for a position where I won't have to worry about doing any work once I am elected."**  
**—Herman Cain, former Republican presidential candidate**

this will really help me come into my own as a politician."

Cain entered the race with energy and determination, plastering the hallways with fresh and appealing campaign posters and championing several radical policies.

In his campaign announcement, Cain advocated a new era of facial hair in Stuyvesant. "My refined and trimmed moustache is what Stuyvesant needs to recover from the bearded years of Principal Stanley Teitel," Cain said.

When asked about his policies, or really anything at all, Cain is quick to refer to his "9-9-9 plan," which includes implementing a nine-period schedule, starting at 9:00 a.m., and giving students a new nine-minute grace period between bells. When asked how his extended passing time was better than his fellow candidate junior Adam Lieber's five-minute alternative, Cain said, "The idea of a five-minute passing is preposterous, and frankly I don't think that 9-9-5 makes

very much sense, do you? It just sounds silly."

"Did someone just say the same number three times?" Assistant Principal Mathematics Maryann Ferrara said. "I love it when that happens."

Cain's addition to the race and his fresh perspective has forced many of his candidates to reconsider their platforms and adjust their strategies in order to keep up.

"Have you seen his pamphlets?" SU presidential candidate junior Calvin Ng said. "His inclusion of free pizza coupons in campaign literature has completely redefined the traditional pamphlet-sudoku paradigm. How am I supposed to compete with that?"

Some candidates like Lieber have criticized Cain for his age. "My opponent must have repeated his junior year an astounding 59 times to even be eligible to run in a high school election. It's simply ludicrous," he said.

**"His inclusion of free pizza coupons in campaign literature has completely redefined the traditional pamphlet-sudoku paradigm."**  
**—Calvin Ng, junior and SU presidential candidate**

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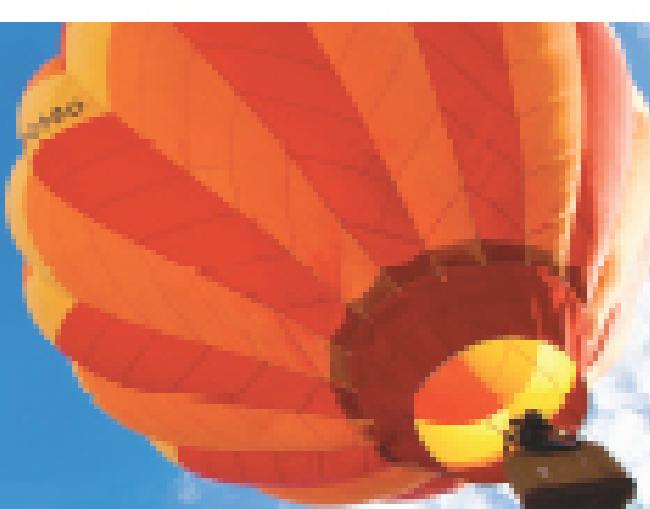
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# The Kevins of Stuyvesant



\*An accurate sample size (20%) of the Stuyvesant male population.

**By the Photo Department**

# Arts and Entertainment

## TriBeCa Film



Niki Chen / The Spectator

### *Struck by Lightning*

By ANIKA RASTGIR

High school senior and aspiring journalist Carson Phillips (Chris Colfer) doesn't let anything get in the way of his attending getting into his dream college. In "Struck by Lightning," Carson relies on getting into Northwestern University as his ticket out of his small town, which is based on where Colfer grew up. However, the dream will never be reality, as Phillips dies after he is struck by lightning in the very beginning of the film. The remainder of the story focuses on his high school life a couple of weeks before the freak accident.

The dark comedy balances frequent witty one-liners with an array of caustic personalities. In a memorable scene, Carson's mother, Sheryl (Allison Janey) lets her son know that she used to hide attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication in his food when he was younger when he wouldn't behave.

Carson, with his single-minded pursuit to become a journalist and his disdain for his apathetic peers, is humorous to watch, but not always relatable. Through advice from his unreliable counselor (Angela Kinsey), who has never heard of Northwestern, he decides to start a literary magazine and submit it to the school to better his chances of acceptance.

Keeping in the vein of teenage movies, Carson is only able to get people to write for the journal after he blackmails the crème de la crème of the school, mostly using their various sexual indiscretions as bargaining chips. While he is nuanced, the other teenagers in the movie fall into the stereotypical roles, such as the cheerleader afraid of leaving home (Sarah Hyland), the jock (Robbie Amell), and the closeted gay theater aficionado (Graham Rogers).

The film doesn't spend too much time on the blackmailing, however, which allows the movie to be humorous without relying too much on a gimmick.

Malerie (Rebel Wilson), Carson's best friend, provides charm and spunk as she records everything around her with her camcorder. The film disperses her shaky video recordings throughout, including an especially poignant scene where Carson describes why he writes.

Colfer, who wrote the script, focuses much of his attention on the adults in the film, who give strong, thoughtful performances. Carson and his mother have a comfortable, albeit non-traditional, rapport with each other, as they trade barbs constantly.

In an especially haunting scene, Sheryl confronts her estranged husband's fiancée (Christina Hendricks), reminding her that she was once in the younger woman's position as well. By dint of an absentee father (Dermot Mulroney), a constantly inebriated mother and a grandmother who suffers from Alzheimer's and cannot recognize her own grandson, it is easy to see why Phillips is so jaded.

The film ends the way it begins. We are shown his death, only this time it is in sequential order. Carson does not leave behind any legacy nor does he die loved by the student body. Carson dies before having the chance to reach his prime and while his absence is noticeable, there is no dramatic immediate change, fitting well with the small town society Colfer has crafted in the film.

### *Insomnia Is Preferable To This Sleepless Night*

By MOLLIE FORMAN

Last year, "Attack the Block," a British film about London hoodlums fighting aliens, perfected the formula of action, suspense, and several truckloads of camp to create something brilliant. "Sleepless Night," directed by Frederic Jardin, might be attempting the same feat—though it's never clear if the filmmakers are serious in their ineptitude—but comes across as a boring thriller that is funny only in its utter insipidity.

The film opens with a pair of men, Vincent (Tomer Sisley) and Manuel (Laurent Stocker), chasing down and murdering a pair of drug traffickers for their enormous bag of cocaine. Despite the canned action music, it is a passable action sequence, and probably the film's peak. The next scene reveals that Vincent and Manuel are actually cops moonlighting as porters for the local nightclub owner. Vincent even has a sweet little boy named Thomas to return home to, which is bad luck when his buyers get antsy and decide to kidnap and hold Thomas and hold him as collateral. Thus begins the titular sleepless night, in which Vincent staggers back and forth across the club, hoping to stumble into the rescue of his son.

The film would be nothing more than a harmless TV time-filler if not for the blatant and disgusting misogyny that even the most exploitative Bond films avoid. A woman Vincent saves from being date-raped (taking out his manly frustrations on her date by beating him to a pulp in front of her) follows him around like a sick puppy, allowing him to kiss her whenever he spots people to avoid, and even has a pathetic make-out session with his cheek as he scans the club for his pursuers.

The real crime, however, lies in the lady cop (Lizzie Brocheré) who suspects Vincent of his illicit activity. There is an attempt at a fantastic device when she sees him hide the drugs in the ceiling of the men's room, and promptly switches it to the same place on the ladies' side. This is a missed opportunity not just in the epic cat-and-mouse game it might have created, but also in the attempt to craft a single meaningful character. When Vincent and the woman come face to face, he grabs her hair and shoves her into the kitchen freezer, slamming her around and crouching behind her as she moans in a disturbingly pornographic manner, not even attempting to fight back. After twisting her arm and leaving her locked inside, Vincent spends the next ten minutes in a pitched battle with her male colleague as she huddles crying in the freezer. There is literally no use for her character but as a punching bag for the surrounding males, who really deserve a solid beating themselves.

By the end of a meager 100 minutes, nearly half the time has been spent hoping for the main character to meet his demise, just so the movie might end. Whatever the director's intention, this film failed at achieving it; if you want an adrenaline rush, your time is better spent reviewing the Bourne films on pay-per-view.

### *The Fifth Estate*

By TONG NIU

It is said that when the government fails to protect and address the interests of the people, the job is passed down to the fourth estate. But what happens when the press becomes another arm of the government? Director Stephen Maing offers his answer in "High Tech, Low Life," a documentary about two Chinese bloggers, Tiger Temple and Zola, reporting on the news the government feels is "unfit" to publish.

Zhang Shihe, known online as Tiger Temple, is a fifty-something "citizen reporter" whose distrust of the Chinese government has prompted him to travel and report the overlooked issues in impoverished rural China.

The quirky, cat-loving bachelor began blogging when he captured a brutal murder on his phone's camera. When police arrived on the scene, their primary concern was not catching the culprit, but questioning Zhang about the photographs he took. Zhang reminds us that perception is power, and the Chinese government will go to great lengths to preserve its image.

Turning to the newer generation is the story of Zhou Shuguang (Zola) whose attitude towards Chinese censorship is far more volatile. As interested in social awareness as he is in personal fame, the thirty-something blogger reflects a cheekier attitude. While Zhang's contempt for the government comes from its failures to provide for the people who built it, Zhou's views are more Westernized. The youth seeks not to protect the forgotten peasantry and elderly, but to promote individuality over the group thinking that dominates Communist culture. Loud and self-promoting, Zhou's blogs always frame himself—his interactions with locals and his reactions.

The full force of the Chinese propaganda in the film is lost in translation. Best viewed in its original Chinese, "High Tech, Low Life" excels in its ability to capture the irony of modern Communist China, a world best demonstrated by one Beijing local whose shanty home was scheduled to be demolished by the Reconstruction Bureau. He put up posters of Communist party leaders and the great Mao so any destruction of his property could be construed as anti-party actions. This move has halted demolition plans.

Throughout the film, the clash between Tiger Temple's view of blogging and Zola's view of blogging is very evident. Nevertheless, the result is the same a gradual knocking down of the Great Firewall of China.



Niki Chen / The Spectator

# Arts and Entertainment

## Festival

### *Obsessed With Sex*

By JAMES KOGAN

We live in an age of relative female emancipation—the days of the 1950s housewife, or the 1910s non-voter, are long gone. However, our culture still wears a tight leash. Sex, America's favorite three-letter word, takes its toll regardless of how far we've come. "Sexy Baby" is Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus's attempt to take stock of how hyper-sexualization affects females all across the age spectrum, a patchwork of honest documentary footage that sheds light on how deeply the issue runs.

Take 12-year old Winnie, for example. She's your average, tech-savvy NYC teenage girl. She acts and sings, loves Lady Gaga, and, of course, spends a good majority of her time on Facebook. It is also her obsession with the website that fuels her conflicts with her parents, who at a few points in the documentary go so egregiously far as to, dare I say it, force her to deactivate her account. One such instance followed shortly after she posted a video of her little sister Myrtle singing and dancing along to the profanity-filled hip-hop hit "Teach Me How To Dougie"; another deactivation occurred after she posted suggestive photos of herself from a late-night "photo shoot" with her friend. Suffering from withdrawal, Winnie's dramatic one-liners come into play, with grim realizations such as, "Facebook is literally 30 percent of my life and it shouldn't be." At times, she can be even more melodramatic: "Facebook is a beautiful place and I can't have it."

Through Bauer and Gradus's candid lens, we see Winnie's attempt to find the middle ground between utilizing the website for whatever a 12-year-old can use a social networking site for, and actually being sucked into the second reality of an online life. Though she is young, she is also precocious. In moments during which she speaks directly to the camera, we see a level of self-reflection beyond her years. Facebook Winnie is not necessarily all that is Winnie, she realizes, but her outward presentation of herself inevitably shapes the person she is offline.

Juxtaposed with the scandalous antics of Winnie are the stories of 22-year-old Laura and 32-year old Nichole. Laura's story is somewhat of a somber one—she is fully convinced that a labiaplasty, a plastic surgery that will trim her lady-parts into a "designer vagina," will undoubtedly better her life. We see her at every stage along the way, from the first medical appointment to her post-op recovery. Unfortunately, it is difficult not to find fault with her plight and wonder how altering her "roast beef curtains," a term used to describe the appearance of the vagina, will ever really change the quality of her existence. Regardless, there are sections of the documentary that are incredibly poignant, especially those shedding light on the tender moments between her and her mother, who accompanies her through all parts of the procedure.

The story of Nichole, however, is a different kind of rebirth story. Attempting to escape her past as renowned porn star Nakita Kash, she removed herself from the industry and began teaching pole-dancing to women instead. The movie shows her in her most average moments—doing housework or roller-blading with her dog—and some of her most beautiful ones as well. We get an inside glimpse at the love she has for her husband, likening their moments of intimacy to pure lovemaking as opposed to the "sport [expletive deleted]ing" of the adult film industry. Finally, we follow her attempts to conceive a child with her husband. In this, the documentary finds its happiest ending. Nichole sheds her old pornographic skin; escaping the sex that society has pushed on her, and reveals herself as an overjoyed new mother.



Director Jay Gammill talks to an interviewer about his new film "Free Samples" at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.

### *Free Samples*

By EMMALINA GLINSKIS

The best way to cure a hangover at nine in the morning is with some good old-fashioned over-processed ice cream—vanilla or chocolate only. In Tribeca Film Festival's highlighted feature narrative "Free Samples," directed by festival newcomer and young artist Jay Gammill, a generic quirky comedic heart-warmer is enlivened by overbearing snarky wit and charm. When law-school dropout and budding alcoholic Jillian (Jess Weixler) begrudgingly agrees to cover her best friend's shift at the "Mike's Dream" ice cream truck for the duration of the day in suburban Los Angeles, she is forced to confront her premature mid-life crisis while handing out free samples to strangers and friends alike.

It is quickly apparent that Jillian is in no mood to be dealing with hungry customers. Her sassy, hungover comments add juvenile humor to the simple plot line and setting. Her "having a bad day" attitude is apparent and, at times, annoying as she interacts with creepy comic book weirdos, annoyed foreign neighbors, manipulative kids, and hippie hobos with feisty comebacks, complaints, and mannerisms. But her sarcastic bliss can't last forever, as Jillian's confrontations with customers start to have an increasingly profound effect on her unintended self-reflection. She hears the inspiring life story of a retired Hollywood star, helps a friend's sibling confront his addiction, meets her previous evening's one night stand, and even receives comfort from an eight-year old girl.

Jillian's constant bad attitude is sometimes off-putting as her shrewdness gets overshadowed by her bothersome immaturity. Her self-realization, the supposed climax of the feature narrative, is very oddly timed and sudden as opposed to gradual, which damages the viewer's overall satisfaction. A few awkwardly written lines stand out as well, though they can easily be played off as another contributing factor to the "indie" tone of the film. The strongest aspect of the movie is oddly not the overly pessimistic protagonist, but the star-studded supporting roles that the film has to offer. Indie professionals like Jesse Eisenberg and Jason Ritter are minor characters, but their obvious expertise and ability to carry a scene force viewers to ask why they aren't featured more throughout the movie.

In essence, "Free Samples" takes a seemingly boring every-day plot and tries to juice it with overly quirky characters and odd situations. Though some jokes are laudable and separate scenes stand well on their own, the movie as a whole seems patchy, oddly paced, and overly sarcastic. The movie is definitely not a masterpiece and is not the best among other works in the festival. Instead, "Free Samples" seems like it would fit better as a friendly campus dorm "indie movie night" type of cinema, but nothing further. Maybe Jillian should have stuck to cold showers and black coffee after all.



Niki Chan / The Spectator

### *One Night in Havana*

By JAMES KOGAN

To decide on a single coherent impression of "Una Noche," Lucy Molloy's debut film, is quite the challenge. Under the guise of a coming-of-age story, the film tackles the reality of life in Cuba in a very human way, together pairing anguish and frustration with teenage pining in a world seldom seen by American eyes.

At the center of the film are three teens: slick-haired and muscular Raul, with his fantasies of lovely Miami; his friend and coworker Elio, with whom he suffers in a grimy hotel kitchen; and Elio's sister Lila, whose arm hair provokes her peers plastic teenagers to tease her about her delayed womanhood.

While it is primarily Raul, whose desires to leave the country set the film's action in motion, it is the many women of the film who accelerate the events that unfold, each contributing in her own way to the party's inevitable departure.

Raul's mother, a weathered woman with a soft voice, is a compassionate character, forced to prostitute herself to make ends meet. Raul undoubtedly cares for her, but is detached—he resists her physical affection, but scours the city's black markets in search of Vilatraxina, an expensive drug to combat the effects of the HIV that his mother picked up from "dealing with" tourists.

Younger than Raul's mother, but not by much, is one of Raul's mistresses, a fair skinned woman who feeds him rich pastries and gives him American technology in exchange for the sexual reprieve he provides.

On the other side of the spectrum, albeit with a similarly minor role, is a young girlfriend of Raul's who provides one of the movie's many comic moments. When her inquisitive father decides to spy on his daughter and she discovers him, we are treated to shrill barks of chastisement in his direction. The point is clear: there is nothing like the wrath of a Latin American woman.

And finally, Lila, whose brief narration consisting of local adages and reflections on the past tie the different parts of the movie together. She is unlike all of other Raul's love interests; resisting his advances, she pores over their interactions in private, recalling those moments in earnest. This is indicative of her character—beyond the taekwondo-practicing, hair-on-her-arms, tomboyish exterior is an unsteady, unsure pre-teen girl.

From the first frame, what we see is a surprise for American audiences. The film paints a richly colored and sun-drenched Havana—dirty white porticos of showy tourist hotels, grainy but rich reds of meat butchered in the filthy kitchens of these hotels, ashy grays of the dilapidated slums of the city, deep blues of the 90 miles that separate the holding pen of the miserable teens and the promises of Miami, a father Raul has never met, the chic populace and wealth waiting to be reaped. However, while his dream is never truly realized, Molloy takes the scenic route, infallibly capturing the local culture and essence through an honest lens.

### *Nancy, Please Smack Some Sense Into This Film*

By NINA WADE

When a film makes you sympathize with the woman who punches the protagonist in the face, it might not be the best sign. Unfortunately, director Andrew Semans's debut, "Nancy, Please," does just that. The film follows Ph.D. student Paul (Will Rogers), who, after moving in with his girlfriend Jen (Rebecca Lawrence), discovers that he has left the subject of his dissertation, an annotated copy of Charles Dickens's "Little Dorrit," at his old house. However, when he tries to get it back, his old roommate Nancy (Eleonore Hendricks) stops him, instead choosing to unleash havoc upon his life—or so she intends. Ultimately, Paul comes across as a whiny, self-involved college kid with "whiteboyproblems" stamped across his forehead.

The film's biggest issue is that it makes Paul completely unlikeable. We're supposed to sympathize with him, but it's hard to feel bad for someone on a scholarship program to graduate school who sits around all day—he can't work without that single copy, apparently—and complains about his ex-roommate to his best friend and his girlfriend. When Jen finally confronts him about his apathy, her side of the argument—that she can't keep supporting him while he mopes around without putting in any more effort than a few phone calls—is far more understandable.

Moreover, Nancy is given absolutely no characterization beyond hysterical psychopath. We don't know why she refuses to return his book, or why she seems hell-bent on thwarting his every effort to reclaim it. At one point, Paul uses his old key to enter her house in the middle of the night to get it back, and Nancy, mistaking him for a burglar, attacks him with a baseball bat. The film paints this incident as an act of malice, but it seems like a completely logical reaction to the circumstances. When they have a final confrontation and Paul yells at her for "ruining his life," it's far more tempting to cheer when Nancy punches him and tell him to grow a pair and stop whining.

The film is well shot, and both Rogers and Hendricks play their poorly-written characters as best they can. However, the film still manages to simultaneously bore and infuriate, and though the evil ex-roommate plot has plenty of potential, almost all of it is wasted.

# Arts and Entertainment

## TriBeCa Film

### *The First (and Hopefully Last) Winter*

By TONG NIU

Benjamin Dickinson's apocalyptic film, "First Winter," attempts to tease out raw human baseness from a group of young Brooklynites, when all they want to do is have sex and do yoga.

The film opens with twelve New Yorkers stranded in a farmhouse, facing a record-breaking cold and a life-threatening blackout. Unofficial leader Paul (Paul Manza), owner of the farmhouse, creates an island of drugs, sex, and yoga in this sea of ice. But as the winter drags on and the food rations dwindle, the house begins to fall apart.

Overall the film is beautifully shot. The wintry landscape creates the perfect, barren backdrop for the brewing turmoil inside the house. Manza is brilliant as Paul, a man with good intentions that are perhaps overshadowed by his selfish desires. Using their isolation as a chance to take advantage of the girls living in the house, Paul only seeks his own satisfaction. It isn't until the arrival of Marie (Lindsay Burdge) and an ever-dwindling food supply that he is forced to reconsider his leadership responsibilities.

A main weakness of the film is over-dramatization of certain events. In one scene, we see the rationing out of their last bits of food. The camera rolls painfully over each outstretched bowl, hands held out as if in offering. But just as it reaches the end of the line, it doubles back and slowly makes its way around a second time—a solid five minutes of metal spoons scraping up last bits of rice and beans. Though trying to emphasize the group's growth, scenes like this reduce the situation to a comical light and undermine the film's message.

"First Winter" is sometimes too subtle in its message and sometimes too obvious. Despite a strong cast and good directing, it fails to elicit much emotion for both the plight of the group and the internal struggles characters face in their interactions with one another.

### *Any Day Now, We Shall Be Released*

By MOLLIE FORMAN

If the Republican nomination campaign were all that an outsider knew of modern America, he or she might believe that the past forty years have not changed us at all. This is one of the many implications of "Any Day Now," a new film based on the true story of a gay couple in the 1970s who adopts a child with Down Syndrome. Despite the overuse of political pontification, director, writer, and producer Travis Fine has crafted a both timely and universal film, crowned by indomitable performances from Alan Cumming and newcomer Isaac Leyva.

Despite the film's culminating power, it rests on an abundance of clichés. Rudy (Cumming) is a cross-dressing, lip-synching free spirit who locks eyes with closeted attorney Paul (Garret Dillahunt) from the stage of the gay bar where he performs. A parking-lot blowjob and business card from Paul later, Rudy returns home to find his junkie neighbor blasting music. He confronts her briefly, but when the noise continues late into the night, he bursts through her door to find something he never expected: the woman's son Marko (Leyva), sitting alone, clutching his doll in the corner. With the mother in jail, Rudy takes Marko into his own house.

Cumming is a relentless whirlwind, playing Rudy as both a sassy spout of one-liners ("This lip-synch thing is just a cover; I really want to be Bette Midler") and a deeply feeling human being who doesn't think twice about falling for an overweight, broken boy. His relationship with Marko is achingly beautiful—during their first meal together, Marko says that he usually has donuts for breakfast, to which Rudy replies, "Donuts are poison that make you fat and give you pimples." He finds cheese and crackers for the boy, setting them in front of him as if they were a French delicacy, making up words and flourishing his arms. When Marko's blank, misshapen face morphs into a smile, and Rudy smiles back, it's like something breaks open in both of them.

Rudy's relationship with Paul pales in comparison. There is clear chemistry from Cumming's side, but it's hard to see what the exuberant Rudy would be attracted to in boring, blank-faced Paul. Dillahunt never truly relaxes into physical intimacy, which makes sense when in public, but not in the privacy of their bedroom. Rudy more or less accepts Paul's closed nature, barring a brilliant scene in which he mutters, "Good thing the black people had Dr. King instead of you."

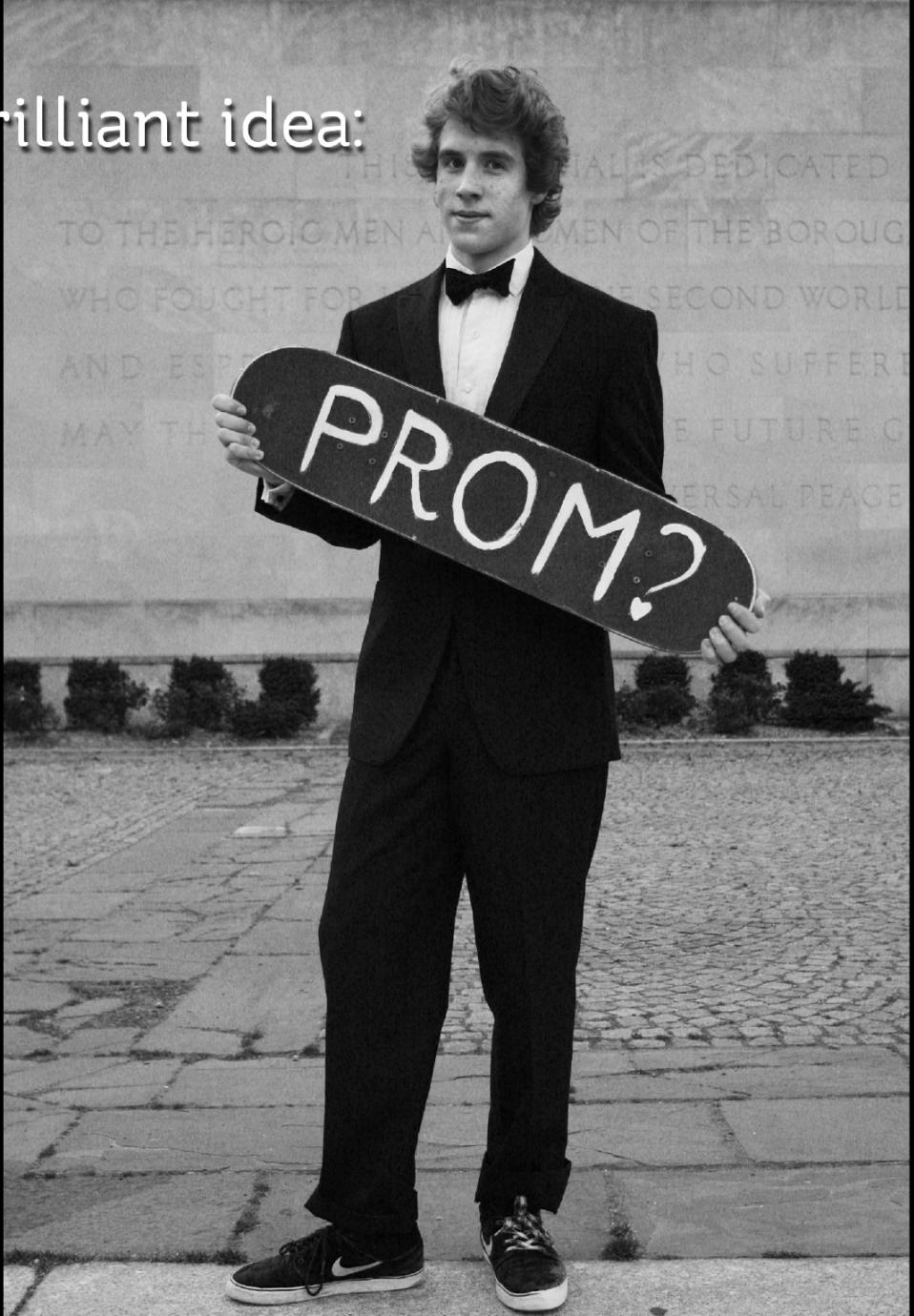
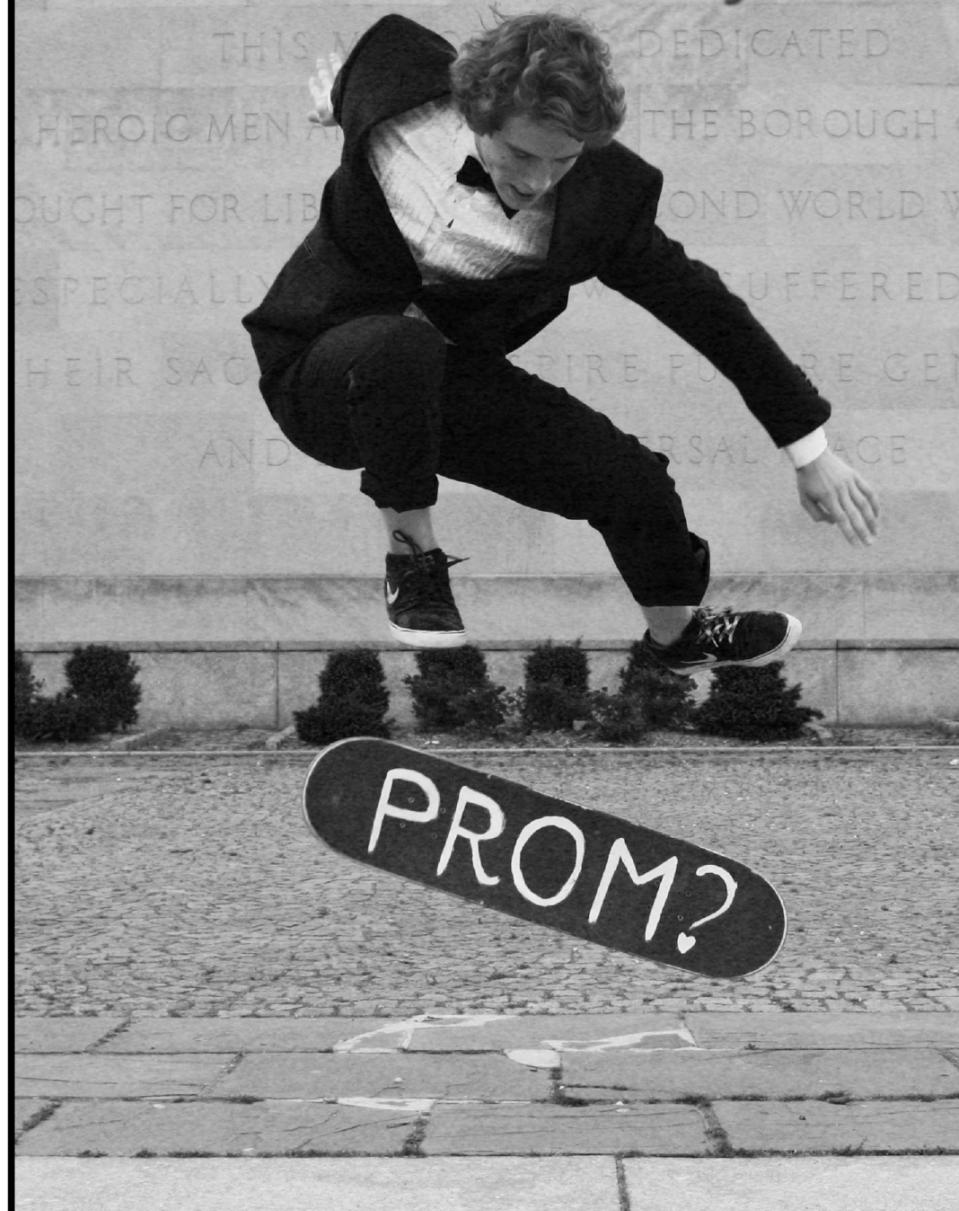
The development of their relationship is mixed up with their interactions with Marko—within several days, they have progressed from a parking-lot encounter to moving in together, so that Marko's incarcerated mother would sign the temporary custody papers. This rapidity makes it difficult to believe any of the feelings they profess to have. But again, it is Marko who ties them together—when it is the three of them, a tenderness and passion emerge in Paul that make the love story at least slightly plausible. When Marko sees his new bedroom, he asks, "This is my home?" and begins crying. Paul embraces him as Rudy watches from the doorway; it's clear this is a homecoming for all of them.

Their happy lives together, exemplified by a cheesy but nonetheless affecting holiday montage, is disrupted when the courts discover that Rudy and Paul are not cousins, as Paul repeatedly professes, but lovers. With Marko more or less out of the picture, the film falters, falling victim to stereotyped social workers and antagonistic lawyers who spout textbook lines of bigotry.

The film is nearly overwhelmed by the vigorous proclamation of its political messages, which are especially timely in light of President Obama's recent statement on same-sex marriage, but there are still moments of immense power. Dillahunt gives a fantastic speech about Marko's prospects without them, culminating with "No one in this entire world wants him but us." Leyva delivers the most heartbreak line of the movie when, after Rudy promises that he'll bring him home but is thwarted by the court, he is led from the car towards a strange house, proclaiming over and over, "That's not my home. That's not my home." It is here that the real tragedy unfolds; as Paul states in court, the hemming and hawing about "destructive influences" only does further harm to the child.

Paul and Rudy's hopelessness is nearly incomprehensible today—if such discrimination occurred in a 2012 courtroom, one campaign with CNN should be enough to resolve it. Or so we decide to think. The fact that this story could be transposed with little alteration to the present day is part of what gives the film its power and is a reminder of the terrifying and lingering consequences of prejudice. The message of the film might be heavy-handed at times, but that does not make it any less valid. All we really need to remember are two images: a beautiful, broken boy wandering alone down the highway, and Rudy, with hands outstretched, wracked with grief, singing Bob Dylan's words: "I swear, my love, we shall be released."

Emma Handte,  
I have a brilliant beyond brilliant idea:

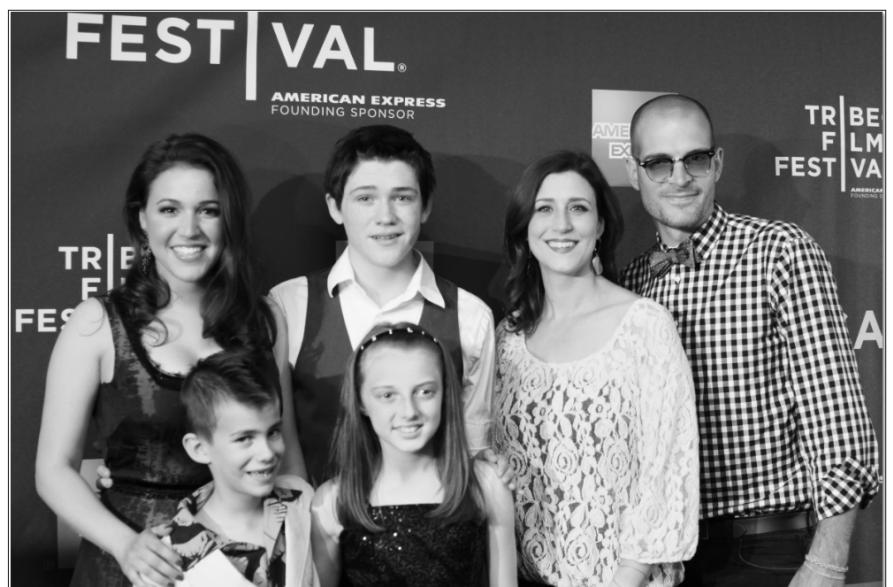


# Arts and Entertainment

## Festival



Director of "The Playroom", Julia Dyer, at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.



(From top left clockwise) Cast members Olivia Harris, Jonathon McClendon, Lydia Mackay, Jonathan Brooks, Alexandra Doke, and Ian Veteto of "The Playroom" at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.



Actors Troy Bernier (left) and Eric Swain (right) at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere of the documentary, "Journey To Planet X".



Co-directors Josh Koury (left) and Myles Kane (right) at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere of their documentary "Journey To Planet X".



Director Donald Rice is interviewed about his film "Cheerful Weather for the Wedding" at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.



Actress Elizabeth McGovern is interviewed about her role in "Cheerful Weather for the Wedding" at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.



Director Nisha Pahuja talks about her new documentary "The World Before Her" at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere.

**Photos by Carolyn Kang and Sam Kim**

# Arts and Entertainment

## Theater

### The Failure of “The Machine”

By EMRE TETIK

Ever since Richard Wagner's four-part epic "Der Ring des Nibelungen" premiered in 1876, the work has invited numerous interpretations. In the past, some of the productions have been controversial, such as the 1976 Patrice Chereau staging, a socialist interpretation that depicted the characters – gods, dwarves, giants, and humans among them – as proletariat and bourgeoisie stereotypes and set the action in industrial factories. When it was premiered, it caused no shortage of raised eyebrows for opera traditionalists. The Metropolitan Opera's current production, which opened last spring and is directed by Robert Lepage, has proven to be equally controversial.

Much of the commotion has concerned the production's modern set, which consists of 24 gigantic, electronically controlled planks that rotate on an axis across the stage. As the scenes change, they move to provide slopes, flat surfaces, or towering structures while colors and ambient images, such as forest backdrops or molten lava, are projected onto them as the staging demands. "The machine," as the gargantuan set has been called, weighs a whopping 45 tons, a mass that so tremendous that the Met had to install steel beams under the stage to reinforce it.

With this high-tech set, Lepage attempts to tell the story of the "Ring," set in ancient times. The four-part story is centered on a ring of power, which the dwarf Alberich (bass-baritone Eric Owens) crafts after stealing a horde of gold from nymphs in the Rhine River. The ring is then stolen from Alberich by Wotan (bass-baritone Bryn Terfel), the ruler of the gods, to repay two giants for building Valhalla, a home and fortress for the gods. Alberich, crushed by his loss, casts a curse on the ring so that it will bring death to whoever owns it and envy to whoever doesn't.

This is the plot of "Das Rhein-

gold," the first of the four operas, whose purpose is to set in motion the events that determine the plot of the next three parts ("Die Walkure," "Siegfried," and "Gotterdammerung"). In these operas the characters' struggle to possess the ring is intertwined with subplots involving Wotan's human and immortal offspring,

**As much as Wagner's music immerses the viewer into the scene, the set is more like a generic nature picture that one might find on a Macbook screensaver rather than an actual forest.**

culminating in the heroic exploits of his grandson Siegfried (tenor Jay Hunter Morris). "Siegfried" chronicles his coming of age and successful pursuit of ex-god warrior Brunnhilde (soprano Deborah Voigt) as his bride. The cycle then concludes with "Gotterdammerung," in which Siegfried is betrayed and killed by those with whom he swore allegiance, and Brunnhilde rides her horse into his flaming funeral pyre wearing the ring on her hand. This restores the ring to the Rhine, and sets forth the redemption of mankind and the destruction of the race of gods.

It would seem that a set so massive would be rather appropriate for the mythological

characters and epic plot of the "Ring." Sadly, this isn't the case. The production, with its computer-generated projections and giant machinery, seemed far too detached from nature for a story that takes place almost exclusively in earthly environments, and for a score that, in a display of Wagner's masterful ability for orchestration, evokes the sounds and moods of the natural world. Nature is, arguably, the unifying theme throughout the cycle. The cycle begins with a musical rendering of the flowing of the Rhine River, and ends with the annihilation of all manmade things, leaving nothing but earth in its natural state, as it began. Some of Wagner's most breathtaking motifs, which were brought to life by the fantastic Met orchestra under the baton of Fabio Luisi are reserved for nature. He uses smooth cello melodies and the harmonic series of the French horn to represent the Rhine River, roaring minor scales on the double bass to evoke storms and radiant horn solos to conjure up thunder.

Unfortunately, Lepage's set doesn't do Wagner's music justice. In one scene in "Siegfried," as the titular hero waits outside of a cave in a forest preparing to fight a dragon, he communicates with a bird chirping from a nearby tree. Wagner's score complements the scene perfectly, with delicate conversations between the flute and the clarinet representing the speech of the bird and the strings providing light harmonies underneath. Lepage's production, however, detracts from the scene. An animated bird on an unrealistic forest backdrop is projected on the planks to give the physical setting. As much as Wagner's music immerses the viewer into the scene, the set is more like a generic nature picture that one might find on a Macbook screensaver rather than an actual forest. Almost every other nature scene suffers from the same problem.

There are, however, parts of the "Ring" that are set, instead of in earthly environments, in grand halls, homes, and other interior spaces. It's in these settings that Lepage's production truly succeeds. In the first act of "Die Walkure," set in a welcoming house in the midst of a storm, the planks are used to evoke the warmth of the hearth, while in the first act of "Gotterdammerung," set in a royal hall, the massive planks suggest towering columns and large structures of grandeur.

The casting for Lepage's production is superb. Bass-baritone Terfel lends Wotan not only an air of godly might, but also of tyrannical brutality and power lust. Morris stepped up to the demanding role of Siegfried with the confident acting and singing style necessary for the arrogant hero.

It seems fitting that Lepage has directed "Cirque du Soleil" shows in the past, as the extravagance of his production of the "Ring" sometimes seems more like a circus show than an operatic staging. The over-the-topness was so distracting at some points that it was difficult to focus on the characters and their situations, which, as in all of Wagner's operas, are very carefully nuanced and complex. It's a shame that Wagner's vision, close to being fully realized in this production by the strong cast and musical accompaniment, had to be stifled by an imposing set.

### Damsels, But No Distress



By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

working at a suicide prevention center; this involvement becomes even funnier when the girls begin sending soap samples throughout the school to increase student happiness.

The girls themselves represent a range of caricatures-turned-characters as well. Violet (Greta Gerwig) masks precocious wisdom behind a veil of emotional sensitivity, demonstrating surprising perceptiveness when discussing the suicide center with Lily, who doubts the efficacy of the program. Rose (Megalyn Echikunwoke), on the other hand, offers little beyond a repeated non-sequitur, albeit one of the funniest jokes of the film. Heather (Carrie MacLemore), quickly established as the dreamer of the group, pines after Thor (Billy Magnussen), a sweet-intentioned buffoon who is part of the school's punnily-named Roman system. Lily acts as a check on the girls' actions, as well as provides a romantic storyline with charming outsider Xavier (Hugo Becker) and businessman Charlie.

The men of the film, especially the Romans, when compared to the girls, further display this theme of falls from elegance. Frank (Ryan Metcalf), a dim-witted simpleton, is so absurdly aloof and unaware that Violet's initial interest in him seems to go over his head. Thor has the unique flaw of not knowing the names of colors, as his parents had made him skip the kindergarten, which Heather finds endearing. Xavier, who seems nothing more than a reserved French gentleman, shatters this classy image by participating in a religion that requires unconventional sex practices.

More than the convincing theme and edgy leads, the strength of the film is the continuous slew of witty one-liners and hilarious developments. From Violet and Rose's judgmental jabs to the Romans' almost disturbing demonstrations of their ignorance, the audience is kept laughing out loud throughout the entire film. It is this wit that distinguishes "Damsels in Distress" from so many other films that attempt to perceive the materialism of youth culture. From Rose's line "operator playboy" to Violet's high-drama declarations to the absurdity of creating a new dance craze (which amusingly takes over the plot near the end of the film), "Damsels in Distress" is refreshingly funny.

What begins as a picture of collegiate aestheticism and ends as a fun homage to youth culture, "Damsels in Distress" promises to rouse a cult following and create an iconic testament to changing times.



# Arts and Entertainment

## **Musician Interview**

### An Interview With A Forgotten Man Who Can't Forget

By GEORGE KAISER

Danny Kalb is not a musician known by the masses, but he is considered by many acclaimed critics and music buffs to be one of America's most defining guitar players of his generation. When I went to interview Kalb in his tiny apartment in Park Slope, I expected a larger-than-life character to greet me at the door. But it turned out that as a nearly 70-year-old man from Mount Vernon, New York, Danny Kalb could not have been more relatable to me. He grew up with one sibling in a middle-class, reformed, Jewish household, just like me. However, when I began to delve into his upbringing and the progression of his life with him, I learned that our stories are very different.

Kalb was raised in a radical communist household, establishing an extremely abnormal upbringing. As a result of the strong connection between the communist party and the genre of music in the 1950s, primarily known throughout the African-American community as the blues, Danny's life quickly became centered around music.

At age 13, Kalb started playing the guitar and, as he recalled, during high school, he first became interested in rock and roll when Elvis Presley "made it happen." However, though Kalb appreciated and enjoyed the newborn rock and roll, he always believed himself to be a blues and folk musician. During his high school years, Kalb started to realize that music was not just a hobby, but also a dream. He fell in love with the notion of expressing himself through rock and roll, folk, and blues music the way Elvis had.

Kalb attended one-and-a-half years of college at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Throughout college, Kalb played small venues there to keep himself involved in his music and pursue his dream the best he could.

Danny recalled to me that one night, a young man approached him and complimented him on his performance. This young man introduced himself as Robert Zimmerman, but would later come to be known as Bob Dylan. Bob, as Danny called him, stayed the night at Danny's dorm and told him that he should go back east and pursue his dream.

Heavily influenced by his new friend and by his desire to play music for large audiences, Kalb left the University of Wisconsin early and returned to the east coast, where he formed the band that would come to define him in years to come, The Blues Project. The peak of Kalb's musical career would be with this band, selling 400,000 copies of the first and most successful of their three studio albums, "Projections." Having listened to "Projections" beginning to end several times, I have heard tracks whose style is reminiscent of The Doors and Creedence Clearwater Revival, among others. But when I asked Danny if these artists influenced the album, he told me that those songs had been written before anybody knew who The Doors and Creedence Clearwater Revival were. Danny, through his guitar, had fused blues, folk, and rock-and-roll styles and contributed to the creation of a new sound that was just beginning to form at the time.

During this period of musical success, Kalb had some experiences of which most can only dream. One of the most incredible memories that Danny recalled was playing a show with famous blues legends, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker, along with folk legend and future Woodstock headliner, Richie Havens. On another occasion, Kalb spent 30 minutes on stage, playing alongside Jimi Hendrix. Kalb described Hendrix as "nothing short of godly."

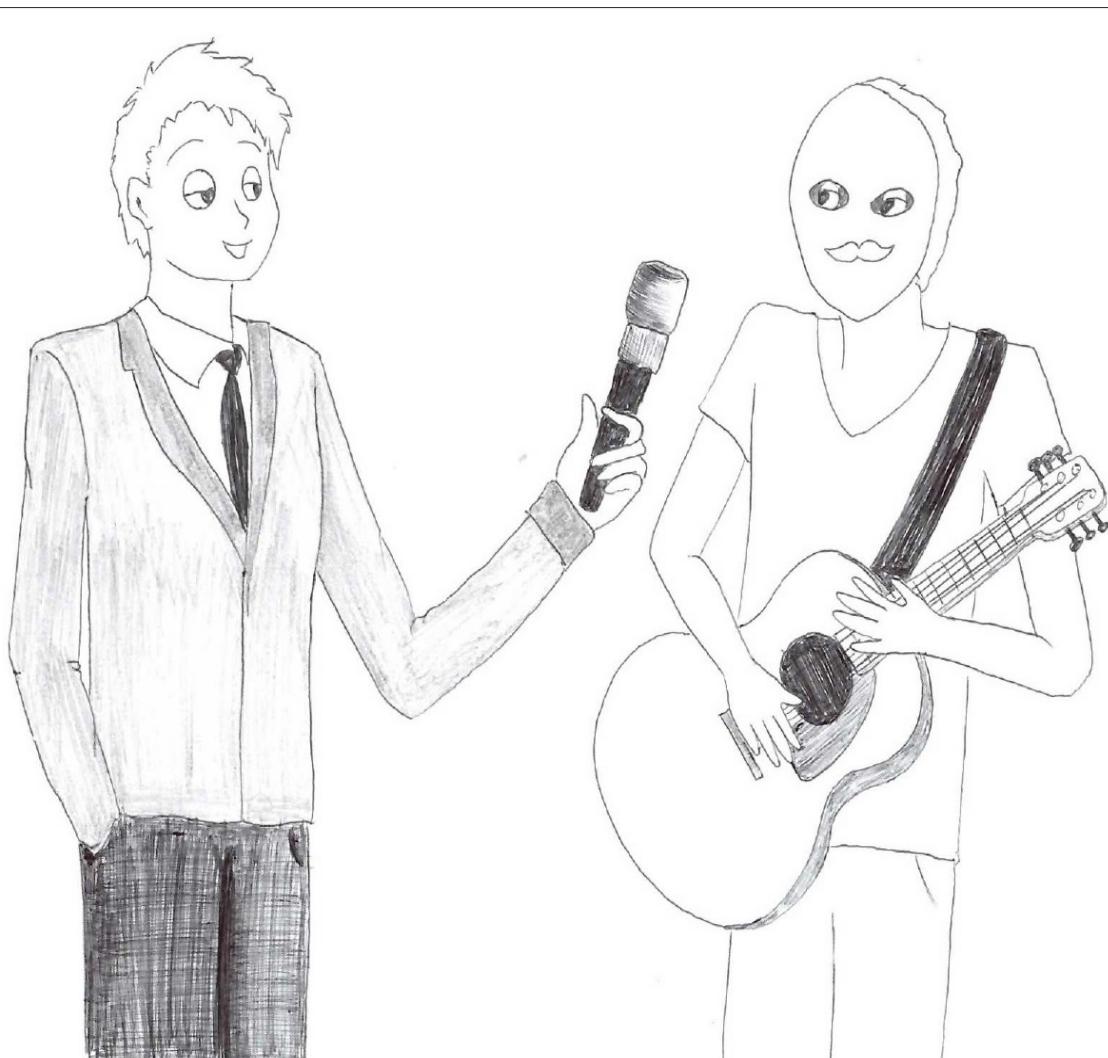
However, Danny's musical career took a turn for the worst

when he suffered the first of four nervous breakdowns that he would have over the course of his life. Because of his constant struggles with depression and severe anxiety, he lost The Blues Project and struggled to support himself off of his music.

Kalb never achieved the success of his friends Bob Dylan or Jimi Hendrix. He suffered for many years and was often unable to follow through on his dreams. Kalb would admit that he has made mistakes and often times been the victim of horrible circumstances, but he is a man who is proud of his accomplishments and contributions to the music industry.

As the interview came to a conclusion after several hours, I realized that it had been an enlightening experience for me as a music fan and writer. I had always believed that the "rock gods" such as Hendrix and Dylan were the ones who "made it happen," but after my time with Danny, my mindset changed. I came to understand that he is just one of many talented, dedicated musicians who contributed to the rock-and-roll movement and then slipped through the cracks.

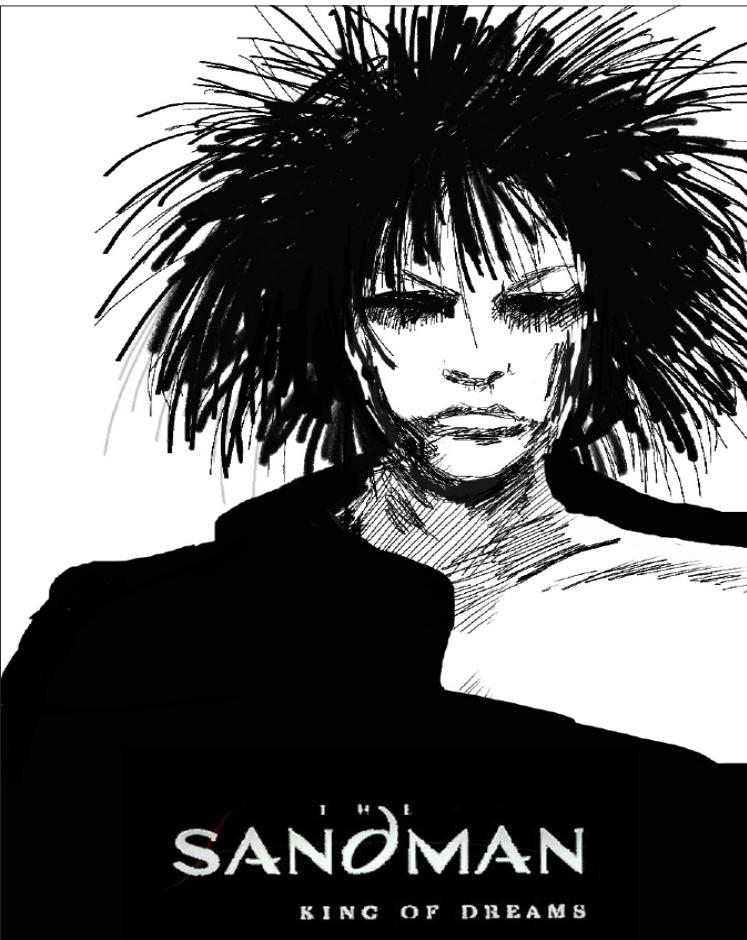
Danny had a stroke two months prior to our interview and had difficulty moving around when I met him. However, he insisted that he take out his guitar and play for me. He played me a song that conveyed the simplicity and the smoothness that had made his talent so obvious to those around him. When he finished playing I was in awe. I asked him who wrote that, thinking it must have been John Lee Hooker or some blues legend like that, but he just smiled at me and said, "That one's all mine." As the interview concluded, I asked him to sum his life up; all the success mixed with all the failure. He simply said, "God has been in my corner."



Cynthia Zhou / The Spectator

## Comics

### Enter (The) Sandman



By EDA TSE

No one has a perfect family. Anyone can think back to family photos, dinners, and petty arguments as a testament to the accuracy of this statement. Even less perfect are the Endless family, whose quarrels can alter the fate of mankind. Destiny, Death, Dream, Destruction, Despair, Desire, and Delirium make up the Endless—each a force who rules over its own realm, making sure that things run smoothly. In "The Sandman," a fantasy comic series written by Neil Gaiman, these forces are brought to life and explored through a series of interweaving tales told from multiple perspectives. The series borrows DC Universe characters such as Etrigan the Demon, as well as historical figures like Marco Polo, and immortal figures like Bast.

In the first volume, Gaiman tells the story of Dream, who has been accidentally captured by humans. This has a negative impact on the mortal world, as it causes a mysterious "sleeping sickness" to advance on the Earth. After many years, Dream escapes but must rebuild his castle and his kingdom. Throughout the story, Dream must learn to accept changes in his family, in himself, and in the way he views the world. However, while Dream is the main character, he is not the focus of all the stories. There are different character arcs where Dream acts along the story's perimeter. For example, in "A Game of You," Barbie, who dreams of being a princess, tells the story of the mysterious Cuckoo, who plans on murdering her. Dream only appears at the end, seemingly unrelated to the story for the most part. At the end of the volumes, characters from all the tales appear once more, in a final culmination to bring the series to an emotional close.

Perhaps the most amazing thing that Gaiman has achieved through this series is the engaging way in which he tells his stories. Prose and illustration do not vie for dominance, but enhance each other instead. Gaiman's engaging writing draws the reader in and achieves (more so than in most comics) the balance between plot and character development. Dream, who seems to be

aloof and uncaring to both mortals and most of his family, learns to understand the consequence of change. The illustrations give the reader a key to the door of Gaiman's imagination (he dictates what happens in each panel), and they are beautified with the help of talented inker Mike Dringenberg, letterer Todd Klein, and colorer Robbie Busch. Colored speech bubbles for each member of the Endless help to identify who is talking and give a better perspective on their personalities. Delirium, the youngest of the Endless, speaks in multicolored letters and backgrounds that swirl around dreamily, reflecting the way she acts.

Gaiman understands the human psyche so well that he is able to paint realistic characters out of life's motifs. It is a comic book that inspires and delights; it even makes the reader think, dream, and realize things about Destiny and Death (as both characters and parts of life). In "A Game of You," Death tells Bernie, a 15,000-year-old mortal, "You get what anybody gets—you get a lifetime." This is such a simple way of telling the truth, and it makes the reader realize that they too have only one lifetime, and that they should try to use it the best they can. "The Sandman" series is filled with thought-provoking quotes and conversations, which give the reader something to mull over after finishing a volume in one gulp.

Gaiman is a master at provoking a reaction from readers, and "The Sandman" is one of his best works. It is an intelligent, darkly humorous comic that (literally) brings to life its themes and brings fantasy to the table in a far-reaching combination of thoughtful prose, mythology, and his own ideas. Gaiman writes characters that are twisted in imaginative ways so that they enthrall the reader almost instantly. As Destruction says, "I will make the most of what I've got. I shall live out my days doing what I have to do, one day at a time. Life, like time, is a journey through darkness." I think it is safe to say that Gaiman has created a work of art that will be appreciated no matter how life changes.

# Arts and Entertainment

## Movie

By ADAM SCHORIN

After considerable rom-com success with "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" and "Midnight in Paris," Woody Allen brings audiences to Rome in his third love affair with a European city in recent years.

"To Rome With Love," starring a laundry list of big names and Allen repeats, also features Allen's first acting job since 2006's "Scoop." (Yes, "Scoop" was also set in Europe, but it was more of a list of grievances than passions for London, drenched in neurotic quips about bad food and driving on the wrong side of the road.) "To Rome" is, to quote the lady in my post-film elevator, "cute." This is a rather astute judgment. The film is fun, sometimes even funny, but generally a lightweight work from such a heavyweight director.

After the standard credits reel (actors listed in alphabetical order and white Windsor font on black, as true fans will know) and a minute or two of Italian get-to-know-the-setting music, the camera pans up to a white-gloved traffic director, who tells us, "I see all people. In Roma, all is a story." There are four stories that make up the movie: an American tourist (Alison Pill) becomes engaged to a dashing, young Roman (Flavio Parenti); Italian newlyweds (Alessandro Tiberi and Alessandra Mastronardi) hit a speed bump on their honeymoon; an old American architect (Alec Baldwin) hangs out with a young American architect (Jesse Eisenberg), his girlfriend (Greta Gerwig), and her friend (Ellen Page); and a middle-class, married Roman (Roberto Benigni) wakes up one day to find out that he is famous simply for being famous. The stories show some promise, even though they don't ever intersect—instead they are cut and sewn back together, about 10 minutes at a time.

At first, Allen appears as Pill's bumbling, music-industry father Jerry. He introduces himself

on his bumpy Alitalia flight with, "Great, turbulence, my favorite—I can't unclench when there's turbulence." Allen's one-liners are consistently hot when he meets his daughter's socialist fiancé, and his mortician father (Fabio Armiliato). But upon hearing Armiliato's shower-borne opera-singing, Jerry is enticed by its beauty and convinces him to audition for "Pagliacci." Only able to belt it while scrubbing and sudsing, Armiliato performs the opera from an on-stage shower.

Though the opera arc is funny and original, it ends a little abruptly after the performance. In fact, all four storylines feel a little short.

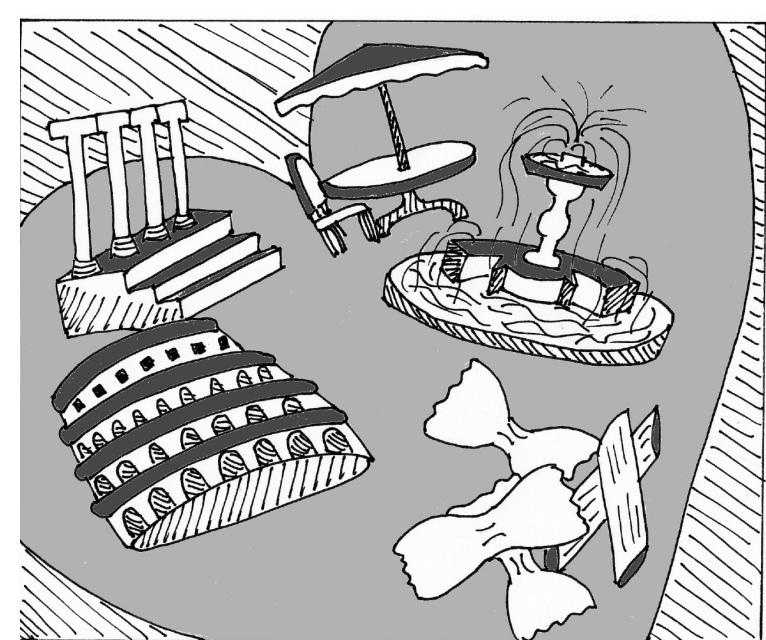
When the honeymooners arrive at their hotel room in Rome, beautifully naïve Milly (Mastronardi) decides her hair is too rural for their important dinner and goes to find a salon, but gets lost in Rome's labyrinth of convoluted directions and serpentine side-streets before plopping down, without a cell phone or a haircut, on the stoop of a fountain. Meanwhile, Antonio (Tiberi) opens the room's door to unexpected visitor Anna (Penelope Cruz), a rambunctious, high-priced prostitute who confuses her client with Antonio. The case of mistaken identity only thickens when Antonio's high-society relatives barge in on him and Anna, assuming her to be Milly. Not sure how to act, Antonio doesn't correct them and Anna joins the family for the day. Tiberi is a young Italian Allen bent over on neurosis steroids, bumbling and mumbling his way with the buxom, self-assured, and hilarious Anna, who is always ready to make the relatives uncomfortable. On a private tour of the Vatican, one aunt rhetorically asks about the Sistine Chapel, "Can you imagine working all that time on your back?" Everyone is silent except for Anna, who casually says in one of her many double-entendres of the day, "I can."

Milly, still trying to find her way back, runs into a famous Italian actor whom she cites as being "the sexiest man alive" and lets him take her to lunch. Possible infidelity looms over the couple, and it is up to the audience to decide on the morality of their situations. There is rarely an Allen film without extra-marital action, so it's an old trope for those who know him well. But "To Rome" ups the ante with not one, but three tempted partners as we move on to the story of Jack (Eisenberg) and Sally (Gerwig).

Sally brings Jack to pick Monica (Page) up from the airport, as the latter is getting over a recent breakup with her gay ex and needs some time to cool down. Sally claims men adore Monica because "of this sexual vibe that she gives off," but the role is a strange one for Page, whose claim to fame as the quirky and unassuming Juno doesn't translate well into sexy, pretentious Monica. Baldwin, meanwhile, makes a strange transition from real character to almost mystical Jiminy Cricket, suddenly dropping in on the group to analyze the dynamics of each scene. He spouts wisdom-cum-sarcasm ("If something is too good to be true, you can bet that it's not," he says), trying to stave off the affair between Jack and Monica, who have similar interests and überpretentious discussions about Camus, Plato, and Neruda, with neither of them really knowing much about the authors.

The budding relationship is, however, predictable with Baldwin calling all the shots, and the moments of romance are so unbearably trite—they kiss during a thunder storm!—that when it was finally over, I couldn't help but ask, "Is that it?"

Allen, so long a master of quirky and particular relationships, has apparently stooped to the generic. Additionally, Eisenberg (as one of the least versatile actors in the world) plays Zuck-



Sophie Pan / The Spectator

erberg once again, but that is not enough to hold up the scene, while the poorly cast Page does little to excite.

Benigni plays Leopoldo Pisanello, an average Italian who goes from bickering over the price of honey at breakfast and staring after secretaries at work to being chased down by reporters and cameramen whenever he steps outside. Similar to Paris Hilton or Kim Kardashian, Leopoldo is famous for no reason at all, yet newscasters hound him with questions like "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" and "Do you prefer boxers or briefs?" His responses are treated as gospel, and the whole dynamic is hilarious until he grows bored of the interviews, starlets, and gossip. He leaves the limelight only to find that—wonder of wonders—he misses it after all. Regardless, Benigni is charming and peculiar, drawing laughs with as little as a raised eyebrow or a shrug.

When the four stories combine to make up the film, the result is enjoyable, but a little overwhelming. As a film-major English teacher once told me, "I go to

the movies to be moved." That is not the case here. It's a fun, easy comedy, but the fact that Woody Allen has always shunned the generic, mocked the rom-com, and championed the neurotic, makes this project somewhat unfulfilling. "Manhattan," "Annie Hall," even dictator-mockumentary "Bananas," or really almost all of his films, are hilarious in their insight, witty in their originality, part of a category that he practically invented.

Allen was much criticized for imitating his idol Ingmar Bergman in the late seventies and eighties with films like "Interiors" and "Another Woman." Now, he's almost mimicking the likes of Nora Ephron. With these European comedies that are more romantic than insightful, optimism is playing a greater role than his standard cynicism. The Big Apple neurosis of old has given way to something plainer. Well, Mr. Allen, come back to Manhattan, please. New York is lonely without you.

*"To Rome With Love" will be released in the United States on Friday, June 22.*

## Art

### Rebuilding the American Dream

increasing foreclosure, and environmental pollution caused by car-reliant inhabitants. On one wall of the exhibit it says, "Change the dream and you can change the city," begging the question of how heavily our notions of American life affect the America we create around us.

Across the country, suburban sites were chosen to be worked on. Five teams of architects, engineers, landscape designers and other specialists were invited to redesign the future of housing in the middle of the foreclosure crisis.

One of the teams, WORKac's Amale Andraaos and Dan Wood, proposed Salem-Keizer, Oregon as the site of their transformations. In their model, they focused on an eco-friendly town in which there is no on-street parking. Instead, there exists a wide range of landscapes and gardens, maintained by the neighborhood and accessible to the public. To solve the problem of residential space, Andraaos designed a tower of homes which he described as a "varied stack of houses" ranging from studios to two bedrooms each with their own private garden. At the core of the building is an artificial waterfall meant to provide water for the

city. Next to this building stands a structure containing recreational areas for activities such as swimming, climbing, and gardening. A particularly fascinating part of this model is a structure resembling a stack of pancakes where solid wastes are composted. A public path laden with shopping centers and pharmacies leads to the heated pools, warmed by the methane generated from the compost, situated on the uppermost stack.

The architecture from Studio Gang's vision centers on Cicero, Illinois. This particular American suburb was deluged by the foreclosure crisis in the 1920s. Because of the overcrowding in many of the homes in Cicero, the team constructed a Rubik-cube styled building in which many bedrooms can be built and kitchens can be used communally. In their model, they focus on the use of space for outdoor activities and playgrounds for children. "The idea is to bring back the vibrancy Cicero once had," said Jeanne Gang, the spokesperson for the Studio Gang.

Andrew Zago of Zago Architecture chose to take on Rialto, California. Their reinvention of the American suburbs takes on urban qualities to alter the

"iconic, cliché, Google Earth image of what a suburb looks like." He suggests subdividing the town into a maze-like structure. The reinvention, he says, will include artificial habitats such as zoos to make use of the natural forest near the site.

The exhibit will be ongoing through September 30, 2012 with lectures and gallery talks by the architects approximately every two weeks.

Consider a trip to the MoMA on a Friday evening, where admission is free from 4:00 to 8:00 PM as part of their Target Free Friday program. Try to either get there as close to 4:00PM as possible or consider arriving after 6:00PM to most effectively dodge the long lines and overcrowding. You can not only avoid the hefty 14 dollars for students, but also escape into a place where the jam-packed streets of New York City seem to melt away into a meditative atmosphere of creativity, thoughts, and beauty.

"Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream," visually demonstrates the results of the ongoing quest to throw off the stereotypes of suburban living and effectively alters the classic dream of owning property in America.



"Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream" at The Museum of Modern Art.

By ANGELA SUN

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), known for abstract exhibits, has taken an in-depth look at something very real this year: the American housing crisis. Tucked away on the third floor of the MoMA "Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream," is a current exhibit that jumps in on the national catastrophe of foreclosure, a bona fide public crisis. It demonstrates the MoMA's effort to develop plans for housing

that will help end this calamity which has swept through United States since the financial meltdown of 2008.

The exhibit is small, but its significance is especially immense, introducing visitors to the mortgage crisis that is plaguing the suburbs. The exhibit emphasizes the importance of the suburbs in the development of the American Dream.

In present time, the suburbs suffer from a wide range of problems, including unemployment,

# Arts and Entertainment

## A New Dimension in the World of Film

By BEN VANDEN HEUVEL  
and TAHIA ISLAM

Since the invention of cinematography over a century ago, the media world has undergone rapid changes that have influenced moviegoers' experience and the artistry of film itself. Each stage in the strange world of filmmaking has seen some new development intended to make movies more accessible, more exciting, and more enjoyable. From silent black-and-whites to the colorful computer-designed films of today, the film world has continued steadily down the road to modernity. Now, a new revolution has emerged. Once considered a futuristic oddity, three-dimensional (3D) movies have become a common and expected luxury of the viewing experience, branching from theatrical releases to television broadcasts.

Though existing in some form since 1915, 3D media was not available to the masses because of the costliness of producing it and the lack of a standardized format for displaying it. The first few tests of 3D technology were shown at the Astor Theater in New York City; primitive reels of tests, including rural scenes and footage of Niagara Falls. The response was positive, leading to more major breakthroughs, such as the releasing of the first public 3D movie in 1922, "The Power of Love." The cinematographer, Robert F. Elder, collaborated with photographers to utilize anaglyph images, the earliest method of presenting theatrical 3D. This method introduced the phenomenon of 3D glasses, beginning with the archetypal red and blue design. These innovations influenced the production of newer systems of 3D, from polarization systems that utilize the modern black glasses to Autostereoscopic displays, 3D without glasses, a relatively new development.

Despite how long ago 3D media was pioneered, for much of the 1970s and 1980s it was poorly received. These decades favored a smattering of more introspective period works, paired with some of the nation's first blockbusters.

But all the landmark hits released from the '70s right up until the start of the 20th century—centerpieces of American filmmaking like "Jaws," the "Star Wars" trilogy, and even "Titanic"—were all released in 2D. The desire for 3D media seemed low as well; American moviegoers were content to see movies in their "flat" form, and the world of 3D entertainment seemed to remain a fascinating, but surreal oddity. In fact, the technology remained unused and un-demanded.

The 3D resurgence we see today is in part thanks to the work of two major entertainment corporations: IMAX and Disney. IMAX allowed movies to be presented on a massive scale with new, high-tech projectors. The calling card of the IMAX company was to bring viewers into a more accessible movie experience, one that emphasized a shocking, adrenaline-filled, overwhelming view of the film. One of the technologies best suited to enhance the IMAX experience is 3D film. IMAX gained a newly devoted fanbase when they put the 3D glasses into their arsenal of alluring surprises, and began featuring popular films in 3D.

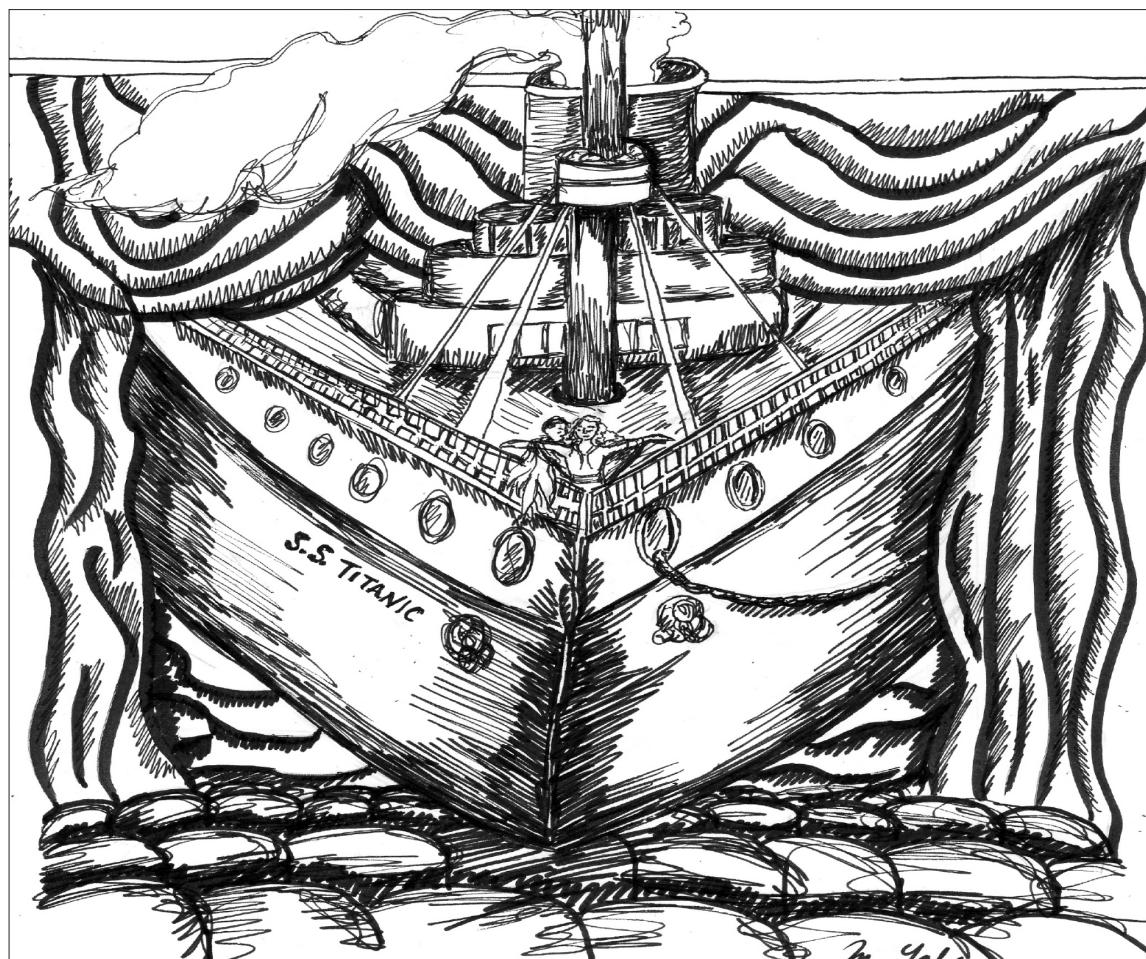
IMAX's first major 3D project was born humbly in the animated "The Polar Express"; it proved a huge success. According to IMAX's own statistics, the 3D version grossed some 14 times as much as its two-dimensional counterpart. Disney also helped to reintroduce 3D media to the world. The Walt Disney Company, and their animation affiliate Pixar, began to experiment with the application of 3D to Disney films, and their first test came in another animated feature, "Chicken Little." Again, the three-dimensional version was a huge success. In its early stages of becoming a mainstream phenomenon, 3D film dazzled the younger audiences first, before whom it was tested with animated features by IMAX and Disney. But soon, the technology would make the leap towards big-scale box office success and demand mainstream attention as a new, cutting-edge sensation.

By 2008, 3D film styles had permeated into other genres, from a variety of nature films and documentaries to the first 3D horror film in "My Bloody Valentine: 3D." But a project by James Cameron, one that he reportedly had begun long before in 1994, was soon to change the status of 3D entertainment everywhere: "Avatar," the fantastic science-fiction feature that captured the attention of the entire world. Boosted by the success of its 3D version, Cameron's biggest project would smash all box-office records, becoming the highest-grossing film of all time. It took the world of media to a new level, and with it we see today the frequency of 3D media, whether in computer graphics, video games, or feature films, on a sharp incline.

Because of the growing popularity of 3D cinematography and the increased revenue it generates, old classics, such as "The Beauty and the Beast" and "Titanic" have been remade with 3D technology to hit the big screen again. The latter was converted with \$18 million, only to earn a worldwide total of \$316.9 million. Rolling Stone film critic Peter Travers rated the reissue 3.5 stars out of 4, and said, "The 3D intensifies 'Titanic.' You are there. Caught up like never before in an intimate epic that earns its place in the movie time capsule."

But how will the growth of the 3D industry affect filmmaking? Sometimes it seems that all the attention drawn to the visuals may take away from some of the classic elements of American movies. Certain films just suit themselves better to three dimensions: action-packed features of violence, car chases, and the like. But the subtleties of some of the film world's greatest acting performances, the intricacies of the plot and script, may be lost beneath impressive visual effects.

The next time you see a 3D film, and enjoy the exhilarating visual experience, ask yourself how much else in the film really caught your attention, whether you really paid attention to the plot or thought about the characters. Most of us don't. The question comes down to whether moviegoers mind. Will they forego the chance to understand a more interesting film in favor of a more instantly stimulating experience? Optimistically, filmgoers across the world will keep a taste for truly good filmmaking, and this may balance out the drive for simpler and more adrenaline-oriented movies. But for now, we can only hope that 3D film is a trend or a bonus, and not a revolution.



Margot Yale / The Spectator

## Caught on the Web: Diary of a Regency-Era Woman

**Pride and Prejudice**

By CHRISTINE LEE

Any great novel or even one that has had relative success on

the market will inspire numerous remakes—some good and others terrible, some flat and others that twist the original and give it a re-

imagined life. The latter perfectly describes the new video series, or fake video blog ("vlog"), "The Lizzie Bennet Diaries." Created by writer Bernie Su and one-half of the YouTube "Vlogbrothers" duo Hank Green, the series got its start on April 9, 2012. And though it has only been two weeks and six episodes since its birth, its YouTube channel, "LizzieBennet," has just over 45,000 subscribers and over 500,000 total views.

Clearly, they're doing something right, as many online celebrities take far longer to achieve this level of viral fame. One notable aspect of the series is the writers' ability to transport the characters into modernity while retaining more than a tenuous connection to the source material, unlike hits such as "Bridget Jones's Diary." Lizzie (Ashley Clements), who is in Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," a woman who wants none of the socialite, husband-seeking life of the times, is now a communications major struggling with student loans. Jane (Laura Spencer), the "pretty girl" of the family, works in the fashion retail industry, and Lydia (Mary Kate Wiles) is a promiscuous college student who is "a bit of a slut," much like her origins as the book's young daughter who elopes with a good-for-nothing

charmer. Charlotte (Julia Cho), an original character, studies film and works as the camerawomen for Lizzie's vlog.

For a four women cast, not only do the actresses stay remarkably in character, but they also successfully take on the roles of other characters through humorous interpretations. In the pilot episode, Clements plays both Lizzie and Mrs. Bennet. (Or, rather, Lizzie plays Mrs. Bennet.) Clements brings out Lizzie's sassiness through jabs at her mother's outrageousness, putting on a posh accent and exaggerated mannerisms.

The strongest part of the series is how genuine it feels, a natural result of talented acting. The interactions the Bennet sisters share are so casual that they seem unrehearsed. Quite a few times, Lydia butts into Lizzie's room to bother her while filming, which leads to typical sisterly squabbles. In the beginning of Episode five, Jane and Lizzie share a conversation that seems so impromptu, they ask Charlotte to cut it out from the video (clearly, she doesn't).

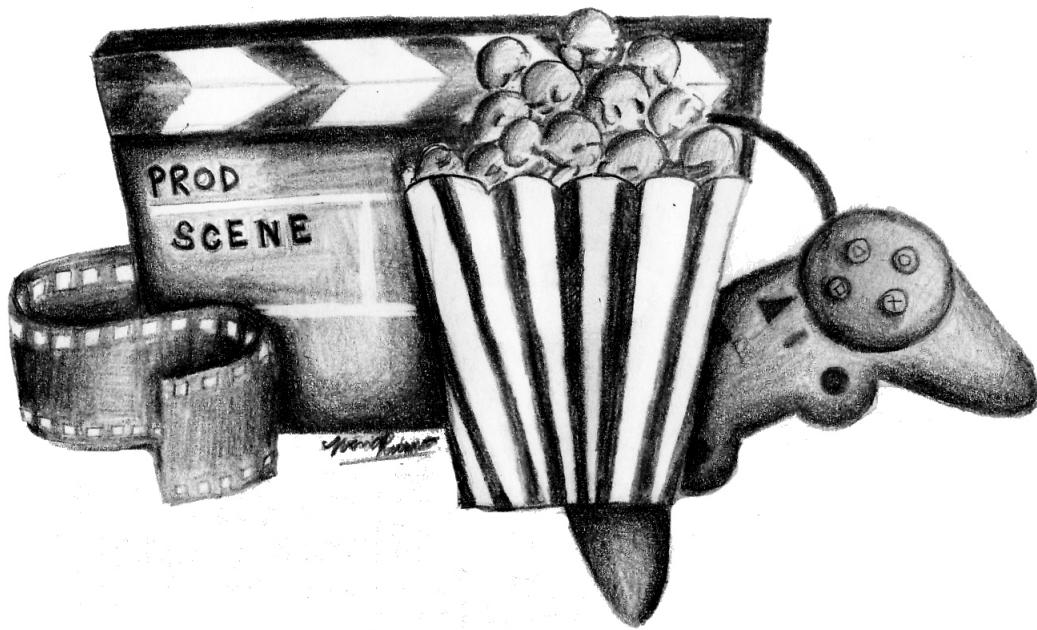
Besides maintaining their roles onscreen, the actresses play their parts online, as well. LizzieBennet, the series' YouTube Channel, replies to viewers as

Lizzie, not as their true identity. The actresses also have their own Tumblr and Twitter accounts, in addition to the official Lizzie-Bennet Diaries Tumblr. Lizzie's Tumblr not only contains videos of the series, but also "candid" photos of the characters.

Green and Su have taken an incredibly innovative step in taking a book often relegated to English class to a fresh medium that fits its romance-drama plot like a proper lady's glove, creating what is, in effect, a high-quality online television show. At the same time, it's very different from conventional television. Episodes usually last three to three and a half minutes long, rather than thirty minutes or an hour, and new ones are released every four days. Having the series online not only allows fans to squeeze an episode or two into a quick procrastination break, but also makes it far easier for them to spread the word—reblogging on Tumblr, linking on Twitter, and sharing on Facebook are all just a click away, easily accessible in an era when we would rather watch a video or read a blog than curl up with a classic example of the written word.

# Arts & Entertainment

## News Flash: Development of Media Halted by Fans



Navida Rukhsa / The Spectator

By THOMAS DUDA

In 1981, the first Indiana Jones film, "Raiders of the Lost Ark", was released. It was incredibly successful, spawning two sequels within the next decade. After the third movie was released, George Lucas was ready to give the series up. Completely exhausted, he couldn't devise any single new plot element that another Indiana Jones movie would successfully revolve around. He knew the series had run its course, and so he

intelligently moved on. The franchise then went dark for 19 years. Eventually, however, popular demand forced George Lucas to write a fourth Indiana Jones film, this one a complete failure. "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" has a user average score of 5.1 on Metacritic.com and has been voted by Comcast as the 11th worst movie sequel of all time. Evidently, the decision to make a sequel was a bad one, and, more importantly, one brought about by the unwise decision of

Lucas to appease fans. The Jones series is just one example of how fan bases should form based on the products that developers release and definitely not the other way around.

When an author writes a book, a director comes up with a movie idea, or a coder develops a video game, they have created something, an object that no one else has claim to. In short, it is their sole intellectual property and whether people like it or not is up to them. However, creators have absolutely

no reason to listen to the common consumer. Not only does it usually lead to bad decisions, as it did in the case of Indiana Jones, but it is essentially the destruction of intellectual property. If the masses were highly influential in creating something, then the true developer can no longer be credited for its creation. It's this type of destruction of genuine intellectual property that is awful and predominant in today's media.

For example, just a few months ago, Mass Effect 3, a video game, was released. Although it was an extraordinarily high rated game, many found fault with the game's ending, which apparently had many plot-holes and close enough plot-lines from earlier in the game. Even if this ending was bad, what the game developer behind Mass Effect did next was inexcusable: they changed the ending. They actually made an entirely new ending, which one will be able to download over the summer, to appease fans who weren't satisfied with the original ending. This is a terrifying trend. Developers should not be altering their own original content just to make fans happy. Fans should've already been pleased with the fact that it was a fantastic game, with an average score of 92 percent on GameRankings.com, and its very own praise-filled Spectator article by James Bessoir.

Whereas developers are professionals in their fields who base their careers off of creating just

about anything, the public just eats that anything up. Developers know what they want to do and how to progress with their work because it's their career. The general public is not in a position to make informed decisions about a professional's work. This being the case, when developers try to cater specifically to what the general public wants, it's simply logical that they will be making a misinformed, decision. It is a decision that is based off financial, rather than creative, interests. Sometimes, the simple fact of the matter is that the public is the public and developers are developers. The two should just not be collaborating, because it leads to the public resenting the developer for making a bad decision, and the developer being out of a job due to the public's resentment. Essentially, when a developer listens to the public, bad things happen on both sides.

In the words of the immortal Oscar Wilde, art is created, "...for art's sake." If developers exclusively listened to what fans wanted in their products, there would eventually be no such thing as true intellectual property. Appeasement of fans leads to a "take it for granted" attitude that has dawned on most fans of mass media. This is a terrible future to be headed towards, one which developers must stand up and prevent before it's too late.

## Sports

### Girls' Tennis

## Lobsters Boiled in Quarterfinals



Junior Dina Levy-Lambert hits a ball during a point.

**Stuyvesant Lobsters 1,  
Beacon Blue Demons 4**

By MATTHEW MOY

The Lobsters were expecting a tough match against the Beacon Blue Demons on Friday, May 11 in the PSAL quarterfinals, and the Blue Demons delivered. Beacon topped Stuyvesant for the fourth time in the 2012 season, but this time crushed the Lobsters' hopes of advancing farther into the playoffs.

The Lobsters started off strong: junior and co-captain Dina Levy-Lambert smoked her opponent in the first singles match, shutting out freshman Sofia Pascual 10-0.

In the second singles match, however, Beacon earned its first victory against junior Irina Titova. Titova bogged herself down with several unforced errors; she had a few double faults and hit the net on several returns. Titova's opponent was able to capitalize on these mistakes, and she ultimately dropped the match 10-3.

The third singles match was a

battle between two freshmen, both among the top players on their respective teams. Stuyvesant's Julia Gokhberg went up against Beacon's Isis Gill Reid. Gill Reid had very powerful serves and returns, and had the control to aim for the trickiest spots on Gokhberg's side of the court. Gokhberg fell behind early, but was able to maintain her composure. Gill Reid, on the other hand, was visibly frustrated and blamed her racket after she hit the ball out of bounds several times. But in spite of her anger, Gill Reid won the match 10-3.

The fate of the Lobsters' season rested on the shoulders of sophomores Victoria Chung and Aleksandra Stanisavljevic in the first doubles match. Their opponents were sophomores Isadora Braune and Sara Levy-Lambert, Dina's twin sister. Braune and Sara Levy-Lambert jumped out to an early 4-1 lead. However, Chung and Stanisavljevic rallied back with excellent net play to tie the match at 4-4. At this point, coach Jeffrey Menaker instructed Chung to try a drop shot, which involves hitting

the ball just over the net so that the opposing players can't get to it in time. It worked to perfection, and sparked Chung and Stanisavljevic to jump out to a 6-4 lead. However, Braune and Sara Levy-Lambert fought back relentlessly to take the match, 10-7.

"[Chung and Stanisavljevic] were in command of that match, through a lot of that match. They played some of their best tennis of the year," Menaker said.

The result of the second doubles match didn't matter, but nonetheless junior Kayla Halvey and senior and co-captain Sofia Pidzryailo fought hard. They led early by a score of 3-1, but couldn't hold off a Beacon rally and lost 10-6. "Within those double matches, a couple of service games where we did not play our best might have been a momentum changer in [Beacon's] favor," Menaker said.

With this loss, the Lobsters were eliminated from the playoffs. This was the first time in the past 11 years in which the Lobsters didn't reach the finals or semi-

finals. It was also the first time in over five years in which the team didn't win the Manhattan/Bronx division.

The Lobsters didn't receive an automatic bid to the Mayors Cup in June because they didn't reach the semi-finals. However, they will most likely receive an at-large bid to the city-wide invitational tournament, which is the largest scholastic tennis event in the nation.

"For me, it's not that disappointing. In a way, it's sort of the beginning of the [Gokhberg] era.

Whether she plays one, two, or three in the future, it doesn't really matter," Menaker said. "We've got this very young core of [Gokhberg, Stanisavljevic, and Chung], a freshman and two sophomores who are in the starting lineup, who are going to be here for two more years together."

**Stuyvesant Lobsters 5,  
Susan Wagner Falcons 0**

By DARYL CHIN

The Lobsters, Stuyvesant's girls' tennis team, had a somewhat disappointing season this year. Usually the dominant team in their division, the Lobsters fell behind the undefeated Beacon Blue Demons to land second place in the division. However, the Lobsters pinned their hopes in the playoffs, still securing a relatively high fifth seed.

The Lobsters were able to capitalize on their high seed and shut out the Susan Wagner Falcons 5-0 on Thursday, May 10.

The Lobsters, led by their three co-captains, seniors Katie Bor and Sofia Pidzryailo and junior Dina Levy-Lambert, entered the match feeling confident. "We came into this match with the mentality that we were going to win because we knew we were good enough to beat them," Pidzryailo said.

When the Lobsters arrived at the National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadow Park, heavy

winds slightly disrupted their pre-game warm-ups by blowing away equipment and by off the team dynamic at the beginning. However, the team did not think that wind played that much of a factor during the match as was evident in their strong play. "The game is really unpredictable and you need to be able to adjust your technique to the wind," sophomore Elizabeth Kim said.

The match opened with freshman first singles player Julia Gokhberg. Gokhberg, who entered the match with a cold, dropped her first two games. However, she bounced back, won the next eight games, and finished 10-3. "I think that Julia is really hitting her stride," coach Jeffrey Menaker said. "I never thought for a second that she was going to lose that game."

The other singles games were also easy routs for the Lobsters. Second singles player Levy-Lambert crushed her opponent, winning the first six games and finishing the match 10-1. The third singles player, junior Irina Titova, started off slower, dropping three of the first seven games. However, she would be able to close out the match after that with a 10-4 victory.

The Lobsters also dominated the doubles matches. The first doubles players, sophomores Victoria Chung and Aleksandra Stanisavljevic, also won their first six games and finished with a final score of 10-1. Juniors Alison Reed and Kayla Halvey played a tighter match, but were able to come out on top, 10-7.

Though the game was a sweep, the Lobsters didn't celebrate for long. Their quarterfinal matchup would be against the fourth-seeded Blue Demons on Friday, May 11. Beacon had handed the Lobsters their only three regular season losses this year, but the Lobsters were eager for revenge. "It's going to be a very, very competitive match," Menaker said.

# Advertisements

# Sports



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# Sports

## Boys' Outdoor Track

### Greyducks Leave Penn Relays Disappointed

By YORKBELL JARAMILLO and EAMON WOODS

All professional athletes who've had the opportunity admit that playing in a championship, whether it's the World Series, the Super Bowl, or the Stanley Cup, is the best experience of their careers, regardless of how many individual records they hold.

For junior Jack Stevenson and seniors Genghis Chau, Mark Schramm and Konrad Surkont of Stuyvesant's outdoor track boys' Greyducks, competing at the Penn Relays on Friday, April 27, in front of 45,000 spectators was equally transformative.

The Penn Relays, at Franklin

Field on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, is one of the most prestigious outdoor track meets by any standard. It includes international, professional, collegiate and high school competitors.

Stevenson, Chau, Schramm and Surkont were invited to compete in the High School Boys' Distance Medley Championship of America after placing fourth in the country at the New Balance Indoor Nationals on March 14 and setting an all-time PSAL record, with a time of 10:12.24. Unfortunately, the same relay team was unable to repeat this success at Penn Relays, by running 10:25.86 and placing 10th.

A distance medley relay con-

sists of four athletes running 1200, 400, 800 and 1600 meters, in order. Stevenson, Chau, Schramm and Surkont ran 3:10.2, 54.1, 2:01.5 and 4:20.1, respectively.

Many factors caused this regression. Cold and windy weather conditions, which were not an issue at Indoor Nationals, made racing more difficult. Also, the nervousness that comes with any competition on the national scale led to a shaky baton pass between Stevenson and Chau. Instead of wearing their traditional uniforms of white tops with red shorts, the boys chose to wear white tops with black compression shorts. This made spotting one another to pass off

the baton even more of a challenge, especially since Stevenson was amongst a tight pack of ten teams. Regardless, the Greyducks know they could have done better. "We don't want to make excuses," Surkont said.

The winner of the event, St. Benedict's Prep, ran 10:07.76. Their success is due in large part to junior Edward Cheserek, an outstanding athlete brought from Kenya to the United States by a church-sponsored program. Although he was 15 seconds and 5 places behind first place when he received the baton, he took the lead after just 600 meters. By running his leg of 1600 meters in 4:06.2, Cheserek singlehandedly executed a surreal comeback that

led his school to victory.

Unfortunately, the Penn Relays was likely the last time this Stuyvesant relay team will ever run together. Stevenson's tendonitis has reappeared, sidelining him for the season, and the rest of the relay will be graduating. "The other guys are going to have to step up big to take up the slack," coach Mark Mendes said.

Notwithstanding the Greyducks' disappointment, it was an incredible achievement simply to qualify for this meet, a success that they added to by solidifying their place in the nation's top ten. "I wish we could have done better than we did, but all in all, it was a fun trip," Schramm said.

## Girls' Softball

### Renegades Take Manhattan A Crown, 9th Seed in Playoffs



Laura Eng / The Spectator

**Stuyvesant Renegades 11,  
Hunter College High  
School Hawks 5**

By NOAH HELLERMANN

On Friday, April 27, the Stuyvesant High School Renegades walked into Central Park looking for payback. With their only loss on the year to the Hunter College High School Hawks, the team was admittedly a little nervous that they would suffer a similar fate.

Putting nerves aside, coach Vincent Miller said that he was looking forward to the game. "I was excited—antsy, but very excited. Right now, we're the team to beat in the division," Miller said.

After a quiet two innings for both teams that included a timely inning-ending double play for the Renegades in the first, the team came alive in the top of the third. A walk, two singles, and a wild pitch gave the Renegades a 3-0 lead, and pitcher and co-captain Morgan Higgins collected

two strikeouts and a groundball for three easy outs in the bottom of the inning.

Stuyvesant broke the game open two innings later in the fifth when Higgins hit a double to right with runners on second and third. Junior Gabrielle Gillow followed with a double to left, scoring Higgins, and making it a 6-0 game. With singles from junior Anna Wang and senior Caroline Roig-Irwin, the dominant inning continued until it was 10-0.

The first time these teams met, Stuyvesant only managed to score one run, losing by a final score of 13-1. This time, Hunter found themselves facing the mercy rule: when a game is called when one team is trailing by more than 10 runs after five innings.

Higgins accredited the team's turnaround to their hitting and focus. "The offense is what made our defense better. We stayed in the game and we started hitting the ball hard even in the first and second inning," Higgins said.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, the Hawks rallied with two

outs to score three runs, after a walk and a line drive down the right field line. With the mercy rule no longer in effect, the Renegades had to play all seven innings, which gave the Hawks a chance to come back. Continuing her regular season success, pitching to a 2.74 ERA, Higgins pitched out of a jam in the sixth inning. She produced a strike out and two weak groundballs with the bases loaded.

After beating the Hawks by a final score of 11-5, the Renegades proved that they are ready to play anyone. "We made all the necessary plays, everyone did their job, and we hit very well," Wang said.

With five games left in their schedule, Stuyvesant has clinched a spot in the playoffs and is leading the Manhattan A division with a 9-1 record. "That's eight wins in a row, and we're going to go for nine next week," Miller said.

**Stuyvesant Renegades 6,  
Beacon Blue Demons 4**

By JORDAN WALLACH

When the Beacon Blue Demons were moved from Manhattan's B to A division before the 2012 season, the Stuyvesant Renegades immediately placed a target on their backs and marked their calendars for when they would play Stuyvesant athletics' unrelenting uptown rival.

After winning the teams' first matchup in extra innings by a close score of 5-4 on Thursday, April 19, the Renegades looked to sweep the season series from the Blue Demons two weeks later on Thursday, May 3, and more importantly, to extend their winning streak to 10 games after beating the Manhattan Center Lady Rams on Wednesday, May 2 by a score of 9-5 for their ninth straight.

From the outset, Stuyvesant jumped to an early lead, scoring three of their first four hitters in the game. They were able to take advantage of two early walks in the first inning due to five wild pitches by Beacon senior and pitcher Ellen Mullan Jayes, three of which resulted in runs scored.

"They're a really good team, so we needed to jump on them or else they would fight their way through," senior and co-captain Ana Slade said.

After the Blue Demons plated one in the bottom of the first, the Renegades added onto their lead in the second with two runs on four hits and two walks. Freshman Lauren Sobota had an RBI

double to score senior Caroline Roig-Irwin, and junior Anna Wang had an RBI single to score Sobota, the first of three consecutive hits by the two, three, and four hitters in the lineup.

Though the game initially felt like a blowout with almost every Stuyvesant reaching base to earn a commanding 5-1 lead, Beacon battled back and scored two in the third to cut the lead to 5-3. It could have easily been cut to a one-run lead, but the Renegades benefited from a questionable call by the home plate umpire on a play at the plate. After the ball was gunned home by junior shortstop Miranda Kalish, he called Blue Demon junior Alexis Traussi out though she appeared to slide under Slade's tag.

The Renegades also had their share of aggressive base-running calls by coach Vincent Miller that ended up as putouts at home. Sophomore Marie Frolich, despite an otherwise perfect 3-3 day at the plate that improved her rookie season's batting average to .500, was thrown out twice on close plays by the Beacon defense after being waved home by Miller. Frolich, given the opportunity to start at second base due to junior Katie Mullaney's leg bone bruise, took full advantage of the opportunity presented to her.

She said, "Katie's position is a huge one to fill, so I'm a little tentative and that's something I want to improve, but it was good to contribute some runs for the team."

Though Beacon was eventually able to curtail their deficit to 5-4 after freshman Gabrielle Wallach circled the bases on a double and error, the Renegades tacked on one run in the top of the sixth with two bunt plays called by Miller—resulting in a single by Sobota and a sacrifice by junior Liana Penny—and later, an RBI single by Frolich to score Sobota.

"It's something we've worked on throughout the entire season, and we try to take advantage of our speed by playing small ball as much as we can," Miller said.

Senior and co-captain Morgan Higgins struck out the side in the sixth and retired the side in the seventh to close the game, securing a season sweep and a satisfying 6-4 victory.

"We played well in the field, which made it okay that we weren't scoring as often, but that last run really helped and made me a lot less nervous going into that last inning," Higgins said.

The Renegades look to finish off their season and secure the

Manhattan A division crown with four games after against division foes.

Frolich said, "We're a really close-knit team and I think that if we continue to mesh like we are, we're going to do great in the remainder of the season."

**Stuyvesant Renegades 3, Manhattan Center Lady Rams 1**

By JOEL BEACHER

The Renegades are poised to storm the playoffs after a strong victory in East Harlem. They defeated the Manhattan Center Lady Rams at Thomas Jefferson Field on Friday, May 11, ending a regular season in which they took the division by four games with a record of 14-1.

The girls were led by strong pitching, giving up just a single run in seven solid innings. Senior Morgan Higgins was lights-out and kept the Manhattan Center girls stifled for the duration of the game. "I was thrilled with the girls today, and have been all season," coach Vincent Miller said.

The final score of the game was 3-1—a strong victory and a fast game at Manhattan Center's home field in Upper Manhattan. A feeling of euphoria and excitement was palpable among the players after the game, as they officially turned their attention to the oncoming playoffs.

The team has had a historic season, winning the Manhattan A division title and securing the ninth seed in the playoffs—the highest since Miller began coaching the team.

In the second game of the season, the Renegades, following a strong 6-1 victory over LaGuardia, lost to the Hunter College High School Hawks by twelve runs. "I sort of yelled at them a little bit and got on top of them. After that, they've really been playing great," Miller said. They won by eight runs in the two following contests, and have been red-hot ever since.

The team continued a theme of tight wins and solid pitching in their season finale. They have won seven games by four runs or less, and five by one or two runs.

The girls look ready to make a bold statement in the playoffs. With 13 straight wins, they have momentum like never before and are very poised to start playoff action. They have steamrolled teams throughout the season, and don't look ready to stop now. "I'm very confident," Miller said. "Fourteen wins are not by accident."

**Girls' Fencing****Girls' Fencing Takes Second in PSAL Championship**

By ODREKA AHMED

"We'd be lucky to come in second," girls' fencing coach Joel Winston said, prior to the start of the season. Luck seems to have been on the team's side during this year's playoffs at Townsend Harris High School on Sunday, May 6. Stuyvesant came in second place, losing only to its long-

**"I think this season has been the best one since I got on the team sophomore year."**  
—Cheng Ma, senior

time rivals: the Hunter College High School Hawks.

"We were determined to win and even came to school to practice the Saturday before playoffs," senior Cheng Ma said.

Stuyvesant went into the playoffs with a new determination and drive that was evident as it managed to not be eliminated in the first round of the direct elimination bracket for the first time since 2009. Stuyvesant's third-seed foil team and fourth-seed epee team both got a bye in the first round of the playoffs, along with other top-ranked teams, and went on to win the second and third place positions, respectively, giving Stuyvesant second place overall.

Stuyvesant's foil team faced sixth seed Brooklyn Tech in the quarterfinals, with senior and co-captain Sophia Chen, Ma, and junior Christina Zeng fencing for all three rounds. The trio domi-

nated, winning all nine bouts and giving up only fifteen points.

Stuyvesant went on to face second seed Tottenville in the semifinal round and, in a very close match, beat the higher ranked team, winning by only four touches. Ma won all three of her bouts and Chen won two. "[Chen] really pulled through for us. In the last bout, we were behind, and then she caught up and won it to bring us into the finals. It was amazing," Zeng said.

Already surpassing its expectations, the foil team found itself in the final round against the Hawks, the source of its only two losses all season. However, Stuyvesant wasn't able to put up much of a fight against its rivals, as Chen was the lone Stuyvesant fencer to win her bout. She got in only two touches but was able to close out the win because the clock ran out.

Hunter used fewer substitutions during the match than it had during the regular season, only subbing in senior Emilia Dwyer to relieve sophomore Grace Wong. Stuyvesant had its first substitution of the tournament in this final match, replacing Zeng with former starter senior Bernice Chan. Despite the fresh fencer, Stuyvesant still lost with a disappointing 16 touches to Hunter's 45.

The Stuyvesant epee team suffered a similar fate to its counterpart. After an easy win over fifth seed Benjamin Cardozo High School, who went undefeated in the regular season but was only able to get 17 touches on Stuyvesant, Stuyvesant's epee team was eliminated during its second match. The team, consisting of senior and co-captain Yin Yin Wu, junior Norine Chan, and sophomore Julia Mendelsohn, found itself in the semifinals against Hunter's powerhouse epee team, prematurely facing its rival because of its initial fourth seed. The trio put up a stronger fight against the Hawks than their foil counterparts, losing by only three touches and, more importantly, not allowing the Hawks to get the maximum score of 45.

"We didn't expect to win, but we definitely put up a fight, and



Wei Dan Yang / The Spectator

it was a close game. I'm proud to say we made them sweat for those 44 points," Wu said. "We only lost by three points, which is pretty awesome considering that they have two nationally ranked starters, Olivia Briffault and Katherine Miller, while we have none."

Less than a week before the playoffs, Wu had victories over

both Briffault and Miller during a regular season match against Hunter. She won 8-5 and 5-1, respectively. This was a very laudable performance by Wu, considering she had only joined the team her sophomore year and began fencing epee her junior year.

Wu hopes to continue fencing for New York University's fencing team, and she plans on competing in non-PSAL tournaments. "At these tournaments, you can get a letter from A to E, A being the highest. [Miller] is an A, and [Briffault] is a C. I hope to be on their level," Wu said.

Though the eventual third-place epee team was eliminated before it could get to the final round, it earned more touches against Hunter than did any other team in the tournament, including the second-place epee team from LaGuardia. The points earned from the touches in both foil and epee were combined to rank the teams as a whole. The strength of the epee team came into play here when points from its semifinal match pushed the Stuyvesant team into second place for the PSAL city champion-

ship—only 12 points ahead of Laguardia and 12 points behind Hunter.

"We were so close this year because we worked really hard," Zeng said. "I would love to see us in first place next year, and I feel that if we work even harder next year, we're well within our ability to do so."

While the underclassmen are looking forward to next season, the seniors are not done with high school fencing just yet. All four seniors—Chen, Chan, Ma and Wu—qualified for the PSAL Individual Championship on Sunday, May 20. "I haven't won gold yet," Wu said. "I've got all the other colors, but I want to win gold."

In addition to the seniors, the remaining starters on the team—Chan, Mendelsohn, and Zeng—qualified, as well. The abundance of qualifiers verifies the strong season that the Stuyvesant fencing team has had this year.

"I think this season has been the best one since I got on the team sophomore year," Ma said. "We definitely had the best team spirit and fought to the last second at the playoffs."

**"I'm proud to say we made them sweat for those 44 points."**  
—Yinyin Wu, senior and co-captain

**Baseball Is In A League of Its Own**

continued from page 32

ner on first base. Now, in addition to all of the previous questions, the defensive players also have to ask themselves: Will the runner attempt to steal second base? How are the field conditions: did it rain recently, or is the dirt easy to run on? But then, the pitcher suddenly pivots and throws the ball to the first basemen—this split-second move has even more layers of baseball skill, as the pitcher shows the runner that he is aware the runner is there, and to think twice before trying to steal.

The count is full—three balls and two strikes. The pitcher licks his palm, analyzes the situation, and runs through all of the questions again. He heaves, and the ball makes an awkward bounce and escapes the catcher. Wild pitch. Instead of ending the inning, there are now two men on base. A new batter comes up, and a new defensive situation is created. This process continues until the final out. There are al-

ways new questions to address, complex defensive and offensive situations to overcome. However, the difference between a win and a loss can come down to one faulty pitch or one powerful swing.

The fact that a baseball game is not timed speaks volumes about its sophistication. An unlimited number of at-bats can occur in one inning, meaning no leads are safe. On May 1, 1920, the Boston Braves ended the game with a once-in-a-lifetime draw (unless it's the All Star Game) against the Brooklyn Dodgers after taking a 1-1 tie into the 26th inning: a pitching showdown. On the other hand, the Toronto Blue Jays hit ten home runs in a single game against the Baltimore Orioles, winning 18-3 on September 14, 1987: an offensive showcase.

Those who say that baseball is too methodical and tedious are people who pay no attention to nuances in their regular lives. There is a tremendous amount of phenomena that fans can ob-

serve, from analyzing the logic of intentional walks and pinch runners to admiring the pure athleticism of a diving catch.

Baseball is the only sport that features a one-on-one matchup, but is still truly a team sport. After three outs are secured, the roles of the hitting and fielding teams reverse. Baseball exemplifies the American dream: everybody gets a chance in multiple aspects of the game. If your defense is subpar, maybe you're a great hitter. If your hitting is below average, maybe you can pinch-run in pressure-packed late inning situations. The exceptions that baseball makes to athletic ability drive home the fact that it is a team sport that focuses on individual talents.

A single Albert Pujols-caliber player is unable to single-handedly bring his team to the World Series—he improves the team's marketability, but he needs his teammates to reach greatness. A star slugger hitting in the middle of the lineup adds dimension to the roster, but does not deter-

mine the outcome of the game. The X-factor that a single player like LeBron James brings to a basketball team does not exist in baseball; there are too many pieces involved for one single person to carry either the success or failure of the team on his shoulders.

The intricacy and depth of baseball is not for the casual sports fan who only cares for in-your-face play and high drama. It is the only sport that can have its fans sit through nine straight innings of sportsmanlike conduct and minimal violence with a scorecard in hand, among many tasks, specifying whether the batter struck out looking or swinging, whether the ball that got by the catcher was a wild pitch or passed ball. Fans of America's pastime are the perfect representation of the true sports fan: appreciative of the culture, attentive to the mechanics, and aware of the idiosyncrasies of the game they love.

**There is a tremendous amount of phenomena that fans can observe, from analyzing the logic of intentional walks and pinch runners to admiring the pure athleticism of a diving catch.**

# Sports

## Boys' Baseball

### Hitmen Tack on Fifth Straight

By LEV AKABAS

**Stuyvesant Hitmen 12, Graphic Communication Arts Devils 1**

Going into their game against the Graphic Communication Arts Devils on Thursday, May 10, the Stuyvesant Hitmen were on a four-game streak, hot off a 4-0 win against the Devils on Tuesday, May 8. However, they would need to prevail again in order to defend their first-place ranking, just above the Beacon Blue Demons in the Manhattan A West Division standings.

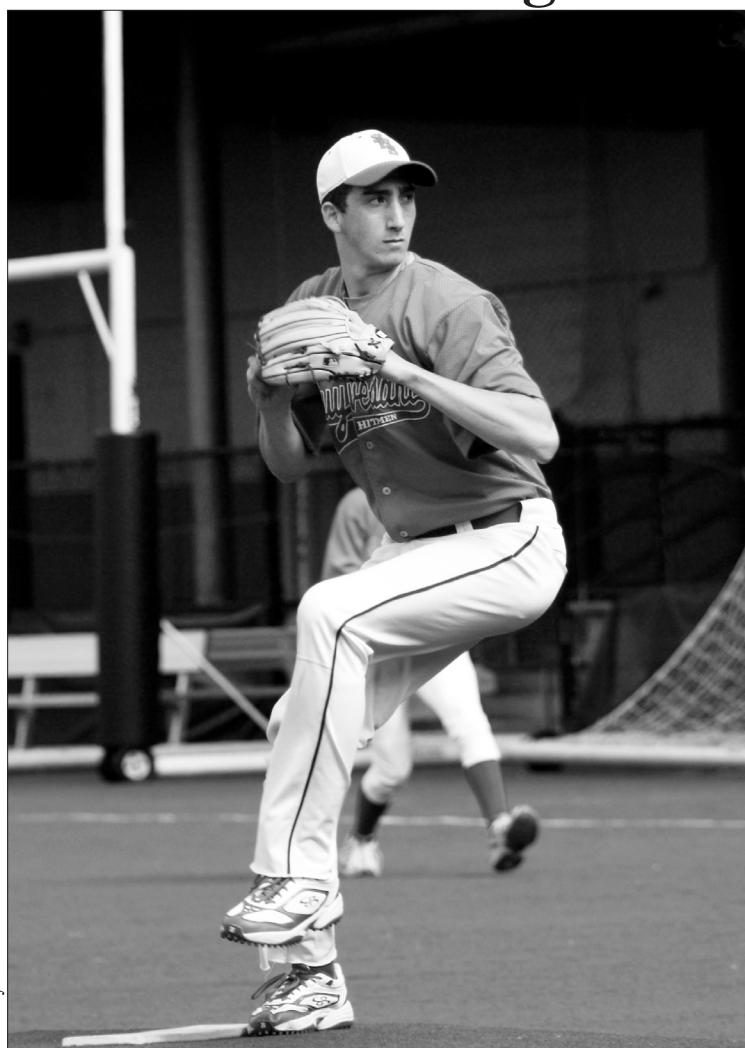
In the top of first inning, senior and co-captain Evan Lubin walked a batter and gave up a single, leading to a run for the Devils. The Hitmen came up short at the plate in the bottom of the inning: the opposing pitcher needed only seven pitches to get the first three Stuyvesant batters out.

But starting in the second inning, Lubin helped turn the tides for the Hitmen. For the remainder of the game, he surrendered only one hit and struck out nine batters in total. "If I pitch like I did today, we will beat Beacon," he said.

In the bottom of the second, the Hitmen got going on offense, as well. Senior Christopher Woo blasted a triple, and in the following at-bat, senior Erick Wong belted a two-run home run over the right fielder's head, giving the Hitmen a comfortable 5-1 lead.

Stuyvesant continued to dominate in the third and fourth innings, in which they scored five and two runs, respectively, and extended their lead to 12-1. The game ended in the fifth inning, due to the ten-run mercy rule.

Prior to this game, the Hitmen had an issue with striking out too much, collectively averaging eight strikeouts per game. However, they were able to reverse the trend and have much smarter at-bats against the Devils, striking out only twice. They also benefitted



Courtesy of Victoria Zhao  
Senior and captain of Stuyvesant's Boys' Baseball team, Evan Lubin, pitching.

from erratic pitching by the Devils and, as a result, drew 15 walks over the five innings of play.

"We had really good at-bats," senior and co-captain Kyle Yee said. "We drew a lot of walks, got base-runners in, and we got clutch hits today."

With the win, the Hitmen improved their overall record to 10-3. But their upcoming series will be challenging contests against the Blue Demons, who are

just behind the Hitmen in second place. The Hitmen will then close out the season with a make-up game on Saturday, May 19 against the Manhattan Center for Math and Science Rams, a formidable opponent from the Manhattan A East division.

"We've been playing really, really well," coach John Carlesi said. "It's going to be a fun time against Beacon, and it looks like we're going to be playing for first place."

## Boys' Handball

### Dragons Complete Another Undefeated Season, Reach 2nd Round of Playoffs

By DARYL CHIN

The Dragons, Stuyvesant's boys' handball team, dominated in a 5-0 win against the Chelsea Lions on Monday, April 30. However, despite the win, the atmosphere in the 6th floor gym remained tense throughout the afternoon. As the game was going on, coach Robert Sandler held drills to work on the players' explosiveness. After the meet, Sandler held scrimmages where the team's seniors faced off against its underclassmen.

The Dragons won all five games against the Lions despite the fact that none of the three team captains attended the game and only four regular starters played. "Kevin [Sheng] was sick, JiaWei [Chen] was sick, and two of our starters had music stuff, but we still won," Sandler said.

In the first singles match, senior Calvin Chong destroyed his opponent, winning the match 21-0. Chong had 13 aces in the match, each one greeted by cheers by teammates and spectators alike. In the second singles match, sophomore Long Yip won 21-4. In the third singles match, sophomore Wilson Luo won 21-7. While the Dragons easily returned balls, Chelsea players struggled to retrieve even the simplest of the Dragon's serves. Rallies were usually short, with the Dragons controlling the matches throughout the meet.

Both doubles matches were lopsided as well. In the first doubles match, junior John Hu and freshman Marco Liu quickly dis-

patched their opponents 21-1. Liu had three aces, and Hu added another ace. In the second doubles match, juniors Cody Tong and Alexander Bu also won 21-3. The two combined for two aces.

Due to the absence of several players, Sandler used this game to give the team's rookies and underclassmen opportunities to get playing time. "It is good for the young guys, and they enjoy playing," Sandler said.

The team has historically been dominant in its division, but has faced problems in the playoffs when facing tough teams outside of their division. As the team wraps up the regular season, the Dragons are planning to scrimmage against stiffer competition to prepare for the increased competition they will face in the playoffs. They will play a more competitive match against a fellow undefeated team, Bronx Science, on Wednesday, May 2. "We're excited to scrim with Bronx Science and hopefully Francis Lewis sometime before the playoffs so we can practice and warm up," Chong said. The Dragons hope they can carry their regular season momentum into the playoffs.

The Dragons were also victorious against the High School of Economics and Finance on Friday, May 4 by a score of 5-0, ending the regular season undefeated without losing a match. In the first round of the playoffs, the third seeded Dragons beat the 30th seeded JFK Campus Knights in a sweeping 5-0 victory on Monday, March 14.

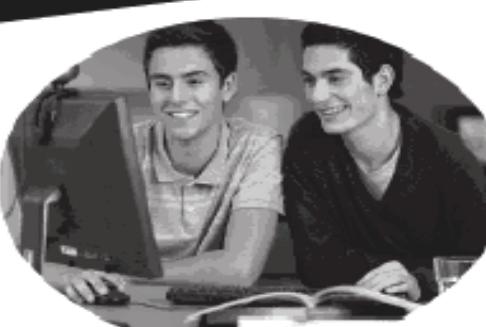
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# A Different Rite of Passage: The College Recruitment Process

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tion, Division I schools require that athletes complete a certain amount of coursework every year to ensure that they graduate on time.

Division II, the smallest division of the three, offers a slightly more relaxed alternative to the extremely competitive Division I, while maintaining the athletic scholarship.

However, Division III offers more top academic schools than Divisions I and II do. "Division I coaches were talking to me, but I knew that [Division III] soccer at Amherst was for me. I wanted to play soccer, but my education was more important to me, and Amherst was the best school academically. It was a no-brainer," McClean said.

Unlike Hu-Van Wright, Altman-Kurosaki, and Surkont, who are all members of teams that have won the PSAL city championship, McClean had to join a high profile club team, Manhattan Ajax, to become a more prominent college prospect. Though the boys' tennis team is not a city champion either, Jou was able to avoid the same problem because tennis is not a team sport. Furthermore, a recruiting site online that ranks all the high school tennis players in the nation allowed college coaches to discover Jou and express interest.

Jou sent his academic record and standardized test scores to several college coaches in January 2011, played at a tournament at Johns Hopkins, catching the interest of the coach there, and kept in touch throughout the year until it was time for early decision applications. "For [Division III], you technically can't get recruited since you can't commit to the school before you officially get in. You are never guaranteed [admission] until you get the acceptance letter. The coach simply pulls for you and tells admissions that you will be an impact player toward the team," Jou said.

Mcclean had a similar experience as he was also recruited for a Division III school. He emailed the soccer coach at Amherst for about six months until the coach finally came to see McClean play in May, without warning. "He happened to be standing on the side I was attacking, and he stood there for twenty minutes. I played really well and scored a sick goal at which point he left, without a word. The next day he came back to watch my game for fifteen minutes, during which I scored another really good goal. And that was it. He left and called my house Monday," McClean said.

Those two surprise visits were essentially the basis of McClean's recruitment, and after getting in touch with every coach that had seen McClean play, the Amherst coach displayed an extreme interest in McClean. He pushed McClean's application through admissions and got him an early read by the end of his junior year with a positive response. McClean was told that if he applied early decision and played soccer for Amherst, admission was practically a guarantee.

"[Division I] can give you a written commitment, but [Division III]'s commitments are verbal. So you have to put a lot of pressure on the coach, and they have to be able to trust you,"

McClean said. He did eventually apply early and received his official acceptance in December.

Surkont, Altman-Kurosaki, and Hu-Van Wright had experiences that varied greatly from McClean's and Jou's. To be recruited to play in Division I, athletes must go to the NCAA eligibility center and fill out required paperwork so that college coaches can contact them. Once they receive contact, they are then asked to respond their preferred schools with transcripts, standardized test scores, and reports on their athletic progress. Coaches usually respond with a definitive answer of whether or not they can recruit the athlete, and keep in touch as they observe their season and any changes in their performance.

In the summer of 2011, Hu-Van Wright caught the attention of many top colleges after he qualified for the 2012 United States Olympic trials. "Qualifying for trials was a goal of mine since I was very young, and making trials opened up new possibilities as many top Division I schools began calling me, as well, including [University of] North Carolina, [University of] Michigan, Northwestern, and [University of] Florida," Hu-Van Wright said.

Toward the end of August, Division I prospective recruits are invited to attend recruiting trips for five of the colleges interested in them, arranged and paid for in full by the NCAA.

These recruitment trips take place near the beginning of the school year to allow athletes to get a feel for prospective schools. "I ended up choosing Princeton because it was the best fit for me. I loved hanging out with the team, talking to the coaches, and getting to know others in the Princeton community," Hu-Van Wright said.

While the NCAA does set up guidelines for recruiters and student-athletes, the process is different for everyone. Surkont didn't know he was going to be recruited until his senior year started, and he took his five recruiting trips in the fall and winter. "For me, this process happened very late. I wasn't offered these trips until much later than most," Surkont said.

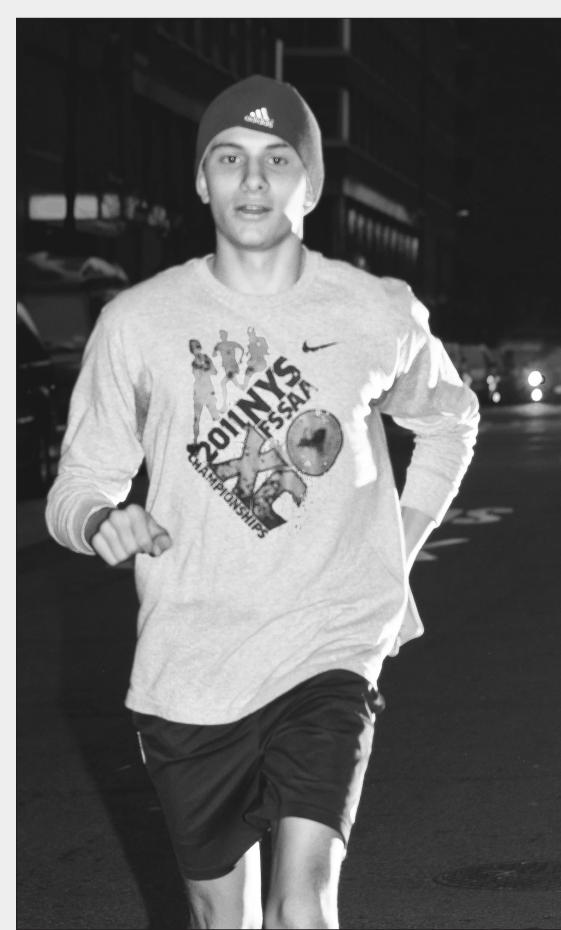
If the coach decides he can support an athlete through the admissions process, after deciding to commit, he or she can apply early and expect to be admitted. If an athlete is committing to an Ivy League school, he or she will receive a likely letter, which is essentially a guarantee of acceptance. Hu-Van Wright and Altman-Kurosaki received likely letters in early November of their senior year.

Surkont's situation was different because there were no real commitments to any school. "I had the option to commit to every school I visited, where they would basically guarantee me admission, but I just wasn't ready to," Surkont said. When he got into Yale early, it was without the help of a track coach, and as it turned out, he was not bound to go there.

Surkont had an agreement with Harvard; the track coach helped push his application through admission on the grounds that he would most likely go if admitted. This was also non-binding, so he had a choice between Harvard and Yale after the entire process.



Noam Altman-Kurosaki, senior and co-captain of Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team, the Pirates. (top)



Konrad Surkont, senior and co-captain of Stuyvesant's boys' track team, the Greyclucks. (right)



Christopher Jou, senior and co-captain of Stuyvesant's boys' tennis team, the Smokin' Aces.



Krit McClean, senior and co-captain of Stuyvesant's boys' soccer team, the Schoolers.

All five athletes felt it was a relief to get such an agonizing process out of the way so early on and to be guaranteed admission into these highly prestigious colleges. They all have practiced playing sports year-

round, often once or more a day, while keeping their grades up in Stuyvesant's rigorous academic environment. Through college recruitment, their hard work paid off, and they were recognized as top athletes in the na-

tion. "People don't realize that putting in twelve years of work into something is actually pretty damn time consuming. I'm glad that that's being recognized," Altman-Kurosaki said.

# THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

## Boys' Tennis

### Boys' Tennis Quarterfinal: Stuyvesant Smokin' Aces 5, Francis Lewis Patriots 0

By EAMON WOODS

The number three seeded Stuyvesant Boys Tennis Smokin' Aces delivered nothing but winners in their overwhelming defeat of the number 11 seeded Francis Lewis Patriots on Friday, May 11 at Hudson River Park. This quarter final victory advanced Stuyvesant to a semi-final matchup against the Brooklyn Technical Engineers.

The fact that three of the Stuyvesant's starters had to miss the match for various reasons did not hinder the team's performance whatsoever. Senior and co-captain Christopher Jou left nothing to chance in his first singles match as he recorded a priceless 10-0 victory.

Senior and co-captain Leon Pan followed in his footsteps as he had tight control on the sec-

ond singles match throughout and won 10-2. Freshman substitute Leonard Margolis decisively beat his opponent 10-3, as the Stuyvesant singles players went undefeated.

First doubles, juniors Hayden Karp-Hecker and Ryan Elnaggar, went on to win 10-4, while juniors and substitutes Kevin Huang and Frederick Dai continued the victory streak with a 10-6 win in second doubles, despite starting senior Pavel Shapurenka being out.

This win qualified Stuyvesant for the Mayor's Cup as one of the top eight teams in New York City, for the first time in three years. "We want to prove to the PSAL tennis division that we are one of the best teams," Coach Timothy Pan said. This absolute victory did nothing but that.

## Baseball Is In A League of Its Own



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

By ALISON FU

Some ignorant sport fans accuse the game of baseball of being boring—of lacking the kinetic energy that is ever present in basketball and football. They are wrong. Compared to its professional sport counterparts, baseball is the soft-spoken older brother with a reserved personality and an inherent ethos. Fans marvel over professionals' seemingly routine throws and effortless swings rather than other athletes' extravagant trick plays or gaudy slam dunks that always seem to land on Sports-Center Top Ten.

Baseball is not an attention-seeking sport, and because of this, many uneducated observers conclude that it is uneventful. To them, the relief that comes when the opposing team's player grounds into a double play in the top of the ninth with the score tied and the bases loaded cannot beat the exhilaration that results from a basketball shot chucked up from the half-court line and made at the buzzer. A fast player who hits a double but is able to

extend it into a triple by taking into account the outfielder's limited range is just doing his job; the football player who sees a loose ball on the field and dives on it is the hero of the game.

The subdued, slower nature of baseball masks the fact that there is more going on during the first pitch of a ballgame than in the entire length of a touchdown run, celebration included. When the batter approaches the plate, each defensive player shifts to where he believes the ball will be hit, something that cannot be determined until wind conditions, tendencies of the hitter, and pitch placement are considered. As the pitcher winds up, the hitter simultaneously asks himself various questions: Will he start me off with a curveball? A slider? The ball is released, and sails across home plate into the catcher's open glove. The umpire signals strike with his right hand, the radar gun clocks the fastball at 94 miles per hour, and the ball-game has officially started.

Two outs later, there is a run—

*continued on page 29*

## Girls' Tennis

Article on page 26.

The Lobsters' playoff run was cut short after their third loss of the season to Beacon.

## A Different Rite of Passage: The College Recruitment Process

By ODREKA AHMED

Surprisingly early in a student's junior year and continuing intolerably late into their senior year, the college application process is a daunting task all students face. It is a chance for them to portray themselves in the best possible light, despite being limited to a grade point average, three standardized test scores, 10 slots for extracurricular activities and 500 words. This long process is completed in the hopes that come April 1st, they will be accepted into a top tier college.

Every so often, however, the tables are turned and students find several top tier colleges contacting them—months before applications are submitted—trying to convince the students to attend their schools. The college recruitment process validates a student athlete's dominance in his or her sport.

The recruitment process starts when college coaches contact athletes at some point during their junior year; but to get from the first contact to an acceptance letter requires a significant amount of interest and effort on both the athlete's and the coach's part. Many students are contacted once, and then never again. Others have to work hard to contact coaches

themselves. The recruitment process is almost as complicated as the application process itself. As a result, come the end of senior year, only several athletes find themselves successfully recruited by a college.

This year, En Wei Hu-Van Wright of the boys' swimming team, along with teammate diver Noam Altman-Kurosaki, will be attending Princeton University. Co-captain of the cross country, indoor, and outdoor track teams, Konrad Surkort will be attending Harvard College. Co-captain of the soccer team, Krit McClean, will be attending Amherst College and co-captain of the tennis team, Christopher Jou, will be attending Johns Hopkins University. These five student-athletes have successfully completed the college recruitment process and will be playing their sport at their respective schools.

Being tremendously successful athletes was not all that it took for these boys to be recruited by prestigious colleges; prospective recruits first have to maintain certain academic standings to be considered for recruitment by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The NCAA requirements are not too difficult for Stuyvesant students to achieve, but many

schools have their own specific academic requirements in the recruiting process. Ivy League schools are known to scrutinize an athlete's academic record more than other Division I schools do. The admissions office goes through the athlete's grades, and if they aren't satisfactory, the student will not be admitted to the school, regardless of his or her talent level.

Division III schools are subject to their own eligibility requirements and are not determined by the NCAA because they do not receive funding from the NCAA for athletic scholarships. For example, Johns Hopkins required a 1300 combined math and verbal SAT scores, as opposed to the 1000 required by the NCAA.

The general consensus may be that Division I consists of the best athletics, followed by Division II and then Division III, but it's not quite black and white. Many factors go into an athlete's decision of which division they will play for.

While Division I schools provide athletic scholarships (with the exception of the Ivy League), they also expect more of athletes, requiring them to play and practice more than a Division III school does. In addition,

*continued on page 31*

## Boys' Volleyball

### Men of Steel Upset in Playoffs

By NIYAZ ARIF

Men of Steel 1,  
Townsend Harris Hawks 2

The Stuyvesant Men of Steel entered the first round of the playoffs on Monday, May 7 seeded 12th, but knew they would be challenged by the 21st seed, the Townsend Harris Hawks. "We knew that they were a tough team to beat. We didn't expect any less than what we saw from them today," senior and co-captain Leon Li said.

Both teams played hard, but the Hawks pulled out on top 2-1.

In the first set, Stuyvesant started off with a 5-1 formation. The team had a nervous start with two missed serves and one out-of-bounds spike. The Men of Steel had difficulty getting past the Hawks' fast-moving middle blockers, and seemed to be bogged down at the beginning of the match.

But the Men of Steel began to rally later on in the first set, beginning with Li's long-range spike and junior Calvin He's three quick digs. The Hawks struck back immediately, and their middle hitters blasted two spikes past Stuyvesant's defense. Stuyvesant responded with a dig, set, and spike combo from seniors Andrew Kim, Philip Zang, and Li, with Li getting the point. Then,

sophomore Connor Pfister's crucial block forced the Hawks' early hit, tying the score at 19-19. However, after a second timeout, Stuyvesant was unable to keep its momentum when the Hawks' libero Oleksandr Boychuk made a block. The pace continued to falter when three setups for Kim all resulted in misses. The set ended with a 25-22 victory for the Hawks.

The Men of Steel got to a better start in the second set, with a successful first serve and a consecutive block. "We went in to play harder with a lot of intensity and not to get ourselves down," Li said.

Li's and He's digs, along with Pfister's double blocks, gave Stuyvesant an early lead of 6-3. Stuyvesant employed formation changes in the set. With Kim, He, and Li playing a central role in the back, Kim and Li were able to obtain crucial digs. Psifer's triple light tip-ins in the central attack led Stuyvesant to a 25-23 victory in the second set. "I just wanted to help everyone play better [in that set] and help them stay positive," Kim said.

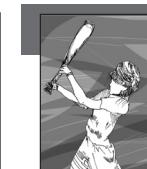
The third set showcased evenly matched sides. However, Stuyvesant started off poorly, with two out-of-bounds plays. The Hawks capitalized on the opportunity, and outside hitter Chi-ray Patel hit two spikes, giving

the Hawks an 8-5 lead. Continuing to play through Stuyvesant's defense, the Hawks extended their lead to 15-11, eventually winning the set 25-20.

Though they were disappointed by the loss, the Men of Steel were pleased with their ability to fight until the very end of the match. "In our divisions, we don't really have much competition, and so we knew Townsend Harris was [a] tough team to beat. But overall, I'm really proud of them," coach Vasken Choubaralian said.

"We have the best hitting team in city, but our passing is sometimes inconsistent," Li said. "We are a pretty quiet team, and talking is the most important thing in volleyball."

With the end of the 2012 season, the Men of Steel are hopeful for next year's team. The strength of the upperclassmen in their undefeated season serves as a key model for the underclassmen's participation next year. They hope that communication and confidence will strengthen in an already-strong hitting team, in order to increase their chances of going deeper in the playoffs next year. "I have hope in the freshmen because they practice really hard and hustle," Li said. "The most important position is a setter and [coach] is doing [a] really good job in making new ones."



## Girls' Softball

Article on page 28.

The Renegades win their first Manhattan A division title under coach Vincent Miller.