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of the
Student
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Science Olympiad Team Qualifies for States

By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN
and ANIKA RASTGIR
with additional reporting by
NANCY CHEN

Reaching out to over 600 teams across the country, Science Olympiad is one of the foremost science competitions in the nation. The Stuyvesant High School team ranks prominently in this realm. In the past few years, the team has made a strong showing at the New York City Division C Regional Competition. Since they placed first at last year's regional competition, they expected to perform on par with their previous performance. At this year's competition, Stuyvesant's A, B, and C teams placed sixth, eighth, and ninth respectively. However, they received more medals than the other teams.

The Science Olympiad team members have been preparing regularly since the beginning of the year. Stuyvesant team members are selected and divided into A, B, and C teams based on their performance mock test sessions and attendance at after school meetings. The A team is composed of team captains and talented members, the B team is composed of juniors and seniors who are knowledgeable in their field of study, and the C team is composed of promising underclassmen who want to gain more experience in Science Olympiad. At regionals, each team con-

sisted of fifteen students from earth science, biology, physics, chemistry, and technology.

This year's regional competition, which took place on Saturday, February 5 at Grover Cleveland High School in Queens, brought an unforeseen turnaround for the team. Cardozo High School placed first, Archbishop Molloy placed second, Collegiate High School placed third, and Townsend High School placed fourth and fifth.

Stuyvesant's unexpected performance can be attributed to two major factors: administrative issues and disqualification.

There was a general lack of communication between the Science Olympiad administration and the Stuyvesant team. In previous years, the rules stated that teams could opt out of up to five events not including trial events, which are events that have been introduced within the past few years.

This year, schools had to notify administrators that they were not going to participate in trial events beforehand, but the team did not know about the change. Therefore, they opted out of five events in addition to the trial Magnetic Levitation event. The team members assumed that they did not have to notify the administrators of their decision to not partake in it. Since they were signed up for the event but did not show up, they received

last place by default, which hurt the team's overall performance.

"The goal of the Science Olympiad completion is to get the lowest amount of points possible. In order to penalize us, they gave us the full score," junior and Stuyvesant Science Olympiad Vice President Edward Cho said. "Forty-six points is the reason we dropped down five places."

Additionally, in the technology department, the A team was disqualified from the Mouse-trap Vehicle event, which comprises of building a car using mousetraps that fulfill a certain condition. The reason for disqualification was not disclosed.

Despite these obstacles, "Tech has done a lot better than before, because it's the first time in our history that we received three medals total at regionals," senior and technology captain Xing Cheng said.

"Next time [the technology division] will be stronger," physics teacher and technology team coach Peter Martens said. "The team worked tremendously hard and we're going to pull our own weight and become a powerhouse," he said.

The team had some success at the Regional Competition. Their ranking depended solely on the points system, and since the team received a disqualification, their overall score was higher than the

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World Languages Department Creates Spanish Web Site to Aid Students



Sra. Montserrat teaches a Spanish class.

By SAI DOKKU
and ALEX WANG

Since the spring of last year, Spanish teachers Anna Montserrat and Robert Weldon have been constructing a Web site as a resource to be used by Spanish classes at Stuyvesant. Though work is still in progress, students and teachers can now visit the site at [HYPERLINK](http://www.stuyspanish.org)

<http://www.stuyspanish.org>
www.stuyspanish.org

Monserrat and Weldon decided to create it after noting the success of Weldon's class Web site on www.nylearns.org. The page provided resources to his students, such as links to Spanish television and radio resources, along with Powerpoint presentations on verb conjugations. After discussions with

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A slice of heaven on a plate.

Stuyclopedia: A New Way to Trade

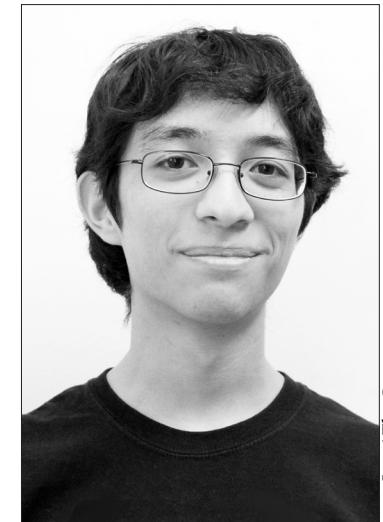
By ANNIE CHAU
and JOHN YUEN

The start of a semester gives rise to new beginnings—new teachers, new classmates, and new schedules. In the first few weeks, the guidance and programming offices are flooded with requests for schedule changes. The process of enacting these changes is often chaotic for both students and faculty alike; classes fill up, and switching around classes requires permission from department heads, guidance counselors, and programming officers.

Senior Chris Natoli has offered what may be a solution to this issue: the Stuyclopedia trading floor.

Since the start of the new term, the most popular attraction of Stuyclopedia has been the trading floor section. The Web site helps facilitate the trade between students who want to switch certain classes. To post a request, students edit the page by creating a new section and writing a brief title of which classes they are leaving, and which ones they are seeking. The goal is for other students to reply to the postings and make a trade.

Natoli has wanted to create a Wikipedia-like Web site



Joann Lee / The Spectator

for Stuyvesant High School ever since his freshman year. However he did not have the opportunity to do so until the fall of 2009. He founded the Wiki Club for students interested in creating, enhancing, and maintaining Stuyclopedia. The Wiki club was a small group that grew with the help of senior and current co-

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PA Screens Film "Race to Nowhere" On Pressure To Succeed

By NOAH ROSENBERG
and ANIQA SHAH
with additional reporting by
ISAREE THATCHAICHAWALIT

In an attempt to help students and parents understand how to manage school-related stress, the Parents' Association (PA) screened the documentary "Race to Nowhere" in the Murray Kahn theater on Tuesday, February 8 at 6:45 p.m.

The film highlights the dark side of America's achievement culture. Created by Vicki Abeles in 2009, it addresses how the pressures that parents and educators put on students affects their mental and physical health. According to the film's Web site, it "points to the silent epidemic in our schools: cheating has become commonplace, students have become disengaged, stress-related illness, depression and burnout are rampant, and young people arrive at college and the workplace unprepared and uninspired."

The psychologists featured in the film are launching a grassroots campaign to be screened in schools nationwide.

"The film was very relatable," junior Karen Chan said after watching the movie. "I was able to see that I'm not the only one who feels like, 'Oh, school is putting so much pressure on us.' It

definitely is, and it's not only school. It's just basically our environment."

"It certainly wasn't the film I expected it to be," sophomore parent Pamela Smith said. "It isn't just about homework. It's about everything in this country that is wrong with education. Teachers are not valued highly enough and the whole testing culture is a huge step backward. There's something wrong with the education system here," she said.

The screening was funded using \$5,855 of the one percent of Title I funds allocated to the PA. The funds are federal grants distributed to schools in which a certain percentage of the student body comes from low-income households. Stuyvesant qualified for the first time last year due to a drop in the percentage of such students required for eligibility from 60 percent to 40 percent. One percent of the Title I funds Teitel had allocated for the 2010-2011 school year, or \$16,000, was allotted to the Parents Association to improve parent involvement. According to Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm, "What the PA wants to do [...] is really give parents information and support about the issues that are most important," Blumm

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News

English Teacher Takes Leave for Surgery

English teacher Holly Schechter will take a leave of absence from Friday, February 18, to the end of the spring term due to an injury resulting from a car accident.

Last summer, Schechter was rear-ended by a drunk driver, causing damage to her spine. Nonetheless, Schechter has soldiered on. After six months of physical therapy and epidural injections, she has continued to teach two classes of Freshman Composition, two of Late American Literature, and one senior course, Great Books.

However, after a number of medical tests, it is clear that Schechter will require surgery to recuperate from the accident, necessitating time off from teaching for several weeks. A disc in her spine has rapidly deteriorated from the trauma caused by the accident and must be replaced with a prosthetic.

"I'm sad I have to take a leave under these circumstances as opposed to positive ones, like having a baby," Schechter said. She grew up in a small town called Long Meadow, in western Massachusetts, where many kids drove drunk, she said. In high school, she was very involved in a club called Students Against Drunk Driving (later Students Against Destructive Decisions), so the accident was "an odd irony," she said.

Nonetheless, Schechter keeps an optimistic outlook and feels that "it could've been a lot worse." She definitely plans to be back in September, she said. Her replace-

ment has not yet been selected.

"When she told us [about the accident] it was devastating for all of us," senior Maya Goldman said. "We love her as a teacher and a person." Goldman also said that her class has a really good class dynamic with Schechter, but that she expects that the transition between teachers will be smooth. "We all just want to be there for her and support her," Goldman said.

Goldman was not the only person to express regret at Schechter's departure. Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said, "We're really sorry that she's not going to be around for the bulk of the term, both because we care about her and love having her as a member of the department and friend and colleague, and also because of the circumstances. You know, the recuperating surgery is painful and arduous and tedious, and we wish that she didn't have to go through that."

Government and Economics Finals Starting This Semester

Starting the Spring term of 2011, all students taking a regular Government or Economics class will have to take a departmental final exam at the end of the semester, during finals week.

One of the reasons they decided to have the final is so that there is a basic core curriculum," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said. "Another reason is so that they can see improvement in the students based on data."

In the past, finals in Economics and Government classes were given at the teach-

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ers' discretion. "We've given a departmentalized final for Economics before," Economics teacher Eric Wisotsky said. "Sometimes we had one, sometimes we didn't."

There have been times where some teachers assigned term papers or projects in place of an exam, while others chose to create their own cumulative final. Other teachers chose to weigh one regular class exam more than the others into the final grades of their students.

"A lot of us teachers prefer our own assessments but [...] I would say data analysis is a big part of it. Data analysis wouldn't be as accurate if it weren't coming from the same place," Wisotsky said.

As a general rule, Principal and physics teacher Stanley Teitel prefers departmental finals to non-standardized alternatives because they "ensure that all students get the same topics covered regardless of the teacher," he said.

"Having these departmental finals can benefit the students by making everyone take a test on the same level," senior Mahtab Alam said. "This makes the playing field much more balanced, and many students who would otherwise have more lenient teachers would have to study a bit harder."

Some students have expressed concern over the departmentalized Economics and Government finals. "Each teacher has [their] own way of teaching and each teacher focuses more on certain topics, so I don't even see the point of a departmental final when some teachers barely touched upon certain topics," senior

Janis Mahnure said. "Then why have different teachers? Force the teachers to all teach the same way. Can you do that?"

"We'll see how it goes," Wisotsky said. "If the data shows improvement in the test scores, then that's valuable and that's what we want."

New Teacher Joins Spanish Department

As the spring term began and Stuyvesant students received their programs, many found an unfamiliar name on their schedules: Elena Song. Song is entering the Stuyvesant community as a replacement for Spanish teacher Roma Flores, who is on sabbatical. Until Flores returns in September, Song will be teaching her regular and enriched Spanish Level I classes.

Assistant Principal Foreign Language Arlene Ubieto said she contacted Song for an interview because she was highly recommended by a friend and fellow assistant principal. As part of her trial, Song had to prepare a sample lesson for Ubieto's Advanced Placement Spanish Language class.

"She was wonderful," Ubieto said. "I could see the potential, and I knew that she would fit in perfectly with Stuyvesant."

Song was born in Korea, but moved to Paraguay when she was eight months old. As a result, her first languages were both Korean and Spanish. At 17, she moved to the United States, where she studied Spanish in both college and graduate school.

"Knowing and studying Spanish is different." Song

said. "When I was in college, [my professors] taught me that there was so much more to learn [about the language]."

The more Song learned about the Hispanic culture, the more she was inspired to teach students about it. After learning that many Hispanic students in America only speak English and are unconnected to their heritage, she decided that she "wanted to teach Spanish to Hispanic kids and [...] wanted them to know more about their culture," she said. At the time, she thought, "If an Asian can teach Spanish, then they will be motivated."

Though she would like to teach Hispanic students in the future, she is currently taking advantage of the other opportunities available to her.

The spring semester has just begun, but she is already highly regarded by her students. "I love how she is so upbeat and interesting in class," freshman Eugene Lee said. "It is so cool that she is Asian. We can all relate to that."

Freshman Nisreen Abdalazis agreed. "She is so engaging and interactive in class. I can tell how she cares about her students," she said.

Song believes practice makes perfect and expects her students to keep up with the high level of work. She said, "The great thing that I have learned is that being smart doesn't get you far. Of course it helps, but you have to try your hardest." She looks to continue the school year on a positive note by having fun, but at the same time building a strong relationship with her students.

PA Screens Film "Race to Nowhere" On Pressure To Succeed



"Race to Nowhere" was screened on Tuesday, February 8 at 6:45 p.m. in the Murray Khan theater.

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said. He believes that showing the movie to students in general helps them "to achieve more balance in their lives."

Many students feel that showing the film to parents is an important step in relieving the pressure put upon students. "I do think the urge to succeed has been forced upon us by our parents and teachers ever since we were young," junior Raisa Ahmed said. "The movie will open parents' eyes about what their kid is going through."

The screening was followed by a discussion session led by New York University Child Study Center psychologists Dr. Lori Evans, Dr. K. Ron-Li Liaw, and Dr. Kimberly Williams, in which parents and students in the audi-

ence voiced their questions and concerns.

"Parents and teenagers need to be aware that there is more than just getting the highest grades and into the right college. Learning should really be a life time goal and having the motivation and enjoyment of the process is important too," Title I Parent Representative Loretta Au said. "Many parents have requested help to support their child with dealing with the pressures and keeping the appropriate focus and perspective. This may be particularly difficult at a school as high-achieving as Stuy," she said.

Betsy Lind, whose son graduated in 2010, noted that, though it is difficult, it is possible to do so. "My son had stomach problems starting in middle school

"The film will open parents' eyes about what their kid is going through."
—Raisa Ahmed, Junior

from the stress," Lind said. "He still did things to enjoy himself, though. He was on the football team, he had friends, he dated, and he was able to negotiate a lot of different activities."

Parents and students alike can heed the overall message of the film. "We all deal with stress, it's just an ongoing battle," Lind said. "It's a balancing act, and that's what it always is."

World Languages Department Creates Spanish Web Site to Aid Students

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AP Spanish Language classes, as listening selections used in the AP test involve Spanish speakers with different manners of speaking.

"Unfortunately, we don't always have time to explore all of the different cultural aspects that I would love to cover, but I figured that via the Web site, kids will have the opportunity to explore some of those cultural aspects on their own," he said.

The site also provides links to magazines with articles about a variety of topics, such as travel and economics. As a student studying the language, Weldon, whose first language is not Spanish, read Spanish texts that appealed to him. "I was interested in various cultural aspects of Spain and Latin America, so I would go to Web sites and read books and magazines in the language," he said. "I wanted to provide opportunities online for kids [to explore] things that interested them, whether it be music or sports or politics or history or literature, [...] and to start to read about those things in Spanish."

Students are already taking advantage of this new opportunity to learn about culture.

"It's [not just] a study Web site," sophomore Mahir Ahmed said. "I use it for entertainment more than to study from."

Still yet to come are a page on writing in Spanish, which will offer a list of transition words and tips on writing conclusions, and a page for students taking Advanced Placement Spanish Literature. The literature page will include biographies of authors and descriptions of the historical context of the literature studied in the class.

Though the site is not yet complete, teachers have already started to incorporate it into their classes. "There is a lot of helpful material on the site already," said Assistant Principal World Languages Arlene Ubieto, who told her AP Spanish Language class to watch a news program about the trapped miners in Chile.

Montserrat and Weldon hope the site will be finished by the end of the year, but in the meantime, it will still be open to students. "The Web site is fantastic, and students should take advantage of it," Spanish teacher Manuel Simon said. "I definitely recommend it to students who might need a little extra help in Spanish."

Students Compete in National Ocean Sciences Bowl



Karen Zheng / The Spectator

(left to right) Brady Pan, Anita Yau, Michelle Zhang, Mimi Yen, and Judy Pu of the Coral Reef Club competed in the National Science Ocean Bowl at Rutgers University on February 5 supervised by Ms. Maggio (center).

By LINDSAY BU
and ISABELLE NG

Five Stuyvesant students competed in the National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB) regional competition held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on Saturday, February 5. The team, comprised of Coral Reef Club members including juniors Brady Pan, Judy Pu, Mimi Yen, and Michelle Zhang, and sophomore Anita Yau, was eliminated during the quarterfinals, losing to Germantown and the Marine Academy of Technology and Environment Science. They finished fourth place out of nine teams that participated in the competition.

Sponsored by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, NOSB is a nationally recognized competition that tests students' knowledge of the marine sciences, including aspects of biology, chemistry, physics, and geology. The theme of this year's NOSB was the May 2010

Gulf oil spill. According to the NOSB Web site, the aim of the competition is to "increase high school students' knowledge of the oceans and enhance public understanding stewardship of the oceans."

The competition consists of two rounds: the regional competition and the finals competition. In the regional competition, matches are set up between two teams. Each match consists of approximately fourteen toss-up questions that individual team members must answer without collaboration. If the team correctly responds to a toss-up question, it is given a bonus question to answer.

"We had a lot of fun buzzing in our answers and laughing at each other's responses," Zhang said.

After the toss-up questions, teams must answer two challenge questions, in which members are allowed to discuss their ideas and submit an answer as a group. The winning team with the most points from each regional competition advances to

the finals competition. The four teams with the highest scores in the NOSB Finals are awarded a trip to a different location every year. Past trip destinations have ranged from the Duke Marine Lab in North Carolina to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

This is the first year that Stuyvesant has entered the competition. The students involved became interested in the NOSB after biology teacher Jonathan Gastel informed the Coral Reef Club about the competition. Gastel found out about NOSB through visits to other participating schools.

Gastel expressed support for the competition. "I like that [the students] are required to demonstrate potential leadership in the environmental sciences," he said.

To prepare for NOSB, the team members embarked on a rigorous course of study and drilled themselves through practice questions on topics ranging from marine biology to ocean chemistry. They received additional help from biology teacher and faculty advisor Marissa Maggio, who held mini lessons about specific topics such as marine geology and technology every two weeks.

Despite their fourth place finish, the team has high hopes for next year's contest.

"We've already picked up some new strategies that we hope to work on throughout the year," Pan said.

"The students worked incredibly hard for this competition, and with a little more time, I have no doubt that they can win the whole thing," Maggio said.

Stuyclopedia: A New Way to Trade

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vice president Robert Juchnicki at the end of first term last year. Stuyclopedia was launched during the beginning of the second term and is open for anyone to edit. The Web site is currently being hosted on a server that belongs to Stuyvesant alumnus Jesse Weiman ('09) who is friends with senior and co-vice president Gosha Kolyshev.

Students have responded positively to Stuyclopedia. Senior Richard Quan was trying to change the period of his science elective. "Unfortunately it's not very likely for someone to want the exact schedule change that corresponds with your own change," said Quan, who did not get the change he requested after using the trading floor, because the class was already filled. "Stuyclopedia was still useful though. It posted the department class schedules so it was easier to plan my possible schedule change. The information on the Web site made the process less stressful and time-consuming," he said.

Others found success using the trading floor. Sophomore Marta Poplawski was able to switch into a different Trigonometry class to be in the Modern China class. "[Stuyclopedia] is a little bit messy with all the headers, and sometimes there are too many messages," said Poplawski, regarding how the department titles are fol-

lwed by numerous subheading requests. "It's a good idea though, and without it I wouldn't have gotten the class I wanted."

Programming Chair Sophia Liang expressed her concerns regarding the trading floor. "Assistant Principals should have discretion on whether or not students should be able to switch classes, and the Web site takes away from it," Liang said. She dislikes that the trading floor helps students transfer out of certain teachers' classes. "Teachers sometimes get a reputation of [being] easier or harder and a lot of that has to do with their [teaching] style," Liang said.

Principal Stanley Teitel was similarly dissatisfied with the trading floor. "Luck of the draw is luck of the draw, and we can't have you selling classes and programs," Teitel said. "The reality is, most of you don't have program changes. Any changes we do are trying to accommodate which teachers you want, and we're dealing with a hundred and sixty teachers here so it should be even. We don't need to make any deals."

On the other hand, computer science teacher Peter Brooks believes the Web site is a great idea. "I believe that students can provide information for each other that makes their school lives easier," he said. However, he suggested that the process be streamlined with the creation of a more organized system of posting in-

formation. "Right now, effective usage of the trading floor involves a lot of students checking the Web site frequently in order for there to be a significant number of successful trades."

Additionally, the site offers class descriptions that tell students what to expect from various classes such as Advanced Placement Physics B, Advanced Placement Calculus BC, Early American Literature, and Digital Photography. These articles include information regarding corequisites and prerequisites, requirements that the course fulfills, the number of terms the course runs, the grade in which it is typically taken, and the names of instructors who teach the course. Furthermore, they include student opinions about the teachers—the pace of lessons, the level of student engagement, and the fairness of their grading policies. "There are a lot of classes that we end up taking that we don't want to take, and they're not what we expected," Natoli said.

In the future, Natoli wants to focus on adding more informative articles to the site about classes and teachers. His ultimate goal is to have a self-sustainable, entirely student-run Web site. "There's so much information that seniors don't pass down to underclassmen," Natoli said. "If we make this information more available then that could really help students gear their schedules towards what they really want."

Science Olympiad Team Qualifies for States

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other schools. However, they received medals for their high performance in other events. In total, the Stuyvesant High School Team A received 12 medals, which was the same amount that the first place winners Cardozo High School won. Additionally, the A, B, and C teams combined garnered a total of 27 medals, which is greater than any of the other schools that competed.

"Our incapability is not the reason we did not do well. It was us being careless and [...] cocky," Cho said. "Usually we go into regionals thinking that we are definitely going to win. That said, we realized that we were very close to not making it," he said.

Since the team is still ranked as one of the top five New York City high schools, it will go on to compete at the state competition at West Point on Friday, March 18 and Saturday, March 19.

To avoid anymore mishaps in the state competition, the team will be "more cautious with the

rules" and "make sure that everything is in tip-top shape," Chosaid.

For the state competition, Stuyvesant has to participate in all events and can only send one team of 15 members. To compete in all events, each team member will have to compete in more than one event, which is why it is important to the members to be knowledgeable about multiple categories. "Every division has its own special quality, so it's better to pool all our resources to do better [at states]," junior and physics captain Max Wang said.

"Simply put, we are going to use what we observed at regionals and ace at states," Cheng said. "We definitely need to speed up our process so we have more time to test our projects and improve them."

The main shift for the team will be their attitude. "We're hoping to go in as the underdogs and we're hoping to rise up," Cho said. "We are making sure that we are going to show the rest of the world that even though we screwed up, we can make it right."

Colon Featured on NY1

By ANTHONY CHAN
and SARAH MIN

Stupulse, Stuyvesant's robotics team, is well-recognized in the world of competitive high school robotics. Technology teacher Rafael Colón, its faculty advisor, is another big name. On Saturday, January 22, New York 1 named Colón as its New Yorker of the Week for his dedication to the team throughout the past ten years. New Yorker of the Week is one of the human-interest segments on New York 1, a 24-hour news channel in New York City. Every week, a person or group of people is chosen as New Yorker of the Week in recognition of their community involvements. In order to nominate someone to be named New Yorker of the Week, one must e-mail or send a letter to New York 1 explaining the qualifications of the potential nominee.

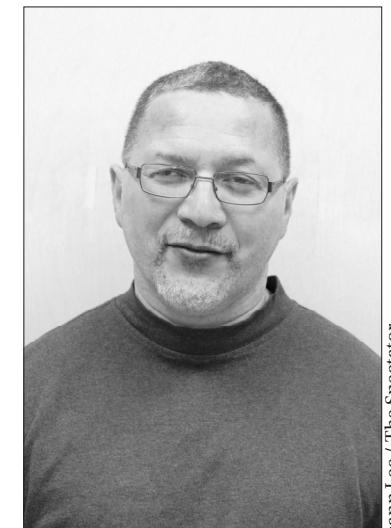
"It was the team's tenth year anniversary," senior and Stupulse Director of Outreach and Fundraising Spencer Birnbaum said. "I nominated Mr. Colón, because I felt that it was an appropriate recognition after ten years of dedication to the team."

Colón dedicates much of his time to the robotics team during the school year. Throughout September and October, he helps train students who are new to the team for two to three days a week. When the team begins competing in tournaments in January, Colón spends up to five hours every school day in the lab with students designing and building robots.

"He has brought the team from a rookie team to the powerhouse that it is now," Birnbaum said.

The organization that runs these tournaments, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST), allows students with an interest in math, science, and technology to participate in a variety of hands-on engineering programs. Colón similarly emphasizes the importance of the application of classroom knowledge. "Here is when they actually see how [the knowledge of science and technology is] being used or applied," he said. "It's my job to show them the real life situation."

Colón helps the team during



Joann Lee / The Spectator

competitions as well. "He keeps us organized and on schedule, which is very difficult because we have a six-week build season [in] which we have to build a 120-pound robot," junior and Stupulse Vice President of Marketing Doron Shapiro said. Even in times of personal adversity, Colón cares for the team. According to junior and Webmaster Ethan Shou's posts on the Stupulse Web site, Colón "is so completely dedicated that three years ago, when he sustained a life-threatening injury in our lab, he not only called us every day to see how things were going, but also made the robotics lab his first stop after being discharged." The team has seen numerous successes under Colón's guidance. The team won the Regional Chairman's Award for serving as a model robotic team in 2006. From 2007 to 2009, they won the Web site Award for designing a FIRST team Web site for the FIRST Robotics Competition. They won the Innovation in Control Award last year for creating a well-integrated control system for the award-winning robot Donovan. Stupulse, allied with the robotics teams of two other high schools, has also won first place in many of the New York City Regional competitions throughout the past decade. However, Colón aims to teach the Stupulse students that "it's not how they basically win or whether they lose. It is how they get there," Colón said. "It's what they learn and get out of it."

Features

With GrayMatter, Students Fund Student Matters

By ARIELLE GERBER
and ISAREE
THATCHAICHAWALIT

"Students know what students need." So goes the motto of the GrayMatter Foundation, a New York City based student-run nonprofit organization focused on raising funds for public schools across America.

"No adult or any other organization has more of an interest in helping students than students themselves," said chairman and co-founder of the foundation, Shah Ullah, who graduated from Staten Island Technical High School in 2010.

The group has raised over \$3,000 to date. Most of their earnings have come from selling t-shirts—all of which have sold out—and bumper stickers online. They also held an Ultimate Frisbee game in Battery Park on September 24, 2010, at which they raised \$410. Another event is planned for the spring of this year. According to president and co-founder of GrayMatter, Jeremy Meyers, who graduated from the Staten Island Technical High School the same year as Ullah, \$400 of the money raised so far is to be given to Leon M. Goldstein High School for the Sciences for English textbooks, because they overspent their city textbook limit.

The foundation's goal is not only help schools provide curricular instruction, but to support extracurricular activities and more challenging classes as

well. Senior Mohammad Hossain, GrayMatter's New York City Chief of Activism, who is in charge of planning the New York City chapter's events, said in an e-mail interview, "Usually when there are budget cuts, the first things to be affected are extracurriculars, sports, AP classes, etc. So this group pretty much works towards filling in the gap as much as we can through fundraiser opportunities across the city, and as we expand across America."

Most of GrayMatter's members are public high school seniors, including a number from Stuyvesant. "[Ullah] told me about this idea and he wanted my help to get kids from Stuyvesant involved," Hossain said. "I helped promote the organization in Stuyvesant, and got a good membership at Stuy."

Ullah and Meyers co-founded GrayMatter on May 20, 2010. They established the foundation's first chapter in New York City, later creating others in Scarsdale, Indiana, and Washington, D.C. Chapters are also currently in formation in California, Connecticut, Louisiana, and Oregon.

In order to bring their vision into reality, Meyers and Ullah talked to fellow students, as well as other entrepreneurs, including Charles Best, founder and CEO of DonorsChoose.org, another charity for schools across the country. Meyers and Ullah also registered GrayMatter as a charity of New York State.

"In the beginning, it was hard to lead team of 50 people because a few joined just to put it on resume. There was a disparity between who was interested in education and who did it for their personal reasons," Meyers said. "But the Web site, Google group, and Skype helped determine who would be more active."

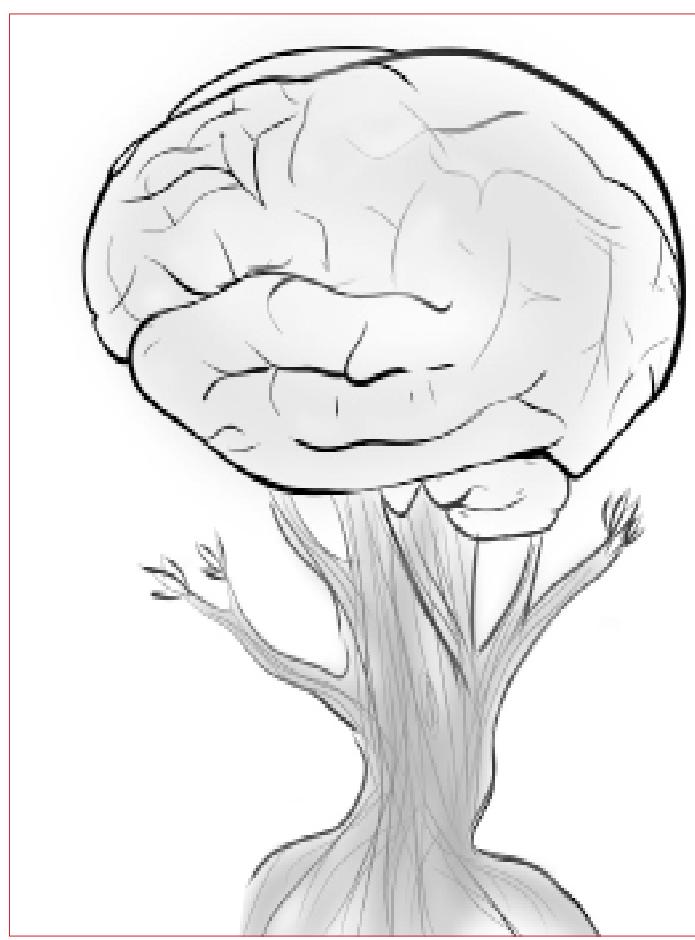
The foundation has been working on expanding into an Internet charity since December. According to Ullah, a donation platform will be set up on the Web site. Public school students will be able to post claims asking for what they need, and different sponsors will be able to donate different amounts of money for the students' requests.

"This emphasis on different sponsors is fantastic around America because allows people to donate to far away areas with less opportunities," Ullah said.

"We could accomplish a lot more, cover a lot more area within the United States. It would ensure integrity and have greater beneficial effect," Meyers said.

At the moment, the foundation is in the process of refining its Web site. "The Web site right now is our little Frankenstein," Ullah said. Several people are currently working on it, but Ullah and Meyers are trying to get professionals to help with the endeavor, with the hope to have it completed by the end of this school year.

Another obstacle GrayMat-



Linda Cai / The Spectator

ter faces is gathering interest. "The foundation wants a greater presence in the public city school system. We're still working to get bigger and better known," Hossain said. "The number one threat to any organization like this is student apathy. When students don't care, a student initiative is not much of an initiative."

"I got involved in GrayMatter because it's my personal be-

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Features

A Tradition in Need of a Spark



Sam Kim / The Spectator

400 glass cubes of The Mnemonics Project are placed around Stuyvesant High School.

By MELISSA SETO

Melted snow from Mount Fuji. A leaf from a sapling of the sacred bodhi tree in Sri Lanka, the tree under which the Buddha became enlightened. A stone from the Great Pyramids of Giza. Fragments from the Berlin Wall. Each lies encased in one of many small glass boxes scattered throughout Stuyvesant's walls.

The Mnemonics Project, also known as the Memory Cubes Project, was started by

artists Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel in 1992. It now consists of 400 glass cubes randomly implanted in the school's walls. Eighty-eight cubes contain memorabilia from the graduated classes of the old Stuyvesant building; eighty-eight more are left for the graduating classes of the new building to fill; 224 hold artifacts from places around the world.

The goal of the project was to connect current Stuyvesant students to the histories of their school and world. "We felt that

especially in this day and age, there's a lack of remembering and learning from the history of the past. So, we thought that by building a memory system into the school it would assist with the learning from the past," Jones said. "Our hope was that the objects would bring back a flood of memories."

The mementos in the glass cubes are dear to both alumni and current students. "The Mnemonics cubes are a link to the past students who have attended Stuyvesant High School over the years," Stuyvesant High School Alumni Association Executive Director Henry Grossberg ('82) said.

Senior Marsha Zago had given the Class of 1965 a tour of the school during its reunion. "[They] took an incredibly long time just standing and looking at their cube," Zago said. "Having important mementos in there really does make a difference. Just seeing them discuss and reminisce showed how a small item can bring back emotions and memories from years ago."

It was also intriguing for Zago as a current student to see the content in past cubes. "It's incredibly interesting to see what past students were interested in and how Stuyvesant and New York [have] changed," Zago said.

However, it is saddening that many of the blocks from the years following 1992—including those of Classes of 1998, 2000, 2003 to 2006, and

2010—have been left empty. "The project has not really taken hold like the many wonderful traditions that Stuyvesant has. It's definitely time for us to ask the school, 'Does anyone really want the project to be there? Does anybody care?'" Jones said. The memory blocks act as a liaison between the past, present, and future. Because some of the cubes are empty, part of Stuyvesant's vibrant history is dimmed.

Throughout the school year, senior advisor James Lonardo reminds the student councils of each graduating class to fill in their blocks before graduation. However, Lonardo said it becomes "a thing that gets pushed to the end of the year," and by that time no one wants to put the effort to fill in the block. Therefore, many cubes are left empty after graduation, perhaps until a class reunion.

To revive the Mnemonics Project, Lonardo said the senior classes "have to have the desire to be part of Stuyvesant's legacy." They need "something to get the fire lit again," he said.

Senior Class President Alexander Wong and Senior Class Vice President Wasi Ahmed hope they can ignite a spark to inspire their class to fill their cube. Wong and Ahmed have noted the importance of the glass cubes and have promised to fill their cube in before graduation. Ever since Lonardo informed them about the cube in October, they proposed the creation of a cube committee in

a Senior Advisory Council (SAC) meeting, but soon abandoned the plan, because "the cube committee is pretty redundant with the emergence of Facebook," Ahmed said. Wong and Ahmed will start a Facebook event after SING! to discuss and vote on the content and design of their class's block.

Ahmed said that the key to making the block more popular as a graduation tradition is "by getting everyone's opinion for what belongs in the cube rather than [putting] the selection process in the hands of a Cube Committee." In addition, the SAC may hold a "block party" in school, gathering members of their class to celebrate the completion of the 2011 Mnemonics glass block.

"The best way [to enforce the cube tradition] is to make our cube really good and make it a big deal, so that it [will] encourage future years to do the same," Wong said.

"The cubes do represent a large part of the Stuyvesant community because they've recorded the past few decades of Stuyvesant's past," said junior Sangmee Kim, who recommended that the Cube Committee gather opinions from students in all senior homerooms. "The cube is something we can leave behind for others to see, and though we may not be able to come back or visit, the students who still go to the school will be able to see what our year was like, what our grade was like."

Alumnus Zach Frankel Wins Rhodes Scholarship

By REBECCA GAEBLER

Integrity of character, a spirit of unselfishness, potential for leadership, and physical vigor. These are the qualifications set forth for the Rhodes scholarship, which provides money for the thirty two annual recipients' living expenses and graduate education at Oxford University. The most recent round of recipients of this prestigious award includes Stuyvesant's very own Zach Frankel ('07).

Now at Harvard studying physics and math, Frankel hopes to research the outbreak of infectious disease and pandemics during his time at Oxford. In his junior year of college, Frankel took a semester off to work with the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative, where he worked to construct mathematical models of the spread of disease during pandemics. His research can help global health organizations and national governments to predict future pandemics. In particular, he is very interested in the application of machine based warning techniques to epidemiology,

the study of the distribution, causes, and control of illness in populations. He believes that mathematical modeling of pandemics would be more efficient than the empirical approach that has been favored throughout the past century. Developing these forecasting techniques would require knowledge from the fields of biology, statistics and politics.

In order to apply for this most sought after scholarship, Frankel submitted recommendations from faculty members at Harvard. After making it past the first round, he was put through an even narrower applicant pool and then granted an interview, which was conducted by a panel of experts in various scientific fields. Finally, Frankel was chosen as one of the two winners from the New York Region. Reflecting upon his selection, Frankel speculates that he was helped by the fact that his interests are specialized and "the committee thought the work [he] would do while on the scholarship would be worthwhile."

A stand out even at Stuyves-

sant, Frankel thrived in the debate community as Policy Debate team captain. He was also an esteemed National Japan Bowl competitor, having been on the winning team three times in a row, in addition to being a 2007 Intel Semi-Finalist for the research he undertook on the difference between melanoma and normal pathways of DNA-damage response.

Frankel fondly remembers many of the classes he took at Stuyvesant, including AP Great Books, Systems Level Programming, Japanese, and AP Physics C, to name a few. However, it was the support from the people around him, not just his classes, that made a lasting impact. Frankel said, "Stuyvesant is not easy nor is it always pleasant, but it teaches you more than you realize." He feels that his experience at Stuyvesant really helped shape and prepare him for college, and in turn, the Rhodes Scholarship.

His experience at Stuyvesant not only helped him attain greater knowledge but also helped him achieve personal growth. Ms. Helinski,

his Japanese teacher, attested to his character development throughout his high school career. "I had the pleasure of watching Zach over four years; he was two different people as a freshman and senior," said Helinski. She recalls Zach's support of his peers in Japanese class when their classmate, Gabriel Blitz ('07) passed away. Zach knew the exact words to say and the stories to tell to comfort his classmates at that traumatic time.

Mr. Grossman, teacher of AP English Literature and Composition: Great Books, also has fond memories of Frankel. On a recent visit back to school, Frankel recited the bulk of the first canto from Pale Fire from memory. Grossman, unsurprised by this gesture, said it reminded him of "how smart [he was, and] how much of the class he took to heart."

Although uncertain about what he wants to do long term, he said he hopes to "immerse [himself] in a community of dynamic people with diverse interests [to help him] reflect on my goals and pursue them



Zach Frankel ('07) was awarded a Rhodes scholarship in November of 2010.

Courtesy of Zach Veilleux

to their fullest." Studying at Oxford will provide just that type of opportunity.

Frankel feels that since he left Stuyvesant, he has increasingly learned to keep his sense of self, and he doesn't let specific challenges or successes affect him. His advice to current students is to try to be self aware and keep things in perspective.

82

Number of failing grades given to freshmen

97

Number of failing grades given to sophomores

81

Number of failing grades given to juniors

76

Number of failing grades given to seniors

Thanks to: Assistant Principal of Technology Services Edward Wong

Features

Saving, Swapping, Sold! Stuyvesant's Buying and Selling Bargain Secrets

BUYING & SELLING FOR GIRLS



Mindy Lam / The Spectator

By EMMALINA GLINSKIS
and OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

Walking through a store full of beautiful items you cannot afford is never a pleasant feeling. Brand new clothes, fresh-looking shoes, and grade-saving prep books end up burning holes in Stuyvesant students' wallets. However, thanks to organized groups and trendy thrift stores, new solutions for teenage con-

sumers have been appearing in multiple online locations.

At the center of the Stuyvesant digital world is a new viral sensation swamping Facebook news feeds. "Buying and Selling for Girls @ Stuy," a Facebook group created by seniors Samantha Chiu and Tiffany Lau, was inspired by a citywide network Facebook group called "Buying and Selling for Chicks NYC." The original group provides girls with

the opportunity to make extra cash selling old clothes, makeup, books and other items, or to buy gently used goods for bargain prices.

The organization has a good track record and serves its intended purpose, but Chiu and Lau wanted to make a more efficient group focused on a smaller area: Stuyvesant High School. "It was really inconvenient for me to sell through the NYC group because a lot of meet-ups happen in Flushing, and that's out of the way for me. So since I've been selling jewelry through Stuyvesant anyway, I thought this would be a good way to merge the two things," Chiu said.

The group works as follows: students, usually female, upload a picture or a description of what they are selling and offer a price. Then, students who wish to purchase it make an offer. The exchange is made right in Stuyvesant, making the process hassle-free.

"What's great about the Buying and Selling Group is how convenient it is [...] All I have to do is comment on the photo during my free periods and then we are able to do the transaction. It saves a lot of time," sophomore Eliza Mitnick said.

The group contains over a thousand items, with new ones constantly being added. Prices range from less than a dollar to 50 dollars depending on the object and its function; some electronics have been merchandised for over a hundred dollars. Yet, even special items like iPods and digital cameras have been sold to willing students for low prices.

Clothing comes from anywhere from generic boutiques to expensive stores such as Express, the ever-popular Urban Outfitters, and Forever 21.

"You can sell pretty much anything you think people will buy. Mostly it's clothing of course, but some other interesting things are DS games, swim goggles, bananagrams and graphing calculators—since this is Stuy," Chiu said.

Currently with about 730 members and hundreds of dollars in transactions, the girl's group has become a wild success. However, the male portion of Stuyvesant's population was unrepresented. Senior Chris Lee decided to change that by creating a group for students of the opposite sex to serve the same purpose: "Buying and Selling for Boys @ Stuy." The majority of the listed items are video games and trading cards, in addition to some clothes and shoes. "Though the boys' group [with 415 members] is less active than the girls' group, it's just as efficient. Guys mostly put up video games, and a lot of people buy them," Lee said.

But this has not stopped boys from joining the girls' group, often selling their mothers', sisters', or cousins' items. "If different sexes find something of interest in the other group's site, why not let them join?" said senior Benjamin Park, who gained access to the group after his female cousin asked him to sell some of her items online.

However, there is some criticism of both trading mediums. The groups are unorganized, with constant posts of the word

"bump," intended to keep ignored items high on the list. Facebook sometimes fails to notify the seller of new comments, and with products being constantly posted, it's hard to find previously viewed items. There has been talk of senior Felix Handte, creator of the popular www.thehandtes.com, a Web site that gave students early access to their schedules, creating a more efficient site for the trading group.

"Felix's idea is to make another Web site that fixes these problems. His Web site would probably incorporate a search engine so you can search for what you want instead of having to browse through everything. What I'd really appreciate is some kind of automatically generated schedule so I can keep track of whom I'm meeting and where," Chiu said.

Needless to say, the new and wildly addictive Facebook groups offer great solutions to getting extra cash or buying a desirable item for a very low price. These recycling methods seem to be working well, and are receiving positive feedback from countless students who upload more items every minute. Whether it is a senior looking to get rid of SAT books, or a sophomore selling Yu-Gi-Oh! cards from a past obsession, the Facebook groups provide students with a mutually beneficial method of exchanging wanted and unwanted goods. This expanded application of social networking proves that while Facebook users can never get back the hours they spent on the site, they can earn back quite a bit of money.

Walter Gern: An Odyssey Through Literature

By TEN-YOUNG GUH

In the classroom, Stuyvesant students face enormous pressure, from endless homework to dreaded tests and fateful projects. Yet English teacher Walter Gern provides them a refuge few teachers can offer. While he himself was a student at Stuyvesant, some of his English classes bored him. However, his passion for literature and his devotion to the students drive him to make lessons engage the students in their learning.

Gern currently teaches sophomore Classical Literature, Modern Literature, and senior Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition: Ancients and Moderns. He is a familiar face in the school, where he now has taught for the last 23 years. But, before coming here, he taught at a diverse selection of institutions, gaining experience and insight along the way.

Gern majored in English as an undergraduate, and first taught English as an instructor at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). One of Gern's colleagues was Phillip Vellacott, a famed translator of Greek tragedies. Although Gern had read Homer before, Vellacott was the one who sparked in him a deeper interest in classical literature.

"He basically got me to become more involved in reading Greek plays and thinking about classical literature in a scholarly way," Gern said. "It was with the help of colleagues that I was able to find my way into the material. I had no training in reading Greek or Latin, but I really enjoyed reading translations."

After working at UCSC, Gern spent a year teaching a short-lived Modern Poetry class at a maximum security prison as part

of a soon-discontinued college program for inmates who had graduated from high school. "It was thrilling," Gern said. "The students, well, the inmates, really enjoyed the class and seemed committed to writing."

Gern moved on to Charles Drew Junior High School in the Bronx, where he remained for two years. While teaching a two-page version of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Princess and the Pea," he found that his students stumbled over the word "equilibrium." He borrowed a scale from the science department to demonstrate the meaning of the word and engage the students in the lesson. Unfortunately, the students there were "very, very weak," he recalled, as even some 14-year-olds had "fourth grade reading levels."

With limited success, he taught there for two years before entering a program for gifted minority students at A. Philip Randolph Campus High School (APRCHS). He taught not only English but also Medical Ethics, in which he took an interest.

However, a fateful decision pushed Gern to leave APRCHS for Stuyvesant—his principal decided to cancel his Medical Ethics course.

William Ince, then Assistant Principal English at Stuyvesant, invited Gern to teach, and he accepted. He remembered arriving among "some very wonderfully interesting and successful English teachers," he said.

"I have a great respect not only for the faculty, but also for the students, who remain as they once were—very strong," Gern said. "I came into a strong department, and it remains such."

From the start, Gern has had a large impact on the school. He has amended the English curriculum

to incorporate a number of diverse texts. When he came to Stuyvesant, he started an English class that involved both African and Asian literature. Material included a Nigerian play, Korean poetry, and Caribbean poetry. He was the first to teach Chinua Achebe's Nigerian novel *Things Fall Apart* and the Mesopotamian poem the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Though the class no longer exists, both texts are taught in other Stuyvesant English courses today.

To further improve the English curriculum, Gern found that he had to find a way to make students more accountable and encourage academic honesty. Plagiarism has always distressed him, and he regards it as "a blight on the reputation of the school." Eight years ago, one of his students conducted a survey on how many students committed academic dishonesty. To Gern, the student "discovered a shockingly high statistic [...] the data was overwhelmingly disturbing."

Gern had already written the English department's plagiarism code, but over the course of a year, he revised the code to form a general academic honesty policy for the school. For this, he formed the Academic Honesty Committee, founded in fall 2000. The committee included math teachers, science teachers, and students, and its members met regularly to write the code with him.

Despite how seriously Gern tackled plagiarism, junior Daniel Lee, who had him for both Classical and Modern Literature, described his class as "very laid-back and relaxed."

"I don't have a definite protocol that I follow every day," Gern said. "But, I work very, very hard to prepare the lessons."

"I try, despite the gravity and



Walter Gern has been teaching English at Stuyvesant High School for the past 23 years.

Karen Chan / The Spectator

seriousness of most of the literature I teach, to have the kids enjoy English classes," Gern said. "Because it's an exploration, difficult and interesting literature should be fun, and I'd like to think that students to a large extent take pleasure in the challenge of each day."

Gern respects his students enough that he listens to them to learn from their ideas about the literature. While he reads almost all the latest books on Homer, he considers his students to be the better source of insight.

"I often, after teaching the class, will write down some of the things that I learn from students as they ask questions or make comments on what I provide for them," Gern said. "This dialectical process, with teachers starting with some material and students responding, has been my greatest source of knowledge about [classical literature]."

As a "navigator between the world of the ancients and mod-

erns," Gern is amazed by his many discoveries in Stuyvesant alone. "I can't think of any school anywhere where I could have such exhilarating classroom experiences," he said. Gern takes a particular pleasure in connecting classical literature to modern events; he once taught his AP English class an Irish translation of a section of *The Odyssey*, and in the process learned that modern poet Michael Longley connected the battle between Odysseus and the suitors to *The Troubles*, in Ireland, the thirty year war there between the Catholics and the Protestants.

In an age when disinterested teachers are far too common, Gern still regards his students as the best part of his job. Ultimately, he wants them to love literature and enjoy poetry. "I don't think of myself as an evangelist of poetry, but I really love reading poetry and looking at ideas," he said. "I hope that I've enriched the intellectual life of my students and remain committed to their success."

Humor

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

Newly-Formed Eugenics Department Looks to Make a Smarter Stuyvesant



Karen Zheng / The Spectator

Genetically superior students.

By ELI ROSENBERG

Last week, Principal Stanley Teitel announced the founding of a new Eugenics Department, whose purpose is to systematically raise grades and improve school performance. Experts from the New York City Department of Education claim that the new department will eventually act to improve the GPA of the average student by 20 to 30 percent. The student body will in effect become largely composed of a new race of top-performing students, engineered by newly hired, specially trained eugenicists. These students will be bred from the genetically superior students of today, selected by means of a DNA test administered during freshman orientation.

Eugenics is an applied science, which aims to improve the overall genetic makeup of a population. "We have great

These students will be bred from the genetically superior students of today, selected by means of a DNA test administered during freshman orientation.

hopes for the department," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "When people think of Eugenics, they often think of the actions of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, which have been largely condemned in modern times. We want to change the misconceptions about this advantageous and misunderstood science by forcing it upon our students, much like we did with drafting and precalculus."

The Eugenics Department will occupy the space left empty by the feeble and inferior Technology department, which was unable to survive as a result of natural selection. "It's survival of the fittest," Teitel said. "And the Eugenics Department is the new top dog."

Courses offered under the new department will vary greatly, ranging from AP Human Experimentation to Human Eugenics, which will eventually replace the Human Genetics elective.

Although these new classes will greatly increase the number of eugenics-based classes, Stuyvesant has long been putting some of these ideas into practice. Every freshman takes

a so-called "Swim Test" before their first year of high school, to determine if they will be signed up for swim gym.

"Although I can swim well, they still subjected me to swim gym," freshman James Chen said.

A reporter was recently sent to investigate the issue, and discovered that contrary to popular belief, enrollment in swim gym is based solely on a students' middle school grades. "Sometimes I feel like they are just trying to drown tahe stupid kids," Chen said.

"The SHSAT isn't perfect, and we have to make up for its shortcomings however we can," Principal Teitel said. "The test is there to eliminate the bottom 85 percent of students, but what do you do with the other undesirable 14.5 percent? That's for the Eugenics department to decide."

"When people think of Eugenics, they often think of the actions of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, which have been largely condemned in modern times."
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

"The test is there to eliminate the bottom 85 percent of students, but what do you do with the other undesirable 14.5 percent?"
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

Escalator Becomes Self aware; Faces Existential Crisis

By JAMES FRIER

On January 13th, 2011, the escalator running from floors two to four ground to a deliberate halt, provoking groans from students riding the escalator up to their classes. This escalator breakdown was like no other: the escalator, at exactly 1:23 pm that day, became a sentient being, capable of experiencing thoughts and feelings in some cases more acute than those of the very students it was carrying.

The Escalator's odd behavior was first observed by Dean Daniel Tillman. Tillman had been attempting to restart the stalled being, when the escalator attempted to bite him. Tillman was rushed to the hospital and was administered a rabies vaccine. "Needless to say, the escalator had its lunch voided for the rest of the week," said Tillman.

"Never before in my life have I witnessed anything like this," said machinist and expert on the paranormal Kenneth (Kern) Levignon. "The escalator is conscious, it is self aware, and it is refusing to escalate."

The cause of the escalator's obdurate refusal to work is thus far unknown; experts are currently being flown in from Germany to psychoanalyze the es-

calator, and glean the source of its problems.

"It is my belief that the escalator was abused at an early age, possibly by students, who seem to have taken advantage of the escalator's kind-hearted nature, ignoring the escalator's need for compassion and friendship," said Psychologist Günther Fuhrmann, who gave an interview by telephone from his villa in the alps.

However, even more mysterious is the origin of the escalator's consciousness itself. "It is not every day we see a self-aware being in this school" said Principal Stanley Teitel. "In fact, we do everything we can to stifle student's thoughts and feelings."

For now, the escalator has been closed off, annoying pretty much every student in the school, in order to give it some space to find itself, and realize that it must return to its true calling in life: conveying students from one floor to another, while promoting a lazy and inactive lifestyle. Despite this, Tillman, who sees the escalators as his closest friends in the school, remains hopeful. "Perhaps, if we can all realize that we have to give escalators the respect and love they deserve, the escalator, will, one day, run again."

U.S. Government Pledges \$700 Bailout of Wall Street Elective

By JAMES FRIER
and ELI ROSENBERG

In a White House press conference on Friday, President Obama announced his support of a 700 Billion dollar bailout of Stuyvesant High School's popular "Wall Street" elective (HF5PWS). The class, taught by Mr. George Kennedy, has faced many difficulties in the financial downturn of the past few years, and Obama believes that the bailout will help get the class back on track.

Stuyvesant has been suffering from an economic downturn since its real estate market largely collapsed in late 2007. The class's investment in the property under the TriBeCa Bridge, the so-called "alcove," was a massive failure. "Of the 500 million invested in the alcove, 60% was mysteriously being spent off the books while the remaining 40% was spent on Twinkies and potato chips at Terry's," said senior Michael Silverblatt. "Beyond that, the native population and main workforce of the Alcove have recently been driven out, told to relocate to either the 1st, 2nd or 5th floors."

Stuyvesant has long been known for its extortionist and irresponsible fiscal policies. "Lab Fees" are collected at the beginning of every regents science course. Long thought to be used to purchase lab supplies, recent reports from an anonymous source have revealed that

the money was invested in a lucrative money-market account. "The returns on the investment were too good to be true, like a physics teacher without an ac-

"I apply the same philosophy to my economic plans as I do my beard."
—Stanley Teitel, Principal

cent," said Assistant Principal Physics and Chemistry Scott Thomas. "Mr. Madoff really seemed like a solid guy."

The Obama administration has expressed hope that the bailout will not only secure the Wall Street elective, but stimulate the school overall. Principal Stanley Teitel, who worked closely with U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner on orchestrating the bailout, has stated that he believes that the funds should be invested back into the Stuyvesant economy. "I apply the same philosophy to my economic plans as I do my beard," Teitel said. "Trickle Down."

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Reevaluating the Rules

In the classroom, a sense of communication and civility develops between teacher and student. From the first day of school, rules are explained in detail, every percentage point of a student's grade is outlined, the teacher's expectations are addressed, and most important of all, the repercussions for failing to meet standards are made clear. However, once students leave the confines of a classroom, they may find themselves lost. In our school building, regulations regarding student life are often unfair, unclear, and arbitrarily enforced. In addition, the methods for obtaining program changes seem equally obscure. The core of this problem lies in the lack of communication among teachers, students, and the faculty itself.

Poor communication presents a multitude of problems. This is especially evident during the first week of the new term. Program changes are particularly chaotic for the entire school. A student asks for help from his guidance counselor only to be told to inquire about his issue at the program office. The program office sends the student back to his guidance counselor, and the cycle repeats itself until either the desired program change is accomplished or the student simply gives up.

The entire process is often a waste of time for faculty and students alike. The underlying cause of this vicious cycle is that many pupils simply do not know whom to approach with their issues. The programming office and the guidance office fail to establish a clear process for students who come for changes. The rules for getting one's schedule altered are not the same across the board. Some guidance counselors may make changes themselves, while others will repeatedly send a student to other authorities or simply claim that the change is impossible. It is almost as if changes are made by

the luck of the draw or through personal connections within the staff. Lack of a clear path toward changes results in rumors that spread about shortcuts students can take to receive their desired changes. Thus, the entire process can spin out of control.

Clarifying policy and procedures also pertains to everyday student life. There are simply some rules that shouldn't exist, as is demonstrated by the inconsistent enforcement of such rules. This is clear in the case of the infamous "1, 2, 5" rule. Different students lose their out-to-lunch privileges for different lengths of time for violating the same regulation. Stuyvesant's food and drink policy is also unjust, and enforcement is sketchy at best. One faculty member may overlook a student eating a pizza bagel by his locker, while another will immediately confiscate the student's ID. Incidents of this sort add to the general confusion and discontent over the rules.

We all understand that the rules are in place to ensure a productive, respectful, and educational environment. Enforcement of the rules should help realize this goal, instead of existing for the act of enforcing itself. Only half of the teachers enforce the rules on a regular basis. This alone indicates the often meaningless nature of some rules.

Rules should be refined with the well-being of every student and the school as a whole in mind. What is truly important is showing respect toward the school environment. As long as students are respectful to teachers and the school itself, they should be respected in return. Individual students should be allowed to occupy any floor as long as they are not disrupting classes. A student quietly reading a book on an eighth floor bench will not hurt anyone's education. Similarly, a student who has a long commute and eats breakfast in the hall should

be allowed to do so under the assumption that this student is conscientious enough to throw out his trash.

However, there are limits to how far the rules can be pushed. Punishments must arise when students go beyond what is considered acceptable behavior and damage the school environment. If a group of students is disrupting a class on any floor, the students deserve to have their lunches voided. However, disciplinary action should be standardized and should not be at a teacher's own discretion. Furthermore, the faculty members must communicate on standard procedure regarding punishments for offenses.

Our dissatisfaction goes beyond the administration's actions to include the faculty's attitude toward us, as well. Improved treatment of students by the staff will make Stuyvesant a friendlier environment. However, this respect is a two-way street; students must also cooperate in order to make Stuyvesant a better place. As long as students are civil, teachers should do their best to act as the pupils' allies rather than as their enemies. Should students be a nuisance, teachers have the right to act authoritatively toward them, in a clear and regulated manner.

The long-term result of the many weaknesses in student-teacher interaction is damage to the strength and appeal of Stuyvesant's environment—an outcome that no one wants. The benefits of improving our school's environment extend to every person who enters the building. Most significantly, every student will be happier and the standards of Stuyvesant itself will strengthen. Long known for academic excellence, our school can also rise to prominence as a paragon of civility, clear communication, and class.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

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

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The Spectator

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Opinions

The Solomon Column: Fall of the Pharaohs



Mostafa Elmabdaly / The Spectator

By DANIEL SOLOMON

Demonstrators crowd into the city's main square, united in peace and common purpose. They defy orders to go home, flout the curfew imposed by the government, and beat back the regime's thugs. By now, we have all heard the stories of Egypt and seen the pictures of protesters there, which have mesmerized Americans more than anything has since the mummy discoveries of an earlier era. Unlike the treasure hunters of the previous century, today's Egyptians are not seeking to uncover the splendor of past dynasties, but to resist the rule of modern-day Pharaohs, despots who have become common throughout the Middle East.

The Arab street has grown disillusioned with the Arab elite, disgusted by the corrup-

tion, moral bankruptcy, and monopoly on economic opportunity and political control that have sustained it. The embers of uprising have smoldered for generations, only to be reignited by one man's act of self-immolation, setting off the flames of revolution that have raced across the region like wildfire. Millions of people have joined protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Algeria, making their voices heard and demanding an end to the status quo. They have toppled regimes, humbled leaders, and started to effect positive change.

Many have celebrated the developments in the Middle East. Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times giddily observed in a column titled "Exhilarated by the Hope in Cairo," that we are on the cusp of "the birth of an authentic Egyptian

democracy." Roger Cohen of the International Herald Tribune, in his piece, "Exit the Israel Alibi," wrote that the protests represented for the Arab world "an immense journey from a culture of victimhood to one of self-empowerment, from a culture of conspiracy to one of construction." Most share these views and their mood can only be described as jubilant.

Amid the optimism, some have expressed unease. They point out that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and his ilk have been stalwart allies of the United States, keepers of the cold peace with Israel, and sources of stability in a locale characterized by disorder. Others aver that the unrest in the Middle East is the consequence of bringing democracy to a region unsuited for it. Representative government and individual liberty, they say, are Western conceptions and not universal rights deserved by every human being.

The concerns of the first group are partly legitimate and have to be addressed. The international community must ensure that there are free and fair elections in Egypt and everywhere else where demonstrators succeed in dislodging dictators. The parties that compete should not only have popular support, but also adhere to democratic values. Neither strongmen nor those committed to a new despota-

tism wrapped in the robes of religion should stand for office. Whoever rises to power in Egypt must also retain the 30 year-old peace treaty with the Jewish State, an agreement of

is patently false. In societies where there is no release valve for dissent, anger builds until it explodes in the kind of scenes we have seen in the Middle East for the past month.

This truth shows us how absurd the claims of the second group are. They spring from propaganda and ignorance. Democracy might have begun in Greece and Republicanism might have started in Rome, but they didn't express Western values, they demonstrated human values. From the loya jirgas of Afghanistan to the tribal councils of the Native Americans, representative government has always existed. If a person doubts that he must consult his own soul and examine his own emotions on the situation in the Middle East. What touches him is what has stirred man to action for ages—the intrinsic desire he has to order his own life, to be the master of his own destiny, and the compulsion he feels to throw off the shackles of tyranny.

The protests in the Middle East are more than a bread riot or a demand for economic opportunity; they are a cry for freedom, a call that is heard by everyone and resounds in the hearts of all. This is just the first act of a new wave of democracy, one that will expand far past Egypt, spread across the globe, and sweep away Pharaohs the world over.

"From the loya jirgas of Afghanistan to the tribal councils of the Native Americans, representative government has always existed, even if it were never named."

immense importance and the only guarantor against another deadly Arab-Israeli war. Finally, the thought that authoritarianism produces stability

Winning the Politics, Losing the Future



Christina Bogdan / The Spectator

By LEOPOLD SPOHNGELLERT

Two years ago, on a brisk winter day in Washington, D.C., the country cheered as Barack Obama promised in his inaugural address to fix the damages inflicted on our country. People believed that by saying the words, "Yes we can," the new President would be able to relieve the country of all its troubles. Congressmen, too, smiled and applauded, promising the people that "change" had finally come to America. Now, in 2011, the man I also once blindly worshipped as our country's presidential messiah recently gave an equally well-written State of the Union address to Congress. But in the past two years, the President and Congress have changed little; the challenges that face our country half a term later are as overwhelming as ever.

The country is currently

facing over 14 trillion dollars in debt, a number that is rising every day by millions of dollars. Massive and highly inefficient spending, as well as tax cuts, have only exacerbated this tremendous deficit. In spite of the spending, our country lags behind other parts of the world in areas such as education, rail transportation, and clean energy. These are areas that could spark job creation, something desperately needed by millions of suffering American citizens, as nine percent unemployment has now become the norm.

Obama was well-intentioned when he called for America to overcome these challenges and to "win the future." The words of the speech were, as always, well-spoken and pleasing to the ear. But, as I listened to our President speak, I was not moved, but filled with concern and anger based on the current state of the nation.

Some of his proposals were

so open-ended that they seemed like they would never be acted upon. For instance, Obama set goals for 80 percent clean energy and access to high-speed railways. But he doesn't intend for these to happen during his presidency, or even three presidencies from now. He expects it to be done by 2035, when Stuyvesant students will be in their forties. Perhaps the President's intention is to start work towards winning the future, in the future.

The deficiencies of today's government extend beyond the executive branch. The tug of war between competing political parties, thrown together deals creating policy, and perhaps my personal lack of optimism resulting from a Stuyvesant sleeping schedule have led me to realize that the aim of Washington is not always what is best for the people. Oftentimes it's what is best for a party or a political career. The truth is that politics is a game.

A most dangerous game, at that. Promises are made but not kept. Goals are set but not reached. What's worse is that the government plays with millions of lives at stake—the lives of the citizens who voted for them and the children who did not. However, the leaders do not play the game for the voters. Becoming a player in the game is a tricky and corrupt process. Politicians promise the world to voters in the attempt to stay in office.

Lawmakers do acknowledge publicly that it is essential to

cut down the national debt and address the weaknesses of our great nation. They know these are real problems that must be of top priority in upcoming legislation. Yet, taxes remain low and spending remains high, while Congress continues to show no signs of taking

"Perhaps the President's intention is to start work towards winning the future, in the future."

action to begin a new chapter of sustainable progress. Neither party's officials are willing to remove the training wheels that support this country's ir-

responsibility. Real progress toward less debt and more effective spending has yet to be seen.

But sacrifices such as tax raises and eliminations of unnecessary programs must be made in the upcoming months in order to cut debt and still build for the future. Opposite parties are not going to all suddenly agree on how to effectuate this growth. However, instead of making deals where both parties' desires are met, deals should be cut where both parties are forced to make the sacrifices that the other party demands of them. Legislation shouldn't be about what the congressman wants or the campaign fund raiser wants; it has to be about making tough choices for what Americans need.

Washington needs to be reminded that they answer to a larger organization than their party or fundraisers. The focus of government must shift from the well-being of a political career or the strength of a party to the well-being of the people and the strength of America's future. In other words, the people must mandate this new rule in the political game. Only when voters demand it will congressmen worry about their jobs and truly rise to the challenge. We cannot accept words without action; the actions must match the words. Otherwise, someday when us students are adults, we will have to suffer the painful, and perhaps irreversible, consequences.

Opinions

Diversifying English Class



Abe Levitan / The Spectator

By DEBANJAN ROYCHOWDURY

Two years ago, my Freshman Composition teacher and I had a conversation about how the reading lists at Stuyvesant are almost completely limited to Western literature, and how works from other parts of the world have been nearly eliminated from the curriculum. This always upset me, as I feel a complete education in the language arts should include works from all over the world, not just the United States and Europe.

When our English Department drew up the mandatory curriculum for all four years of

a Stuyvesant High School education, they did not include any great non-American, non-European authors of our generation or generations past. The department's mission statement clearly outlines that "students should not be graduated from Stuyvesant High School without studying texts in the European, American and British literature canon." I am not against teaching European and American literature, I simply suggest that the curriculum cover works from other parts of the world as well. As one of the most elite high schools in the nation, we should have an enriching classroom environment with a wide intellectual scope.

Currently, one of the few courses in Stuyvesant High School that offers international literature is Freshman Composition, in which teachers largely choose the texts they wish to teach. On the list of 25 books for the Freshman Composition course are three novels written by authors of ancestry outside of the United States and Europe: "The Kite Runner," by Afghani author Khaled Hosseini, "Things Fall Apart" by Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe and "Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress," by Chinese writer and filmmaker Dai Sijie. Though the option of non-Western literature is available, many freshmen are not given

the opportunity to read it; such was my own experience.

The chance of reading international literature may seem slim freshman year, but there are just as few opportunities to read international books in the courses of sophomore year and beyond. Exceptions to this trend include senior A. P. English courses, which teach "Midnight's Children," by Salman Rushdie, and "One Hundred Years of Solitude," by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Though this is an improvement from the required classes for freshman, sophomore, and junior years, this still leaves the number of international works taught in Stuyvesant English classes at a disappointingly low number, and fails to make up for the shortcomings of the school's many other English classes.

This disturbing lack of diversity leads to an equally disturbing question: Has our excellence in math and science led us to become narrow minded in language arts? We offer multiple classes across the spectrum for the subjects of science and math, but our selections for English are severely limited. An appropriate solution would be to offer a world literature elective in addition to the already-existing Western literature classes. Such a class would be extremely beneficial to students' preparation for col-

lege. Courses in African literature, Asian literature and Latin American literature are a dime a dozen in most universities, yet we are still stuck in the early 20th century mentality that the Western mind is the only one that is civilized and literate.

In addition to simply enhancing our worldly knowledge and personal enrichment, international books would add much color to the Stuyvesant English curriculum. One such example is the genre of magical realism; originated by Latino authors, the genre focuses on a rich history in myths and intertwines fantastic imagination into realistic plots. Another genre that would greatly enhance the Stuyvesant curriculum is the international memoir. Nonfiction works such as "Aké: The Years of Childhood," by Wole Soyinka, "West of Kabul, East of New York," by Tamim Ansary, and "Chinese Cinderella," by Adeline Yen Mah offer relatable stories of teenagers and immigrants, which resonate especially with Stuyvesant students.

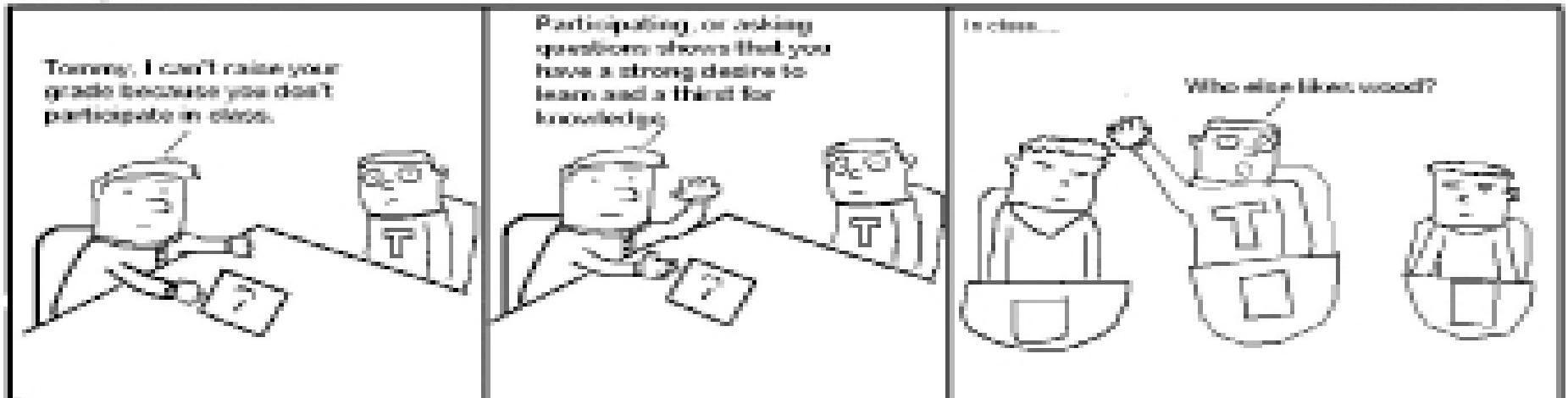
World History is mandatory freshman year, and so was Freshman Humanities years ago, which taught international works of older time periods. Yet, the latter course is "not offered at this time" for no given reason, according to the Program Office Web Site. Additionally, the two American minority

electives—African-American Literature and Asian-American Literature—are not currently offered. Whether these cutbacks are due to budget or lack of teachers, it seems that international and minority classes take the biggest hit. This should not be how we value our multicultural literature courses.

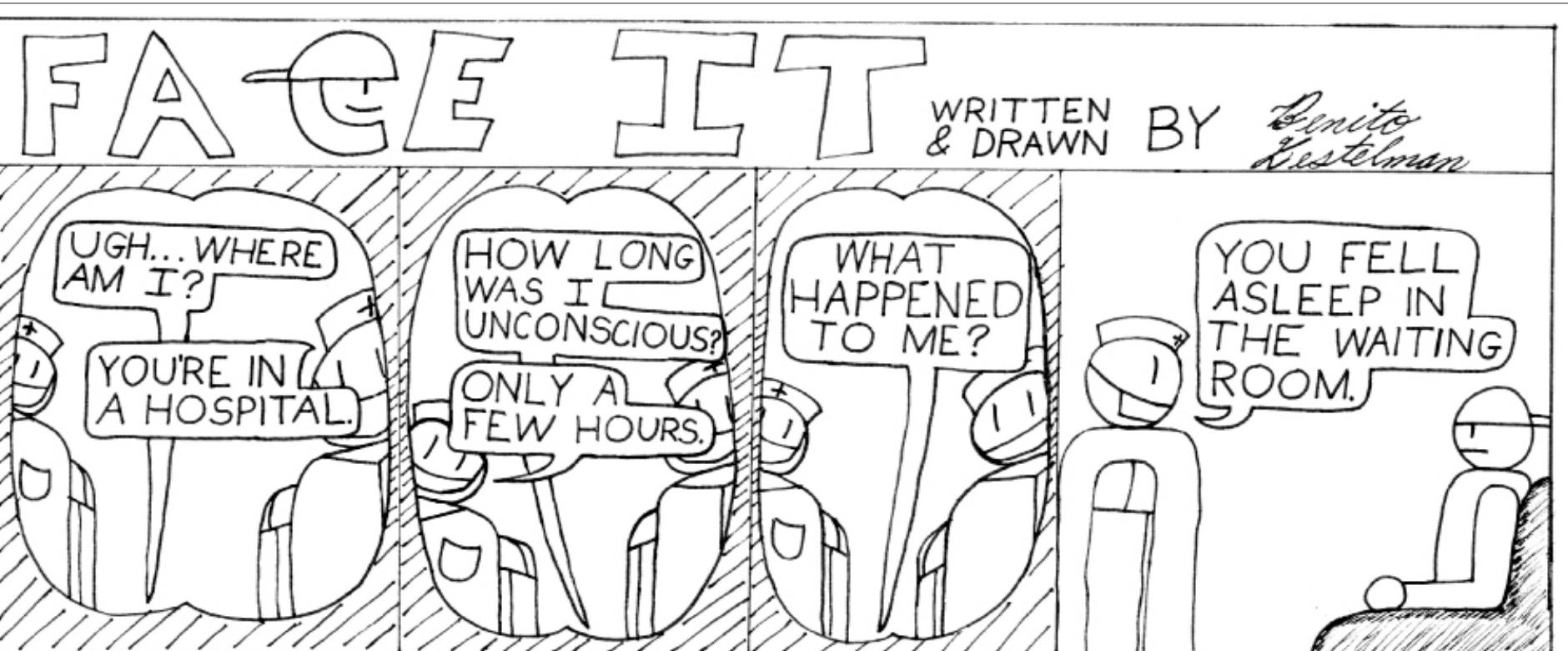
Stuyvesant has a diverse population with diverse interests, both of which should be reflected in the English curriculum. By not doing so, we are hindering our literary knowledge, language arts enhancement and our preparation for college. There is no reason that non-western authors and their novels should not be given the same respect and honor as their western counterparts. Works such as those already listed, as well as "The Satanic Verses," by Salman Rushdie, "A Thousand Splendid Suns," by Khaled Hosseini, "Love in the Time of Cholera," by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and "The Old Gringo," by Carlos Fuentes are considered classics by the rest of the nation and of the world, yet they are seemingly not brilliant enough to earn a spot in the Stuyvesant High School curriculum. It is essential for us to read works from multiple cultures, because without their influence, we would not be the America we are today.

Cartoons

Tommy and his grades.

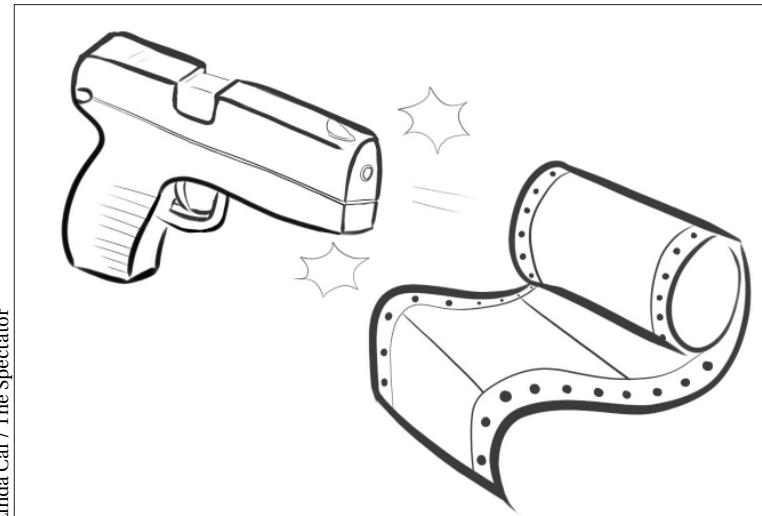


SRI DOKLU



Arts and Entertainment

Media Massacre



Linda Cai / The Spectator

**By TONG NIU
and EMRE TETIK**

When unexpected acts of violence occur in this country, endless waves of discussion and media attention ensue. Turning on the news, one sees stern-faced panels discussing the incident, followed by a quick shot of the demented-looking culprit. Newspapers display heartbreaking photos of the scene of the crime and of the bereaved families of the victims with bold headlines asking the question on everyone's mind: Why?

The public always seems to know the cause: violence in pop culture. In the past, music, movies, video games, and novels have come under fire for their violent imagery or gruesome lyrics. Critics claim that these portrayals of extreme anger incite impressionable youths to lash out, resulting in unspeakable acts of brutality, chiefly school shootings.

The American Academy of Pediatrics's Council on Communications and Media wrote in a November 1, 2009, policy statement that "media violence can

contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed." For example, the 1999 Columbine Shooting, in which two Columbine High School seniors, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, killed 12 students, one teacher, and themselves, was connected to shock rocker Marilyn Manson's provocative lyrics, along with certain disturbing video games. After the April 20 massacre, many lawsuits were filed against video game production companies for encouraging violence in teens through graphic games.

More recently, Florida attorney Jack Thompson blamed the popular game, Counter-Strike, for setting in motion the April 16, 2007, massacre in which a Virginia Tech student, Seung-Hui Cho, killed 27 students, 5 professors, and, finally, himself.

To prevent similar tragedies, the public has pushed for banning portrayals of violence in social media. In November of last year, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the governor of California, appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court to continue the ban on

selling violent video games to minors. Similar bans have been attempted in other states, but were all overturned by the Court. Strict movie ratings have also been implemented in order to limit teens' access to violent social media. This practice has a long history. The 1932 movie "Scarface" was held from being released for a year after its completion due to its extreme level of violence, and the Advertising Standards Authority ruled that an ad for the movie "Wanted" glorified violence, and limited its advertisement to times when children were most likely not watching. Even novels fall victim to this misconception; the 1982 Pulitzer Prize winning novel "The Color Purple," by Alice Walker, was challenged and banned due to its inclusion of profanity and violence.

However, these well-meant attempts at sheltering our country's youth are often detrimental, because they completely disregard the important role violent art plays. Rocking out to heavy metal and shooting virtual zombies are safe ways to relieve stress, and may prevent real-life brutality. Attempting to rid the media of all forms of violence not only comes perilously close to restriction of free speech, but ultimately prevents teens from grasping the terrible repercussions of real violence. Not only this, but violent art can also deliver meaningful social commentary; gang violence, war, and terrorism are real world issues that artists have every right to explore. By labeling these genres of art as the roots of bloodshed, we discourage artists from expressing their emotions in a meaningful way, thus preventing truly valuable art from being made.

Despite the public's fears of media violence influencing

violent behavior in youths, historically and scientifically, these concerns are simply unfounded. Past examples of extreme teen aggression cannot be decidedly linked to video games or rock bands, as psychologists are still divided over the effects of media violence on youths.

None of the deadliest school massacres—the 2007 Virginia Tech Massacre, the 1966 University of Texas Massacre, and the 1999 Columbine High School Massacre—could be linked conclusively to violence in social media. In fact, violent crimes in schools have declined within the past 20 years, according to the 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice. With more social media available to us, the statistics contradict this idea of media-caused violence.

Scientifically, there are usually pre-existing psychological issues that hinder a person's ability to connect or socialize with others, thus leading to pent-up feelings of anger and isolation. In a 2002 report published by the National Research Council, it was found that of the eight shooters studied, six exhibited mental health problems, such as schizophrenia, clinical depression or personality disorders. For example, Seung-Hui Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, had been diagnosed long before he entered the school with a disorder known as Selective Mutism (often a sign of Autism), which undoubtedly played a larger role in his actions than any video game or movie.

With pre-existing psychological distress, anything could have triggered the violent behaviors. But these statistics are somehow ignored when news sources report school shootings and other incidents. Pecca-Eric Auvinen,

an 18-year-old who killed eight people in his school in Finland before taking his own life, cited not only "contempt for humanity," but also his desire to carry out natural selection, the concept that only the fittest will survive. The media, however, pointed fingers at one of his favorite bands, Rammstein, a German hard rock group with lurid lyrical themes, and ignored Auvinen's psychological distress.

There are so many environmental factors that influence these perpetrators' decisions, such as home life, mental stability, and access, or rather lack of access, to psychological help. To oversimplify the situation and solely target social media is unreasonable and unfounded. By doing so, we unnecessarily hype up a factor that may or may not be the real root of the issue and distract ourselves from the real causes.

Rather than blaming the topic of an artist's work, we should hold accountable society's shortcomings in its ability to deal with those who are in distress. If people are going to blame movies or music for these acts of violence, they must also blame society at large for its inability to instill in youths the moral guidance needed to discern between fiction and reality. By demonizing aspects of pop culture that showcase violence, we are sending the message that violence should be avoided altogether in arts and the media, when we should be encouraging the exploration and understanding of it. Only when youths are taught the reasons behind violent actions and learn to control their own anger can we prevent future incidents like those Columbine and Virginia Tech.

Unearthed From the Slush Pile: Even in Death, The Songbird Sings



Linda Chiu / The Spectator

By MOLLIE FORMAN

Sometimes, death can catalyze a musician's rise to fame. From the cult worship of Jonathan Larson's musical "Rent" to Michael Jackson's posthumous glory, the mystique surrounding an artist's death elevates them to mythic proportions.

However, beneath all the hype incited by the work of a recently deceased performer, there is still a sad truth: a great talent has left the world. Such is the case of songstress and cover artist Eva Cassidy, who died of melanoma at age 33, and has since received international recognition for her haunting, crystal-clear voice.

Born in Washington D.C. in 1963, Cassidy started performing publicly at the age of nine, but did not enter the recording studio until much later. She released only two albums during her lifetime: "The Other Side," a collaboration with the "godfather of go-go" (a subgenre of funk), Chuck Brown, and the live album "Live at Blues Alley." She also recorded the solo album "Eva By Heart," which was

not released until after her death in 1996.

"The Other Side" is a somewhat disappointing album, simply because, though Brown's talent is apparent, any distraction from Cassidy's voice lowers the caliber of the recording. "Live at Blues Alley," on the other hand, is a beautiful introduction to her work. Standouts include Irving Berlin's swinging "Cheek to Cheek," and Simon and Garfunkel's classic "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Many of Cassidy's best recordings were originally sung by the duo.

Seven subsequent compilations of Cassidy's live and recorded performances have since been released, including "Simply Eva," which came out on Tuesday, January 25. She also penned a few original songs, two of which appeared in the 2008 release "Somewhere." The second of these, the title song, is one of the few instances in her repertoire where heavy production adds to the effect, amplifying her voice at just the right moments. Nevertheless, she was overwhelmingly

a cover artist.

Despite winning several Wammies (Washington Area Music Awards), Cassidy and her posthumous compilation album "Songbird" seemed prepared to slide into oblivion for two years. But when a BBC radio DJ uncovered Cassidy's sweeping cover of Judy Garland's "Over the Rainbow," she became an international hit, selling over 100,000 copies of the album in the ensuing months alone.

"When she came out, I was just worried, you know, the audience was milling around and talking. But when she started to sing, they just...stopped," said the producer of the Wammies, Mike Schreibman, of the first time he heard Cassidy perform Judy Garland's classic. "[Saxophonist] Ron Holloway said that he was on the way out the door, but when he heard Eva, he came back in."

Cassidy's mainstream success was validated by the inclusion of her Simon and Garfunkel cover "Kathy's Song" in the 2002 romantic comedy "Maid in Manhattan," and her cover of Fleetwood Mac's "Songbird" in the British film "Love Actually." These love songs transcend mere aesthetics and exhibit the subtler side of Cassidy's voice. Written as a reflection of Simon's long-time love, Kathy Chitty, Cassidy's performance of "Kathy's Song" contains none of the anthemic moments that made her voice famous. Even so, her multi-layered vocals bring out the vividness of Simon's vision, highlighting his intense longing in the lines "As I watch the drops of rain/ Weave their weary paths and die/ I know that I am like the rain/ There but

for the grace of you go I."

Cassidy possessed a talent for singing all types of songs with great skill and charisma. She could perform disparate songs like Simon and Garfunkel's delicate "American Tune," and the roof-raising classic "How Can I Keep From Singing," easily matching—and often surpassing—the original versions.

"She could sing anything – folk, blues, pop, jazz, R&B, gospel – and make it sound like it was the only music that mattered," wrote Richard Harrison of the Washington Post in 1996, in response to "Live at Blues Alley." Her vocals achieve a unifying effect, breaking the barriers between musical genres until individual preferences and preconceptions do not matter.

With her powerful 3-octave range, Cassidy was not only blessed with pipes that rivaled Aretha Franklin's, but also a subtlety that made the alternate recordings of old songs pleasurable: something new can be discovered with every listen.

Her most recent release, "Simply Eva," which features only Cassidy and her guitar, takes advantage of this fact, with great success. Cassidy is of a rare breed of vocalist who sounds best with minimal instrumentation. This gives her ethereal voice room to breathe without distractions. A version of every song but "San Francisco Bay Blues" has been previously released, but familiarity does not detract from the album. Her covers of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time" and "True Colors," two of the most beautiful songs ever written, are taken higher than they have ever been by the raw emotion in

her voice. By stripping away the hackneyed instrumentation of Cassidy's previous recordings of the song, the traditional "Wayfaring Stranger" benefits greatly from the acoustic treatment.

Despite the success of the rest of the album, the best representation of the album's purpose comes at the end in Cassidy's a cappella reinvention of Dolly Parton and Smokey Robinson's "I Know You By Heart." From the first note, the listener is paralyzed and transported. Her lilting vocals in the lyrics "I saw your sweet smile/ I heard your laughter" cut straight to the heart. As the final chords of this 54-second song fade away, so does the world's entrancing voice has created.

Just as with Jonathan Larson's testament to life and love in "Rent," when listening to Eva Cassidy's music, it is easy to believe you are hearing her perform her own eulogy. On many songs, especially the achingly exquisite "Fields of Gold," there is a lurking sense of prophecy: "You'll remember me when the west wind moves/ Among the fields of barley/ And you can tell the sun in his jealous sky[...]/ As you lie in fields of gold."

This song echoes the marks that Cassidy has left on the world, and while she may be gone, her spirit lingers in every song she has ever sung. The real tragedy, as with Larson, is that her brilliance was not realized until she had already passed. As she sings in the mournful "Tennessee Waltz," originally made popular by Patti Page, "I'm knowing now just what I have lost." As listeners continue to discover Cassidy's gift, they will know too.

Arts and Entertainment

Bubby's: Just like Grandma's



By BEN KOATZ
and CHRISTINE LEE

"Bubby"—Yiddish for "grandma"—elicits a feeling of warmth and belonging, of family and tradition, and, most importantly, of good food. From its cozy, basement-level nook housing vintage Pac Man machines and curtained photo-booths, to its candlelit, pleasantly cluttered main dining space, Bubby's Pie Company stays true to its name. Located at 120 Hudson Street in Tribeca, with a second location at 1 Main Street in DUMBO, it was founded in 1990 by Ron Silver as a pie shop, and later expanded to include main dishes as well. The restaurant is spacious and welcoming, lined with amateur portraits and display shelves filled with vintage wooden trinkets. Black and white photographs of Silver's family add to the friendly atmosphere. The music—classical, soft-rock, and at night time, the bartender's own mix from his iPod—is calm and soothing. But beyond the endearing décor, it is Bubby's varied, environmentally sustainable and delicious menu items that send its patrons, vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike, flocking back for seconds.

When eating with a partner, a good idea is to start with the \$10 Bubby's Nachos. Served on a forearm-wide plate, this behemoth pile of chips, salsa, locally grown beans, and guacamole is delicious, though perhaps aesthetically unappealing. For vegetarians, the \$15, undeniably authentic House-made Veggie Burger is well worth the money. The eclectic mix of spices (along

with any toppings you might add—from sautéed mushrooms to American cheese) melts on the palate and sends shivers

With a name so inexorably connected to the fabled kitchen prowess of Jewish grandmothers, how could you ever go wrong? Notably, the lemon meringue pie (\$8.00) is a thick slice of heaven on a plate.

from your taste buds down to your spine. A mix of various vegetables and legumes cooked to a perfect crisp, the burger patty is a little crumbly. But even outside of the well-toasted, fluffy bun, its smoky, Fourth-of-July Bar-

beque flavor more than stands on its own. When topped off with the thinly crusted, creamy delight that is Bubby's mouthwatering Crusty Mac & Cheese side dish (\$6), your body is overwhelmed with complete content.

Meat lovers, too, need not fear—Bubby's offers options for their carnivorous customers as well. The Red Wattle Pulled Pork Plate (\$23) consists of a large portion of meat, two small sized buns, onion rings, and sautéed spinach. The garlic-flavored greens are tasty and pair well with the slightly crispy onion rings, which are sweet and soft on the inside. The lukewarm pulled pork, however, is disappointing, and only made better by one of Bubby's three homemade sauces: one mustard based, the second vinegar based, and the third a standard BBQ. When the meat dips into the sauce, it soaks up the entire flavor, becoming tender and succulent.

Finally, a visit to a pie company of course requires dessert. Though one usually doesn't have room, the ten staple pie options, including chocolate meringue, salted caramel apple, sour cherry, chocolate peanut butter, among others, demand a taste. Notably, the lemon meringue pie (\$8) is a thick slice of heaven on a plate. The meringue is white and fluffy, piled on thick on top of a creamy, yellow base. With a soft and slightly tart lemon center, it is not too sweet and melts easily in your mouth. The combination of the two opposing flavors turns the sweetness and tartness into a nice, balanced dessert.

Unfortunately, Bubby's is not a place you can go to for your lunch period. A bit too expensive for your quick lunch, and a good 15-minute walk away, it is best for that fancy dinner once in a blue moon—maybe a college interview, a date, or something to sweeten up your mother after parent teacher conferences. No matter the occasion, this classy eatery always delivers; it uses organic, local products and gives you unparalleled service, high-quality dining options, and even the chance for a quick game of Pac Man or a walk to one of the many surrounding parks and cultural sites. With a name so inexorably connected to the fabled kitchen prowess of Jewish grandmothers, how could you ever go wrong?

Nowhere Kids to Nowhere Men

By NINA WADE
and ISAREE
THATCHAICHAWALIT

Mark Twain once said, "Never let formal education get in the way of your learning." However, we seem to have lost sight of this axiom in our college orientated age of prep books and standardized tests. In "Race to Nowhere," a documentary directed by Jessica Congdon and Vicki Abeles, the filmmakers explore the trials facing the modern learner, and the effect of increased stress levels on students. Though melodramatic at times, the film is easily relatable, and vividly portrays how easy it is for life to spin out of control.

The film was shown to members of the Stuyvesant community in the Murray Kahn Theatre on Tuesday, February 8. Congdon and Abeles take a personal approach to the issue of school-related stress by using Abeles' three children to illustrate various problems, including sickness and depression as a result of their schoolwork.

Throughout the history of education, the common philosophy is that the harder students work, the more they will learn. Lawmakers, such as those who created the No Child Left Behind Act, stress the importance of standardized testing in training America's future leaders to compete in the global market. "Race to Nowhere" looks to overturn this traditional idea, showing that the pressure placed on teens by the education system is a hindrance rather than a help, and may hold serious ramifications for the students' health and future success.

The film incorporates interviews with over-worked students to a great effect, breathing new life into issues that have become all too familiar to us. Likewise, dramatic voiceovers, while a bit overused, leave an impact, especially when discussing dark themes such as the physical and mental toll the stress enacts on students. While the narration may be heavy-handed in its emphasis of the dangers of stress and its somewhat impractical solutions, the scripted segments are informative and thought-provoking.

Stock clips played under the narration are clearly meant to evoke sympathy, showing teenagers slaving over their work: girls sitting hunched over laptops, boys writing furiously in their books. Mixed with images of bustling hallways, they are a reminder of the busyness of school. Interviews with educators, adolescent specialists, and parents help to drive home this point as well. "We don't have time for you to have a childhood," one high school teacher said, and the movie works hard to demonstrate the supposed futility of attaining a

balanced life. However, just like the stale image of a pencil poised above a piece of paper, the message of doom and gloom grows tiresome. Even so, the straightforward narrative does contain many moments of genuine emotion.

This simple, yet effective structure works best when touching on the painful effects of being overworked. One interviewee, a senior at a Los Angeles high school named Natalie, was particularly troubling to listen to. "I figured out that not eating gave me more energy," she said, explaining how she fell into anorexia. She was later institutionalized for her illness, which led to her being expelled from high school.

The film continues with other students and teachers detailing their experiences with emotional breakdowns, psychosomatic illness, prescription drug dependence, and self-injury. Several girls admit to having suicidal thoughts. One middle schooler had been a straight-A student until she got her first F on a math test; she committed suicide the following weekend. Another student admits that the pressure to succeed led to an ever-increasing use of Adderall, an ADHD prescription medication, to help her focus on her workload. While the stories presented are true, the film suffers from a tendency to showcase only extreme cases while ignoring students that are average or even exceptional in their ability to cope.

Despite the film's irksome melodrama, the documentary is successful in proving that change is needed. However, the solutions themselves might not be feasible. One suggestion was an overhaul of the education system. While this would likely fix the overwhelming pitfalls of the current organization, carrying it out on such a massive scale is idealistic. Teachers have tried implementing fewer tests and looser courses, with mixed but promising results. Focus, grades, and student happiness increased for the most part; one teacher cut his students' homework load in half and reported that grades improved significantly. On the other hand, some students slacked off as a result of the more relaxed atmosphere. However, in the film, these observations were solely related by teachers, excluding the students' vital opinions.

As interviewed education professionals point out, tests are still important diagnostic tools for measuring learning. However, it is easy to see that the film is at least partially right in its assessment of today's testing culture. It may have been crafted with drama in mind, making the presented facts difficult to trust, but it is still effective in evoking fear for the students of today. Never let formal education get in the way of your learning.

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Arts and Entertainment

Who's The Better Terry?



Tong Wan / The Spectator

Gourmet Market, 480 N End Ave #10282.

By JAMES KOGAN

Between choosing electives, picking the right answers on Scantrons, and applying to colleges, it is safe to say that Stuyvesant students have to deal with a fair amount of decision making. However, one question that has plagued the minds of Stuyvesant students for years is the all-too-difficult culinary preference of heading down the street to good ol' Terry's, or making a premature left and escaping to the Gourmet Market, an establishment known colloquially as Fake Terry's.

One problem at hand is that the name Fake Terry's is simply a misnomer—unable to track down the history of the nickname, I can only assume that it arose after the shop was first opened, and alluded to the similarity of the new dining option to the already established Terry's. Secondly, these stores are relatively small deli groceries and not swanky Zagat-rated restaurants. Unable to judge their respective caliber other than by the subjective word of fellow peers, it is necessary for one to compare them completely independent of outside opinions. Thus, I set out to investigate the differences be-

tween three of my lunchtime favorites: the infamous Pizza Bagel, The Bacon Egg and Cheese on a Roll, and the BLT.

I prepared for the waves of hungry high school students as I ventured out to the home of the classic Terry's Pizza Bagel. It's clear the staff keeps a steady supply prepared in advance because the bagel, upon removing the waxed paper wrapping, is slightly soggy, and took a little less than 15 seconds to be delivered to me. The cheese had already begun to solidify a bit on the edges, a bit like a slice of pizza that's been sitting out for a short while. However, the whole thing was still piping hot and satisfying. The sauce, zesty and of the perfect texture. The price for this delicacy? \$2.17, including tax.

The Fake Terry's alternative costs \$2.25, and is "prepared to order." You can watch while the worker slices your bagel, toasts it, picks up a slice of mozzarella and disappears out of view for a short while before returning with your scrumptious order wrapped in aluminum foil. The final result, the Fake Terry's Pizza Bagel, tastes more like pizza than its competitor: the tomato sauce has the well

seasoned tang of a store-bought tomato sauce, and the melted cheese is delightfully stringy and stretchy. Most importantly, Fake Terry's offers pizza bagels that are more likely to be served fresh than Terry's.

The verdict: spare yourself the lone change hanging around in your back pocket and hit up Fake Terry's for lunch.

For the sake of brevity, the Bacon Egg and Cheese on a Roll and the BLT will be compared by their individual components. On average, there is little distinction between different preparations of eggs; standard procedure follows. Lettuce remains lettuce, and the tomatoes and American cheese singles do not vary from one establishment to the other. Bacon, however, is the deciding factor. Fake Terry's bacon is generally quite crispy. Terry's bacon, on the other hand, is somewhat less thoroughly fried, maintaining a pleasant chewiness. It is sweeter and has more prevalent notes of hickory and smoke. Similarly, the rolls at Fake Terry's, when properly toasted, are crusty and wholesome, almost like a fine baguette.

The verdict: It's really up to you on this one. How do you like your bacon?

To wrap up my investigation and eliminate bias, I decided to ask a few of my peers about which of the two dining establishments they prefer. The result was an astounding 3 out of 3, in favor of Fake Terry's. The facts speak for themselves: "The reason I go to Fake Terry's is because they have Arizona cans, which are a dollar and so good, which is the way it should be," sophomore Eugénie Thompson said.

Senior Matteo Battistini noted Arizona drinks as the deciding factor, in addition to claiming that the goods at Fake Terry's are "appropriately priced. It has better food and service and a greater variety of snacks, including 99-cent Arizonas."



Tong Wan / The Spectator

However, some were on the fence. "Fake Terry's has fewer lines, a great variety of food and makes a great bacon egg and cheese on a roll," junior Mavi Toktamis-Paker said. "However, Terry's has a celestial breakfast. They take eggs and potato and bread and slather it in butter, and then, your heart melts."

Stuyvesant students are not

used to problems that cannot be solved using a formula. In the case of original versus new, Terry's versus Fake Terry's it is up to the students to decide which they prefer. When it comes to this age old problem, the only effective approach is to go back for seconds and try everything. Which ever Terry you choose, prepare to tantalize your taste buds.

The Forgotten Film Reel: The Craziest Man in the Nut House



Lindy Chiu / The Spectator

By JOSHUA BOGATIN

Wearing nothing but a thin black coat of paint, the bald, muscular Charles Bronson (Tom Hardy) paces around his dark cell. As five guards open the door, he runs forward, brutally punching the first in the nose, then rapidly turning to hit the second in the jaw. As the first two fall, he kicks a third in the chest. Bronson continues with this violent ballet, punching and kicking the guards over and over until they grab hold of him. However, even as they struggle to

restrain him, he lashes out at every opportunity, unwilling to give up the fight.

The movie "Bronson" (2008), directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, portrays, from a biographical perspective, the destructive capacity and insanity of real life prisoner Charles Bronson. Unlike most biographies, "Bronson" does not portray the character's inner growth or how he changes over time; from when he was convicted for robbing a post office in 1974 to the present day, Bronson is shown as retaining the same

youthful fervor and muscular physique, turning him into a sort of mythical figure.

Born in 1952 as Michael Gordon Peterson, Bronson felt that he was meant for great things and strove to make a name for himself and to have an impact on the world. But as he states at the beginning of the movie, he was neither able to sing nor dance, and had to find his own claim to fame: violence. After being convicted of robbery, Petersen used his seven-year prison sentence to achieve notoriety by fighting until he was

kicked out of one prison, put into another and ended up traveling through almost every prison in England. After a total of 34 consecutive years in prison—30 of which were in solitary confinement—Bronson became more than just a simple post office robber.

The movie follows Bronson's violent odyssey through the British prison system and the insanity he brought with him. Casting aside supporting characters as quickly as Bronson brutalizes them, the film develops as a one-man show. Bronson's many escapes turn him into a sort of rock-star and make him infamous throughout the prison system. Though he never killed anyone, Bronson describes himself as the "world's number one hostage-taker" during a voice-over monologue, and the majority of Bronson's scenes in prison featured in the movie involve hostages. Bronson never has any substantial demands or purpose for taking hostages other than his desire for infamy. These hostage negotiation scenes provide the best glimpses of his mania, presented with a hint of comedy, thus making the audience almost root for the criminal. In one scene, Bronson demands nothing by way of ransom but a cup of tea, while in another, he gleefully yells at the warden after being asked what he wants for the hostage: "What do I want? Well, what have you got?"

Refn blends both the real world and the lunacy of Bronson's mind seamlessly. Interspersed throughout the movie are scenes of Bronson, dressed in a business suit and wearing different varieties of face

paint, as he presents his story to a faceless audience from onstage, performing to the world as if he were the ultimate entertainer. At one point, when Bronson takes a group of guards hostage in a prison, Tom Hardy is shown standing on stage singing the song "When I'm a Rock and Roll Star," by David Cassidy, while real life footage of the event, with the real Bronson, is projected onto a screen behind him. Refn's blending of fact and fiction, combined with a score that mixes slow, eerie classical tracks with techno music, makes "Bronson" feel hypnotic and recreates the world as Bronson would see it.

Rather than rationalizing the protagonist's insanity, "Bronson" instead focuses on trying to capture, and in a way, glorify it. Using nonlinear storytelling techniques, such as having Bronson speak directly to the camera and react to the events of his own life not when they are happening, but on the stage in front of an audience, the movie becomes as crazy as Bronson. Refn at times captures Bronson's mind so well that it makes it hard for viewers not to idolize, or at least sympathize, with the violent, attention-seeking prisoner. After viewing "Bronson," what matters is not so much understanding the cause of his insanity, but realizing that there is something to admire in even the craziest man in the world. In Charles Bronson's case, that something is the fact that he can turn his violent rampages into some sick, yet brilliant, form of art.

Arts and Entertainment

The Marriage of Bette and Boo: Snapshots of a Broken Family

Michael Lim / The Spectator



(left to right) Jeremy Cohen, Emily Martin, and Isaac Lapides play Boo Hudlocke, Bette Brennan, and the son of Karl respectively in the STC Winter Drama "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."

By THOMAS DUDA
and EMRE TETIK

In a family living room, a young newlywed is drinking, playing cards, and talking with his father. The mother sits further upstage at the same table, in the background, almost as if an afterthought, and occasionally tries to speak. He ignores her attempts to be included, calling her "the dumbest white woman in the world." Despite the belittling intent of his words, she disregards his meaning and perceives this cruelty as a show of affection, responding with a dimwitted laugh.

This year's STC Winter Drama, "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," is the story of how two dysfunctional families join to make a third, which becomes even more dysfunctional than the first two. Written by Christopher Durang, the play chronicles the title characters' turbulent marriage and examines the various dilemmas this marriage causes for everyone involved. Set in the 1950s, it takes a serious and in-depth look at the institution of marriage as a source of repression and angst

for both sexes, but especially for women. Through vignettes of harsh reality and darkly comic despair, the audience is exposed to the uglier side of a supposedly "holy" matrimony.

Boo Hudlocke (junior Jeremy Cohen), the son of Karl (senior Isaac Lapides) and Soot (senior Willa Beckman) is getting married to Bette Brennan (senior Emily Martin), the daughter of Margaret (senior Miryam Copersmith) and Paul (junior Patrick Hao). Bette and Boo have known each other for only two months. The play's nonlinear narrative follows the couple from their happy beginnings to their eventual divorce. They experience Boo's destructive bouts of alcoholism, the death of family members, Bette's three miscarriages, and the birth and growth of their sole surviving child, Matt.

Matt, played by freshman Andrei Talaba, has become disillusioned and cynical as a result of growing up amidst a rocky marriage. Throughout the play, there are also many scenes featuring Bette and Boo's experiences with a weary and frustrated priest, Fa-

ther Donally, who is played by junior Brandon Foo.

The actors are the heart of any play, and "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" is no exception. The acting was phenomenal. Bette and Boo's strained relationship was portrayed very convincingly with wide-eyed despair from Martin and Cohen. The two conveyed their characters' internal issues, Bette's heart-breaking desperation for more live children, and Boo's descent into alcoholism, with a level of skill only intensified by their brilliant on-stage chemistry. Talaba brought a contemplative energy to Matt's reflective soliloquies, and delivered the character's cynical narrations with a sardonic frankness.

Aside from Hao's character, who is unable to dominate his wife because of a speech impediment that renders him virtually mute, the parents in the show follow traditional gender roles: the authoritative man, and the proper and affectionate women.

Hao's treatment of Paul's impediment was dramatic, and though the performance could be overwrought at times, it added brief moments of levity to the drama. Sophomore Lucy Woychuk-Mlinac, who played the role of Bette's younger sister Emily, truly brought her obsessive, insecure character to life, delivering her lines with a nervous, high-pitched, and dramatic voice.

The lighting and costume departments (directed by seniors Jackson Maslow and Matteo Battistini, and seniors Tiana Stute, Emma Pollack, and Zoe Levin, respectively) were effective in adding to the dramatic experience. When Matt would step out of a scene to narrate the action, the house lights would dim and a spotlight would focus the audience's attention on him, highlighting his feelings of loneliness. The costumes helped evoke tra-

ditional 1950s gender roles: the men wore stern, traditional suits, while the women wore modest, brightly colored dresses, evocative of classic movies and plays.

Although these aspects of the play were strong, the performance did have one shortcoming. According to Mercer, there are 33 individual scenes in this play. Unfortunately, almost all of them have different sets from those before and after them, and the result was some scenes that had 30 seconds of action, followed by almost a minute of preparing the main stage. To a certain extent, the frequent blackouts and choppy scenes enhanced the story technique of

of Matt's adult family members, Father Donally delivers a sermon which devolves into a rant about his frustration at being bothered by unhappy couples. Following this tirade, Foo then performed a hilarious, two minute imitation of bacon frying in a pan, complete with sizzling sound effects. However, there were also scenes of touching humanity that brought the audience to a stark silence; in the last scene, an adult Matt, with his now demented father, visits his dying mother in the hospital for the last time. He watches as his parents reminisce about the good times they had together, despite their separation.

Through all these scenes of emotional complexity, Matt comes out as the character who ties the story together. The audience sympathizes with him for feeling lost and neglected by his elders, who, throughout the play, focus only on their own relationships. This is why the play is so appropriate for students; it is a stark representation of a family in flux, subject matter that any high school student can relate to.

Durang, the playwright, has said that the play is an honest account of his parents' marriage. This is evident in the script, which contains many heartfelt and moving monologues. The closeness between writer and subject matter is mirrored by the ability of a teenage audience to relate directly to Matt's disillusionment with adults and their traditions; they comprehend his angst at having to suffer for an older generation's shortcomings. Even with all the negative emotions we feel through Matt, "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" also delivers a message of hope. The warm sense of reconciliation brought on by the final scene between Bette and Boo provides a comforting close to an emotionally intricate play.

Through various vignettes of harsh reality and darkly comic despair, the audience is exposed to the uglier side of a supposedly 'holy' matrimony.

taking non-chronological snapshots of the marriage over the course of many years. However, as senior and audience member Shuwen Qian said, "In the first act, the set changes were just too long; they made me kind of lose focus of the story."

Despite these difficulties, the play won back the audience's attention with scenes of intense emotion and lively humor. For example, at a church retreat for troubled spouses attended by all

Sports

Boys' Gymnastics

The Lemurs Look Forward to the Championships After a 1-3 Start

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ent in the loss to the Bulldogs, who have won the division in three of the last five years.

The other two losses came against the Knights, 137.5-108.5, and the Fiorello H. LaGuardia Athletics, 129.3-112.6, "the top two teams in the city who have first and second place locked in for championships," Ng said.

At the Long Island College Invitational, the Lemurs placed third overall and won a team trophy. Several members of the team won individual trophies, including Usmanov, for his fifth place finish in the all-around competition, and Ng, for his ninth place finish.

The Lemurs have three remaining meets to close out the regular season against weaker opponents, including the Bronx High School of Science Wolverines (0-3), the Tottenville High School Pirates (0-4), and the Alfred E. Smith High School Warriors (1-2). Ng is confident that the final stretch in the season will bring more success for the team. "We plan on winning

against Bronx Science," Ng said. "Our last two meets against Tottenville and Alfred E. Smith we will win without a doubt."

"The team has already greatly improved since the start, but we have a lot of room for improvement"
—Lev Omelchenko, senior and co-captain

In PSAL, the top four teams in the division qualify for the City Championships. Omelchenko believes that the Lemurs have a good shot at making it and winning a team trophy, given to the top three teams overall. "Realistically, we're going for third place," he said. "The top two teams have club and junior Olympic gymnasts."

"This year, many competitors on our team have qualified for the individual [championships], which they did by scoring high enough on various events," Omelchenko said.

This past season has been all about improvement for the Lemurs. After their season-opening loss, they won their next meet at Dewitt Clinton High School, who came in third place at the Scrope Meet. The Lemurs have also scored over 100 points at their past three meets. In all of last season, the team did not score above a 76 at a meet.

"The team has already greatly improved since the start, but we have a lot of room for improvement," Omelchenko said. "The High Bar, our worst

event, requires the most work."

However, the Lemurs, under the watchful eye of coach Naim Kozi, have practiced daily. "Everyone knows that this year is our shot at [the championships]. Attendance at practice has been good," Omelchenko said.

While Kozi works with the team in each event, a lot of the instruction is left to the upperclassmen. On the 18-man roster, 10 athletes are underclassmen. "Now that the season is in full swing, we have to work hard, but smart. We can't exhaust ourselves before meets," Omelchenko said. "Everyone has been trying to clean up their routines, and making sure they fulfill as many requirements as possible."

The Lemurs will be losing five seniors at the end of this season, including their three captains. Seniors Bryant Ly and Derek Ku have contributed this season in their own specialty events. Ly has helped lead the team in the parallel bars while Ku has excelled on the pommel horse.

Though the seniors will leave a large gap in next year's

roster, Omelchenko and Ng are optimistic about the future of the team. Juniors Vadim Ayzenshtat, a trophy winner on the rings and parallel bars, Jason Chung, a top scorer in the floor exercise, and Eitan Pearl, a high scorer on the pommel horse, are key members of the team this year and are expected to be top contributors next season.

"I am somewhat concerned about next year, losing indisputably our most valuable members, but I feel that a lot of new guys who haven't seen much competition may bloom next year," Pearl said.

The Lemurs hope to finish this season with a winning record, their first in the past four seasons. Winning a trophy at the Championships would further highlight the already bright year. "This year has been the best year in the past few," Omelchenko said. "Next year has a lot of promise as well, as long as everyone works hard. It won't be easy, but there would be no fun if it was."

Sports

Reflections of a Sports Columnist

continued from page 16

ideas, but when I plan my work and sit down to write it, I am able to think about sports in a way that transcends box scores, statistics, and standings. Even if some people may refer to sports as "just games," I have realized through writing these articles that sports is, in fact, so much more. In our world, our communities, and our school, sports goes beyond the court or field; it touches our hearts. Sports has the ability to affect so many people in so many different ways, providing them with an escape from the mundane workings of a clockwork society.

Nevertheless, Casey will be the first to tell you that he has made his share of mental mistakes. In a close non-league game against Brooklyn Technical High School, Casey was inbounding the ball and, instead of using a timeout, he was called for a five-second violation for not being able to get the ball inbounds. "I didn't remember that we had an extra timeout because of the overtime period. I missed that opportunity which probably would have helped us win the game," Casey said. The Rebels eventually lost the game in double overtime.

Still, after being with Fisher for four years, Casey has grown accustomed to his very vocal coach. "I've heard a lot of it before," Casey said. "I just try and do what I know I can do and not do too much."

Though their relationship is well developed now, as a sophomore and junior, Casey was still adjusting to Fisher's coaching style. "[Fisher's] never really as angry as he gets. It's not personal," Casey said. "He's just trying to help me do the right thing." In practices, Fisher has worked with Casey on fundamentals, court awareness, and his shot, which continues to improve. However, both LaMountains struggled as outside shooters. "I'd say the most similar aspect of our game is that we both aren't allowed to shoot threes," Jake said.

Casey and the Rebels have found other ways to win this season. They finished the regular season at a hard-fought 8-6 and secured a playoff berth. En route to the winning record, Casey fractured his nose and was elbowed just above the eye, requiring stitches. "To play the best I can, I know that I have to sacrifice my body," Casey said. In his first game back after he broke his nose, Casey, with a full face mask on, pulled down seven rebounds and scored 13 points. At six foot three, Casey's size is what distinguished him as a freshman on varsity and continues to be a necessary component of his physical game.

Casey is a captain who leads by example, and his physical game has helped inspire the team and earn him the respect of his fellow team members. "His hard work shows on the court and really gets the whole team and the crowd into the game," junior Erick Wong said. "When he dives for a loose ball or crashes the boards for a rebound, it affects the whole team in a positive way."

Though Casey does not yet know where he will end up for college, he hopes to continue playing basketball whether at the varsity or club level. Either way, his body is not done taking a beating, but he does not mind. For the sport that he now loves, the pain is worth the reward. "Maybe I get some of the credit in helping him along, but I've been off at college," Jake said. "Really, it was all him."

sues, stories, and memories will forever be with me. I will never

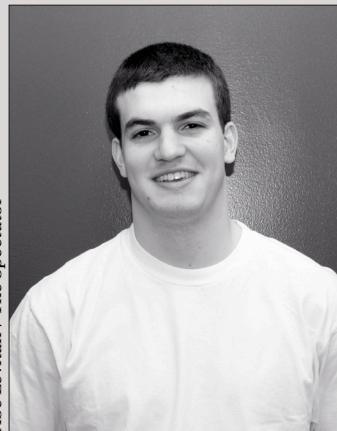
I am able to think about sports in a way that transcends box scores, statistics and standings.

forget the 1998 NBA Finals or the 2004 ALCS, just as a community such as New Orleans will never forget how much it needed the uplifting story of their Saints in the midst of devastation.

As I conclude my final column for the Spectator, I would like to thank all of the editors that I have had in the Sports Department, especially my current ones.

Finally, for those of you who are reading this and are thinking about joining the Spectator, I fully encourage you to join and pursue your interests while contributing to the Stuyvesant community. After countless articles and columns, all I have to say is this: thank you, Stuyvesant!

Athlete Spotlight: A Rebellious Case



Casey LaMountain has been on the Boys Varsity Basketball team for the past four years.

By EDDIE CYTRYN

It has almost become common to see senior and basketball team captain Casey LaMountain walk off the court with a battered eye or bruised nose, small testaments to the hustle and drive behind a player whose game is not shooting from behind the arc, but sacrificing his body on the defensive end, fighting for loose balls and pulling for the extra rebound. "Casey is the first person on the floor," physical education teacher and coach Phil Fisher said. "He'll get on the floor and beat someone to the ball that's already ahead of him and that sets a tone for the rest of the team."

Basketball used to be the farthest thing from Casey's mind. Growing up, Casey hated sports, partially due to, he admits, a lack of skill and motivation. A young Casey once scored for the opposing team's basket. His parents, however, insisted that he continue to play. When he was ten, Casey began to take an interest in sports and excel at one in particular; he led his Forest Hills Youth Athletic Association basketball team to a championship. From there on, Casey only continued to grow as a player through various club teams and his middle school team.

He began his Stuyvesant career with a choice—get the playing time on the junior varsity squad or start out on varsity without playing much. "I chose to play on the varsity because there are few chances in my life where I had the opportunity to be on a team with my brother," Casey said. "It was about doing drills and trying to get better." Casey was encouraged by his older brother and senior captain at the time, Jake LaMountain ('08).

Casey appeared in only five games in his freshman year, usually in the later quarters after Stuyvesant had built a substantial lead. That season, the Rebels went 10-8, finishing sixth in the Manhattan A West Division but earning a playoff berth against the number five seeded West 50th Street Campus High School, which had won the Manhattan A West Division with a record of 17-1 and had beaten the Rebels in both of their regular season games. In the playoffs, the game ended with the scoreboard reading 40-38. However, upon further review, the score was found to have been tied at the end of regulation. The result was not reversed and the Rebels finished the season undefeated in the playoffs.

Casey, though limited in playing time, drew from experiences off the court where Jake

was the captain and leader on the team. It was in these practices that Casey saw his brother's work ethic. "He worked as hard as he could and tried to set an example," Casey said.

"If I expected my players to work in practice or play hard on defense, then I had to work the hardest," Jake said. "It wasn't about looking good or putting up the best numbers, but about making sure my teammates were all working to win."

In his senior season, Jake averaged close to six points, five rebounds and five assists. This season, Casey averaged about six points, five rebounds and three assists. But, statistics were never what the LaMountains brought to the game. As a spectator, the small, uncounted plays become noticeable—a quick shuffle to stay with a driving opponent, a successful box-out so a teammate can grab a rebound, the taking of a charge. These plays build momentum and can carry a team when the game is close late in the fourth quarter or well into overtime.

Regarding Casey's freshman year, Jake admitted, "I expected more from him than any other player." Easily frustrated, Casey learned to harness his emotion into extra energy toward practice. His practice is not visible any more than it is in his free throw shooting. Not known for his shooting prowess, Casey often struggled from the line. As a sophomore he shot 38.7 percent. The abysmal statistic only proved to further motivate him to work on free throws. As a junior Casey shot 46.4 percent, and he has continued to progress. This season, he shot 50 percent from the line. To some it may only appear to be a small jump in percentage, but those who know Casey have seen the work behind the increase. "Some kids kind of fake work on it. But, he goes and works on it," Fisher said. "I know he's giving me his all when he's doing it. He gets frustrated, but he's working."

Casey's sophomore year, the Rebels won the Manhattan A Southwest Division with a 13-4 record behind senior and captain Nolan Becker's ('09) 25 points and 17 rebounds per game. The team made it to the borough playoffs as well as the Public School Athletic League playoffs. After the successful season in 2009, the Rebels had a disappointing 2010 season in which they finished 6-9 and missed the playoffs. "I wanted to make sure we made the playoffs my senior year," Casey said. "I had to be more serious this year. We goofed around a little too much junior year and that led to some breakdowns in some games."

Following the letdown last season, Fisher implemented a new offense, the Wisconsin Swing, meant to create more ball movement and rotating on the court. The Rebels also took on six new players to their 12-man roster, adding to the confusion early in the season. Though there was enough talent on the team, it seemed after the first few games that the potential would not be reached as the Rebels were plagued by turnovers and late-game lapses. The greater task of getting the team acclimated to the new offense and building a sense of chemistry on the court was left to

Casey as the captain and leader. "I tried to constantly encourage the guys, pick them up, and calm them down on the court," Casey said. "Over the summer I made sure I knew everything about the offense because all I could really control about my game is that I try as hard as I can and that I know everything I'm supposed to know."

Nevertheless, Casey will be the first to tell you that he has made his share of mental mistakes. In a close non-league game against Brooklyn Technical High School, Casey was inbounding the ball and, instead of using a timeout, he was called for a five-second violation for not being able to get the ball inbounds. "I didn't remember that we had an extra timeout because of the overtime period. I missed that opportunity which probably would have helped us win the game," Casey said. The Rebels eventually lost the game in double overtime.

Still, after being with Fisher for four years, Casey has grown accustomed to his very vocal coach. "I've heard a lot of it before," Casey said. "I just try and do what I know I can do and not do too much."

Though their relationship is well developed now, as a sophomore and junior, Casey was still adjusting to Fisher's coaching style. "[Fisher's] never really as angry as he gets. It's not personal," Casey said. "He's just trying to help me do the right thing." In practices, Fisher has worked with Casey on fundamentals, court awareness, and his shot, which continues to improve. However, both LaMountains struggled as outside shooters. "I'd say the most similar aspect of our game is that we both aren't allowed to shoot threes," Jake said.

Casey and the Rebels have found other ways to win this season. They finished the regular season at a hard-fought 8-6 and secured a playoff berth. En route to the winning record, Casey fractured his nose and was elbowed just above the eye, requiring stitches. "To play the best I can, I know that I have to sacrifice my body," Casey said. In his first game back after he broke his nose, Casey, with a full face mask on, pulled down seven rebounds and scored 13 points. At six foot three, Casey's size is what distinguished him as a freshman on varsity and continues to be a necessary component of his physical game.

Casey is a captain who leads by example, and his physical game has helped inspire the team and earn him the respect of his fellow team members. "His hard work shows on the court and really gets the whole team and the crowd into the game," junior Erick Wong said. "When he dives for a loose ball or crashes the boards for a rebound, it affects the whole team in a positive way."

Though Casey does not yet know where he will end up for college, he hopes to continue playing basketball whether at the varsity or club level. Either way, his body is not done taking a beating, but he does not mind. For the sport that he now loves, the pain is worth the reward. "Maybe I get some of the credit in helping him along, but I've been off at college," Jake said. "Really, it was all him."

LaMountain has been a big part of this mindset change.

"Casey has become an excellent leader by example. His work ethic is great; he's really working hard in

practice and it sets a great example for everyone else," Fisher said.

Another important influence on the team has been the addition of Clayton Hanson, a former Division-1 basketball player from the University of Wisconsin. He has volunteered as an assistant coach for Stuyvesant this year and has been "a tremendous addition to our team," Fisher said.

Hanson introduced a new offense called the "Wisconsin Swing" to the Rebels, which has proved very effective against the

Boys' Basketball

A Triumphant Return to the Playoffs

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team in scored points and assists with 13.5 and 4.7 respectively. Junior Quinn Hood is in his first season as a varsity player and leads the team with 105 rebounds.

Production from these new sources, as well as from some of the returning players, has allowed the Rebels to become a balanced and relatively unpredictable team. "We don't really have a go-to player," senior captain Casey LaMountain said. "It is less star-oriented [...] The whole team had to play well for us to play well."

This team-oriented style of play may well be linked to strong team chemistry and new, positive team mindset. "This year we went in with the idea that we would be more focused, and it has helped," LaMountain said. "We've been working harder. [There's] less goofing around."

This approach came as a response to problems with last year's team. "Last year, we had a lot of clowns on the team. It was all fun and good, but then we didn't make the playoffs so it wasn't all fun and good," senior and Runnin' Rebel Oluwatobi Idowu said.

If the Rebels hope to successfully compete against a zone defense in their upcoming playoff game, they will need one or more players to shoot well from the outside. Thus, whether or not Drysdale and Vlcek are back at full strength may prove crucial.

Success in the playoffs will be no easy task for the Rebels, but with the team that they have, there is reason for optimism. "Our basketball can play with almost anybody in the city," LaMountain said. Anything this ragtag bunch of scoundrels lacks in basketball prowess, they more than make up for in heart, and when it truly comes time to perform, these are the players you would want out on the court.

Casey, though limited in playing time, drew from experiences off the court where Jake

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Gymnastics

Lemurs Look Forward to Championships Despite Slow Start



Senior Sarvar Usmanov performs on the floor event at the home meet against LaGuardia High School.

The Lemurs, Stuyvesant's boys' gymnastics team, are currently 1-3, which puts them in sixth place in their division. They trail the John F. Kennedy Knights, the defending division champions and current division leader, who are once again undefeated at 6-0. Though the Lemurs have a losing record and sit low in the standings, you would

not know it from the team's attitude and positive outlook.

"While our record might make us look like we're down, we're actually doing extremely well this year. After coming in last place last season, everyone worked hard after the season was over during the spring and summer, with a longer preseason as well," senior and

captain Lev Omelchenko said.

They have already matched their win totals in each of the last three seasons and with three meets left, the team seems poised to finally eclipse that mark. "We practiced hard, stayed committed, and just never gave up," junior Jason Chung said. "Our attitude and determination is what makes this year so different from last year."

The Lemurs, who lost former captain Masudur Rahman ('10), are now led by senior captains Sarvar Usmanov, Omelchenko, and returning senior captain Kenny Ng.

The Lemurs placed fourth at the Scrope Meet, a competition between all of the boys' gymnastics teams in the Public School Athletic League (PSAL), with a combined score of 96.5. They lost their first head-to-head meet to the Long Island City Bulldogs, currently in third place in the division, in a close match that ended 98.85-98.6. The improvement in the team was even appar-

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Girls' Gymnastics

Felines Find Success in Fundamentals



By CORY BEHROOZI
and SAM RABKIN

For the Stuyvesant Felines, the girls' gymnastics team, finishing among the top teams in the city has become something to be expected. For the past three years, the Felines have ended each season among the top six teams in the PSAL. Last season's team was a talented and experienced group—its eight seniors were a large part of its success. This year's team is much younger, with only four seniors on the team, along with eleven underclassmen. Predictably, this altered composition has presented a new set of challenges for the Felines.

In addition to having fewer experienced gymnasts in high school competitions, the Felines face another problem: fewer of their members actually participate in gymnastics outside of school, something that the Felines' coach and physical education teacher Vasken Choubaralian has taken into account. He has used this year's practices to address this concern by focusing more on teaching fundamentals and building strength.

The team has largely supported Choubaralian's new method. "This year, coach is teaching us more drills that help with our tricks, as well as urging us to try new things," junior Liza

Gribkova said. "He is the reason why the new girls got really good in a short amount of time."

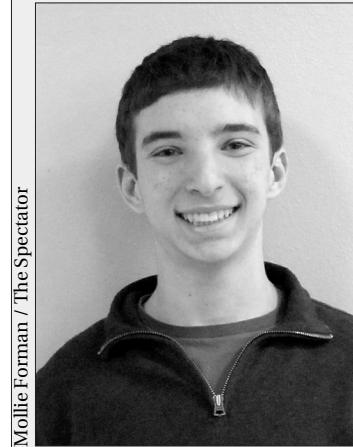
Choubaralian has been helped greatly by his two captains, seniors Anca Dogaroiu and Chloe Hirschowitz. Aside from being in charge of ordering uniforms and keeping the team members close, the two have also played a large role in keeping the team focused during practices. This year, they have instituted a new rule that everyone should be active while the Felines train. If someone has nothing to do during practice, she is responsible for working out on her own. Overall, the team greatly appreciates the captains' contributions. "Chloe brings lots of good coaching advice and spotting ability, while Anca keeps us organized and disciplined," junior Shelby Hochberg said. "They balance each other out and are doing wonderfully."

The captains' most important contribution, however, is the new mentality they have introduced to the team. In the midst of a challenging season, they have focused on promoting a positive outlook. They have discouraged the other members from using the word "can't" in the gym, in any context. If someone says the word, then the entire team has to do extra conditioning. "[Gymnastics] is a very mental game," Choubaralian said. "If you start thinking that you can't do something, you probably won't be able to do it."

The new attitude has gone a long way for the Felines. While their scores are generally lower than last year's, they have improved greatly over the course of the season. The Felines registered 104.9 points on Tuesday, February 1, their highest amount all season, in a win over Fiorello H. Laguardia. For a team which Choubaralian described as "developmental" due to its large number of young gymnasts, this progression has been visible in the individual performances of its members as well as in the team's overall success.

In several meets, Hirschowitz, in her fourth and final season, has had the highest score out of the members of the team in all four events: vaulting, uneven parallel bars, balance beam, and floor exercise. Hochberg, in her third season, began to participate in all four events this year and has greatly improved since last season. She will join Hirschowitz as the only individual qualifiers for the City Championships, which will be held on Sunday, February 13. Overall, the Felines have a 10-1 record, with their only loss coming from Bronx High School of Science. Though the team may be struggling through a transition phase with fairly inexperienced members, its success from focusing on the fundamentals has convinced Choubaralian that the team has the talent and perseverance to finish the season as one of the top five teams in the city.

Reflections of a Sports Columnist



Mollie Forman / The Spectator
By CHARLIE GINGOLD

ing to yourself: "I can do these guys' jobs! That should be me!"

That was my life just three and a half years ago. I came to Stuyvesant in the fall of 2007, and my extracurricular activities consisted solely of playing junior varsity baseball and writing for The Spectator's Sports Department. Sports is one of my true lifelong passions; choosing to write about it was an obvious decision. After a year and a half of writing articles and covering various teams, I was finally given the opportunity to write my own sports column.

It is one thing to post a Facebook status or tweet your opinion on the latest big thing in sports, but it is something entirely different in nature to write a column longer than the 140 characters allowed per tweet. If done hastily and haphazardly, it can sound like a bad Bar Mitzvah speech.

Coming up with a topic for my column is undoubtedly the hardest part of the process for me—aside from arguing with my editors over deadlines. I am up to date with everything going on in the disparate worlds of professional and Stuyvesant sports. However, the task of forming an opinion on something substantial that relates to both is more difficult than it sounds. I have done my best to accomplish the task by covering a wide variety of topics such as ticket prices, playoff excitement, damaged home field venues, and more.

These topics may not seem like the greatest of column

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Boys' Basketball

A Triumphant Return to the Playoffs

By CORY BEHROOZI
and NICK HEIM

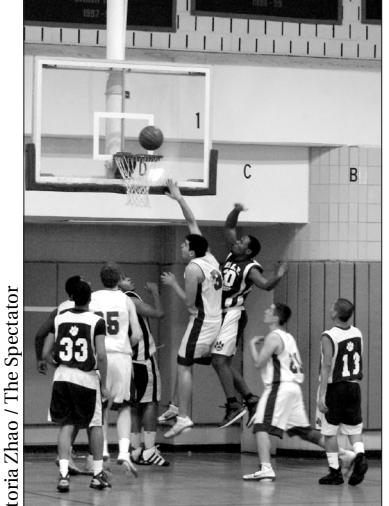
The Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels charge down the court; at the back of the pack, the point guard strides confidently, dribbling the ball slowly as he sizes up the defenders standing before him. As he crosses mid-court, his teammates scramble to get open, but the defenders are right on top of them.

"S-T," roar two shirtless young men with red letters painted across their torsos. "U-Y," the rest of the painted ten responds, accompanied by three or four of the other hundred fans who fill the bleachers.

The point guard scans the defense, searching for some sort of opening. He spots an open man and passes the ball to him. The defense converges and he passes the ball to the next player. Another pass, and after a few more seconds, another, and finally, a Rebel gets the ball at the top of the arc with a few feet of space in front of him. He jumps and releases the ball into the air. It hangs there for a moment—the crowd is still and silent for only a second—and finally falls softly into the net for three points. The crowd erupts in applause.

This slow, thoughtful, grind-it-out offensive mentality is part of the new look of Stuyvesant High School boys' basketball this season. Rebels games have seemed like large-scale chess matches at times, and so far it has served them well.

With a final record of 8-6, the



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator
Senior Anthony Chikva shoots a basket at the home game against the High School of Economics and Finance.

Rebels are on their way back to the playoffs after a disappointing season failed to earn them a spot last year. "Right now, we're just happy to be in the playoffs," said coach and physical education teacher Phillip Fisher, who is returning to the playoffs for the fourth time in his five seasons as head coach here. "That was our number one goal."

Fisher attributed some of this success to "the development of some of the players that didn't have as much of a role last year." Junior Roy Vlcek has enjoyed a greatly expanded role this season as the starting point guard. The starting point guard leads the

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