



# The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"

Volume CIII No. 8

February 5, 2013

stuspectator.com

## Stuyvesant Welcomes New Library



Primary donor Boaz Weinstein and wife Tali Farhadian Weinstein cut the ribbon to mark the grand reopening of the Boaz R. Weinstein Library on Wednesday, January 16, 2013. Former Principal Stanley Teitel, right, and Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang, left, watch on.

By GABRIEL ROSEN  
with additional reporting by  
ELVIN SHOYFER

The reopening of Stuyvesant's renovated library was celebrated on Wednesday, January 16. The grand reopening ceremony, originally slated for Monday, January 7, was rescheduled due to the sudden illness of Tali Farhadian, the wife of the library's benefactor, Stuyvesant alumnus Boaz Weinstein ('91). Weinstein, currently a hedge-fund manager at Saba Capital Management, donated \$1 million toward the renovations via several Stuyvesant alumni organizations.

The opening ceremony began at 4:00 p.m. with an introduction by Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang, who said that "Stuyvesant without a permanent library was like the morning without a good cup of coffee." Henry Myerberg, the library's architect, was slated to speak next; however, he was unable to attend.

His wife, Karen Myerberg, read a message in his stead regarding the library's completion. Student Union President Adam Lieber then gave his remarks, followed by President of the Alumni Association Lisa Tepperberg, Weinstein, and former Principal Stanley Teitel.

These speeches were followed by interpretive and oratorical performances by members of the Stuyvesant Speech and Debate Team and musical pieces by members of the Stuyvesant Symphonic Orchestra. The ceremony ended at 5:30 p.m. with a ribbon cutting, after which refreshments and beverages were served.

The library's renovation was initially aimed at improving Stuyvesant's central hub of information while also making it more appealing to the student body. The renovations consisted of three main components: alteration of the color scheme, enlargement of the working space, and

continued on page 2

## Talent Abound, A Pair of Star-Crossed Lovers Take Their Lives



The Stuyvesant Theater Community displayed Romeo and Juliet for the Winter Drama.

By EMRE TETIK

In one scene in "Romeo and Juliet," this year's Stuyvesant Theatre Community (STC) Winter Drama, Romeo (senior Jamie Bloom) is accompanied by fellow Montagues Benvolio (senior Sasson Rafailov) and Mercutio (senior Shane Lorenzen) to a party at the Capulets'. Romeo confides in them that he's been having dreams of Rosaline, with whom he's been infatuated. Mercutio advises him not to listen to dreams, warning him of "Queen Mab," who inserts crazy ideas into men's heads as they sleep. The scene occurred in front of the drawn stage curtains, with no set for the characters to interact with, and yet it effectively brought Shakespeare's words to life. Lorenzen's lines rolled smoothly off his tongue as he played a flamboyant Mercutio, admitting after his long monologue that he was talking about nothing. He owned the stage, advancing and retreating when the dialogue called for it, while Bloom and

Rafailov reacted accordingly, sometimes interested, sometimes impatient. In this scene, I felt like I was watching a few buddies casually engaging in small talk before a party, where they'll dance, drink, and have a good time.

This was only one scene out of many in the production that succeeded in turning the foreign tone of Shakespeare's language into relatable dialogue and making captivating and novel situations out of familiar classics. These are no easy tasks, but the directors (seniors Adam Schorin and Gabrielle Giles and junior Robert He), the cast, and the crews stepped up mightily. Everybody knows the story of the two star-crossed lovers, if not from the original source, then at least from one of the countless adaptations of it. Romeo is a member of the Montague clan, but falls in love with Juliet, a Capulet and therefore his enemy. Their romance is obstructed as the tension

continued on page 17

## Stuy's Intel-ligent Ten

By LUO QI KONG, EMMA LOH, and SCOTT MA

Every January, thousands of budding young scientists pray that they will be one of the three hundred selected as semifinalists for the prestigious Intel Science Talent Search. Students from all over the country submit a written report of their research in hopes of not only having scientists view their work, but also winning monetary awards and scholarships. This year, ten Stuyvesant seniors have been named semifinalists for their independent research, ranging from analyzing the effects of Vitamin A deficiency to a new model for quantifying rodent anxiety.

**Jamie Lee Solimano, Senior**  
*Super-Resolution STED Microscopy Provides Insight into the Dynamics of Intraflagellar Transport and Reveals Novel Distribution of Adenylate Cyclase III in Primary Cilia*

Solimano's research deals mainly with super-resolution imaging of primary cilia, sensory organelles in nearly all mammalian cells. The importance of these cilia is acknowledged due to their broad range of genotypic and phenotypic abnormalities, which may be responsible for several diseases.

Solimano's project involved Super-resolution Stimulated Emission Depletion (STED) microscopy, which allowed her to produce novel images of the distribution of an enzyme called adenylate cyclase III (ACIII) in cilia. These photos provided new insight into the anatomy of cilia, showing specifically that a two-row pattern existed across the width of the cilia. In addition, Solimano studied the effects of lithium treatments on the cilia, discovering that these treatments stimulated the abnormal elongation of the cilia and disrupted the localization of the ACIII in daughter centrioles. Solimano also investigated live cell imaging of the intraflagellar transport of receptor proteins, which she found was essential to the cilia's signaling function. Altogether, these conclusions highlighted the importance of cilia to critical diseases and mutations, which has often been overlooked due to its microscopic size compared to the human body.

Solimano acknowledges that this breakthrough could not have been possible without the help of biology teacher and research coordinator Dr. Jonathan Gastel. "[Dr. Gastel] was invaluable to the project, in showing us what kind of mentality we needed to have," Solimano said, reflecting on how she had to adopt a more diligent attitude in order to complete the project.

In addition, with the assistance of Dr. Jung-Chi Liao of Columbia University, Solimano had access to a lab and the resources necessary to complete the project. According to Solimano, the design was one of the most difficult tasks she faced, especially due to the amount of research she needed to obtain by communicating with professors and reading several related articles. "One of the first things was figuring out what to do and how to do it," Solimano said. Another challenge posed was the fact that she had to maintain live samples, which often did not behave or grow in the way she needed.

Despite these obstacles, Solimano has become one of 40 finalists in the competition. In her future, it is certain that she will pursue the sciences, possibly majoring in molecular biology and continuing on to medical school.

Solimano is the only Intel finalist from New York City.

continued on page 6

Features

Article on page 4.

Roving Reporter: Affirmative Action

What do Stuyvesant students think about affirmative action?

Article on page 12.

Opinions

Democracy for Men, Fear for Women

An Indian columnist provides a firsthand account of life in Indian society and her views on the rape epidemic in the country.

# News

## Newsbeat

- Stuyvesant's Global Citizens Corporation (GCC) is holding a clothing drive, dubbed "Teens for Jeans," to donate jeans for the homeless. The drive is part of a national competition in which the school with the most donations receives \$10,000, a party, and customized sweatshirts for all students. Donated jeans are being collected by the second floor bridge entrance.
- Senior Christine Kowlessar is among the ten winners of the 12th annual Independence of the Judiciary Essay Contest, which is hosted by the Association of Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York and the New York City Department of Education. She will receive her award at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York on Monday, February 4, 2013.
- Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Dolle visited the Criminal Law classes of social studies teacher Linda Weissman on Friday, January 11, 2013. She discussed the issue of sex-trafficking with students in observance of Sex-Trafficking Awareness Day.
- English teacher Dr. Emily Moore invited SlamPoet and alumnus Jacob Victorine ('04) to read his work to her Poetry Workshop classes.

## Physics Research Reinstated

By DORIT REIN

After a five year hiatus, Physics and Engineering Research

**"We had plenty of people interested in physics and engineering research for Ms. Gorla to teach; so it seemed like a good time to restart it."**  
**—Dr. Jonathan Gastel, Biology teacher and Research Coordinator**

has been reinstated as an Intel research course at Stuyvesant.

Physics and Engineering Research is a year-long course launching in the spring semester of the 2012-2013 school year. It will be taught by physics

## Stuyvesant Welcomes New Library

*continued from page 1*

acquisition of new equipment.

In addition to another circulation desk to expedite the textbook borrowing process, more than 15 new computers and three printers were installed for student use. Because the new equipment takes up precious space, Myerberg removed the old bookshelves and installed new ones, making more room for the computers and giving the library a more spacious feel.

The layout of the library has also been altered to fit the new space. The area that was recently cleared of bookshelves to make room for the computers is now an "absolute silence" zone. This was implemented because of input that students gave to librarians regarding the previous noise levels in the working environment. The middle of the library will remain a "normal" zone, where students are expected to uphold proper library decorum. The eastern section of the library will now become a "quiet whisper" zone, where students may go to be quieter than in the middle, but to not be in silence. All of these zones have also been outfitted with new chairs.

"The library now looks more accessible than it was before," sophomore Benjamin Pan said. Simultaneously, however, the library has begun to enforce their entrance policy more

heavily: students may only enter the library from periods one to 10 if they have a free period or if it is their lunch period. This new policy will thus ex-

**"Stuyvesant without a permanent library was like the morning without a good cup of coffee."**  
**—Jie Zhang, Interim Acting Principal**

clude students who have science free from entering the library during those periods. This measure was taken, in conjunction with the building of a separate entrance for room 615E, to avoid overpopulation.

teacher Rebecca Gorla during 7th period with approximately 17 students. Unlike the Honors Physics Research class in the fall semester this year, this modified course does not fulfill the Regents Physics requirement, but does act as a 10Tech course. While students are not required to submit a project to the Intel competitions, they are still mandated to complete a research project of that caliber.

"The class starts out with students trying to find an area of research that interests them and a place and person under whom they can do their research," Gorla said in an email interview. "They will most likely spend their summer doing research on their project. In class, students learn about using technology, analyzing data, writing research papers, and giving presentations, among other topics."

Junior Mandy Wong, a student in Gorla's Honors Physics Research class, believes Gorla is well-suited to teach the research class. "She tells students to talk to her privately if they want to do Physics Intel," Wong said. "She seems to be genuinely interested in helping [her students]."

Biology teacher and Research Coordinator Dr. Jonathan Gastel attributes the course's revival to a growing interest in conducting research in the physics and engineering fields. "With the expansion of the research program over the last few years the science research class is now overloaded," Dr. Gastel said in an e-mail interview. "We had plenty of people interested in physics and engineering research for Ms. Gorla to teach; so it seemed

like a good time to restart it."

Research Physics was discontinued in 2008 due to inadequate funding for a prospective teacher for the class. At the time, there were not enough physics teachers to cover the course. In conjunction with an overall lack of student interest, it was eventually merged with other Intel research courses due to an overall lack of student interest. In bringing the course back, Gorla is willing to devote the extra effort required to teach students the practice of physics and engineering in a laboratory setting.

"[Gorla] makes the effort to get to know her students; she's really personable," Wong said. "That being said, she's also a tough teacher. She really wants her students to succeed."

Dr. Gastel is optimistic about the new course, which is already off to a different start than the previous Research

**"[Gorla] seems to be genuinely interested in helping [her students]."**  
**—Mandy Wong, junior**

Physics class. "The teacher and curriculum are different," Dr. Gastel said. "Already this one is much more popular."

## Flu Season Hits Stuyvesant

By REBECCA CHANG and DAVID MASCIO

This winter, Stuyvesant is facing what New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo calls "the worst flu season since at least 2009," when the Center of Disease Control declared the H1N1 strain a pandemic.

So far, 19,128 flu cases have been reported in New York this season, compared to the 4,404 cases last season. Moreover, the New York State Department of Health has received 2,884 reports of hospitalized patients with influenza, as opposed to the 1,169 patients reported last year.

In response to this year's H3N2 virus and the rising number of flu cases, Governor Cuomo declared a state public health emergency on Saturday, January 12, 2013. Along with general physicians, pharmacists are now permitted to administer flu shots to children and adolescents between six months and eighteen years of age.

Nevertheless, there was not a significant decrease in Stuyvesant's average school-

wide attendance percentage in December than in previous years, when the average attendance rate in December was typically over 97 percent. This December, according to the NYC Department of Education's Public Attendance Record, the attendance rate dipped to 96.75 percent, marking the lowest rate since 2005.

"At least 20 percent of absent students caught the flu," attendance officer Mary Chin said. "They try to stay in the whole day, but many of them have to leave early."

Many students have been sent to the nurse's office due to symptoms of the flu, such as sore throats, coughs, and runny noses. According to School Nurse Margaret Brefo, there have been fewer cases of the flu this year, but the season is still early. "Last year there were more patients," she said. "The symptoms are less severe than last year, but it may get severe as time goes on." Brefo advises those who have the flu to stay home to prevent any other students from getting sick as well.

## More Aggressive Recycling Initiative Launched

By COBY GOLDBERG

The Stuyvesant Environmental Club is placing new recycling bins in the cafeteria and on select floors of the school as a part of a stepped-up recycling initiative. The initiative, beginning at the start of the second semester, is part of a broader campaign run by the New York City Department of Education to increase recycling within schools.

"We, as a school, send about 60 bags of trash to landfills each

cafeteria bins to direct students toward the proper receptacles.

"Most of the students know about the importance of recycling, it's just a matter of changing habits," senior and Environmental Club President Geyanne Lui said. "We're hoping this gets the school into the habit of recycling."

In the hallways, there will be an increase in the number of recycling bins on the second, third, and fourth floors. Based on the usage rates of the bins, their

**"We, as a school, send about 60 bags of trash to landfills each day because we don't recycle cans, milk cartons, bottles and a lot of other stuff. This [initiative] should drastically decrease our waste,"**  
**—Marissa Maggio, biology teacher and Environmental Club faculty advisor**

day because we don't recycle cans, milk cartons, bottles and a lot of other stuff. This [initiative] should drastically decrease our waste," biology teacher and Environmental Club faculty advisor Marissa Maggio said.

The new program follows a two-pronged approach. First, to make recycling more convenient, there will be an increase in the general availability of recycling bins throughout the school. Secondly, there will be a more pointed approach taken within the cafeteria to actively direct students toward more environmentally friendly behavior. Volunteer students from the Environmental Club and other service groups such as Key Club and ARISTA within the school community will be stationed near the

numbers could be expanded on every floor of the building. The bins will be marked with signs designating which bins collect what type of waste—paper or cans, bottles, and milk cartons.

In the cafeteria, the bins will be placed in a central location alongside the existing trash cans and TerraCycle bins. TerraCycle is a national environmental company that buys certain recyclable goods, such as toothpaste tubes, pretzel bags, and lipstick cases, from the school. The profits made by the school are then donated to other environmental organizations.

The central location will also have a designated area for students to stack lunch trays to reduce the amount of space they take up in the trash.

## ADVERTISEMENT

# WE BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THAT LAST



## AN ABS DEAL MEANS EVERYBODY WINS

**162 FIFTH AVE**  
Jay Caseley  
212.400.6075



**380 SECOND AVE**  
Ken Findley  
212.400.9482



**915 BROADWAY**  
Carol Sacks  
212.400.2355



**1001 SIXTH AVE**  
Jay Caseley  
212.400.6075



**19 UNION SQ WEST**  
Jay Kreisberg  
212.400.2348



**44 WALL ST**  
Keith Lipstein  
212.400.9492



**20 WEST 22ND ST**  
Jason Fein  
212.400.2357



**2 WEST 47TH ST**  
Robert Hadi  
212.400.2340



**PRE-BUILTS**



**270 MADISON AVE**  
Douglas Regal  
212.400.6077



**564 WEST 25TH ST**  
Joe LaRosa  
212.400.9516



**250 CANAL ST**  
Steven Hornstock  
212.400.6073



**200 PARK AVE SOUTH**  
John Gols  
212.400.9477



**230 WEST 38TH ST**  
Andy Udis  
212.400.6085



**29 WEST 38TH ST**  
John Gols  
212.400.9477



## A CLOSE-UP OF 2 WINNING RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES



**250 CANAL STREET**  
AT THE CORNER OF CANAL & LAFAYETTE STREETS  
Where Chinatown Meets Soho and the Lower East Side



**200 PARK AVENUE SOUTH**  
ON UNION SQUARE  
10,000 sf retail flagship

**• Unique build-to-suit retail opportunity**

- Incredible signage opportunity
- Highly visible location with estimated 50,000 daily pedestrian count
- J, M, N, Q, R, W, Z & 6 at the foot of the building with average daily rider count of over 45,000
- Long-term ground lease available for single tenant or will consider build-to-suit for credit tenant

Jay Caseley  
212.400.6075

Keith Lipstein  
212.400.9492

Mark Tergesen  
212.400.9528

Steven Hornstock  
212.400.6073

**• 100' of highly visible wrap-around frontage with 45' on 17th street**

- Join powerhouse retailers Sephora, Barnes & Noble, Paragon Sporting Goods, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, ABC Carpet, CVS and more
- 10,000 sf corner store: 2,500 sf ground floor; 7,500 sf lower level
- Ceilings: 16' on the ground floor; 12' on the lower level
- Elevator to lower level to be installed

Mark Tergesen  
212.400.9528

John Gols  
212.400.9477

## Features

### Roving Reporter: Discussing Affirmative Action and Legacy

By ALIYA TUZHILIN

As seniors hit the daunting "submit" button on their last college application, they can't help but let out a sigh of relief. But the worrying never stops: Will I get into my dream college? Will they accept me? Was my college app good enough? These thoughts spin around until that long-awaited ping arrives in their inbox, addressing their extended miseries. Everyone knows that strong grades, stellar extracurricular activities, well-crafted essays, and glowing recommendations are important, but there is still debate surrounding other factors out of the student's control, including policies such as affirmative action and legacy admissions. Affirmative action tries to increase the representation of minority races on college campuses, while legacy admissions favor applicants with immediate family as alumni. But does affirmative action really level the playing field of college admissions? And is legacy truly a fair concept? Five seniors weigh in on these policies, considering the ethics involved and the ultimate goal achieved.

**Carolyn Yao**

"The concept of [affirmative action] is valuable in that we need racial diversity in universities, because it is an aspect of a good education. However, the current system of accepting students of certain races doesn't actually even out the socioeconomic differences, which is why

affirmative action was created. [Affirmative action is supposed to give] minority students who are disadvantaged a leg up in the college process so they have access to better education and escape the cycle of poverty, but a lot of colleges take students just based on race, even if they are middle or upper class. What we really need to tackle is the poverty platform. Some Asian families are not as advantaged in terms of opportunities, background and finances, and their kids are still able to do well in school. The other problem in college admissions is the fact that we have legacy. Asians are much less likely to have the advantage of legacy in their application."

**Mauricio Moreyra**

"Some schools like to have a personal connection with students through legacy, so I think it's fine, even though I don't benefit from it."

"A lot of people think that affirmative action is just about race, but that's not necessarily true. Affirmative action is meant to shed light on a person's background and how much they had to work to reach their level in high school. A lot of schools take in background information, like financial need and what kind of school a student attended. Also, students don't just get accepted based on this one detail, but because they're great students and it's good to have the additional diversity they offer on campuses. Also, I don't think it has as big an impact on the ap-

plication process as SAT scores and such. For some students it's

**"Students don't just get accepted based on this one detail, but because they're great students and it's good to have the additional diversity they offer on campuses."**  
—Mauricio Moreyra, senior

tough because they hear people saying that they're going to get into a college based on their race, while they've worked so hard for college acceptance."

**Fiona Woods**

"I think affirmative action is a good idea because diversity is a positive and there are some situations where it makes a lot of sense and you're not going to get diversity otherwise. Racism has created a debt in our society to minorities, which we must pay back. But I also understand people struggle with this often because they come from the same background as minority students and they feel they deserve as much of a chance. I think that some of the complaints that people have could be resolved if affirmative action took economic background into account."

"I really don't see why [colleges use] legacy. I understand that universities need to keep those who can give them money happy, and that they want generations of families coming to their school, but I don't see why someone should have a better chance at admission just because their parents went there. Colleges should be academic institutions and therefore not create policies for profit."

**Daniel Lin**

"This apparent act of creating equality has essentially taken away the equality from others who are equally or even more deserving. It is artificial equality. Affirmative action takes away the right of a particular race or group of students to show that they are capable. Maybe if we didn't have affirmative action those students would be able to prove that they are equally

capable without this leg up. But I don't know if that's true. I believe that affirmative action was created on a fair ground with an idealistic and reasonable mindset, but that hasn't really kept its integrity to its purpose."

**Zambeta Tsapos**

"I think the process is fundamentally flawed, because I don't see how either legacy or affirmative action can help someone become a better college candidate. Affirmative action's intention is good, but in actuality it seems like colleges are trying to use other criteria to disqualify people."

However, despite the fact that affirmative action is not fair, it is on my college application that I have Native American heritage. The question is 'what race do you identify as' and I have been raised in a household where our Native American heritage is a thing. I don't agree with affirmative action, but since other people are using it and it's there, if I don't then those people are getting an edge on me."

Legacy has nothing to do with me. Its intentions are much worse though. At least the purpose of affirmative action is to get more underprivileged people in college, where as legacy is just for money. I think it's weird that colleges are blatantly not trying to hide this. There's a bigger debate on affirmative action than legacy, when it should be the opposite."

ADVERTISEMENTS

**ACT  
SAT  
PSAT**



**\$100 off 12+ hour Private Tutoring Package!**

Offer expires 12/31/12. Must call to enroll and mention Spectator ad.

**AtlasTestPrep.com**  
**347.949.TEST**

**Affordable.  
Experts.  
Higher  
Scores.**

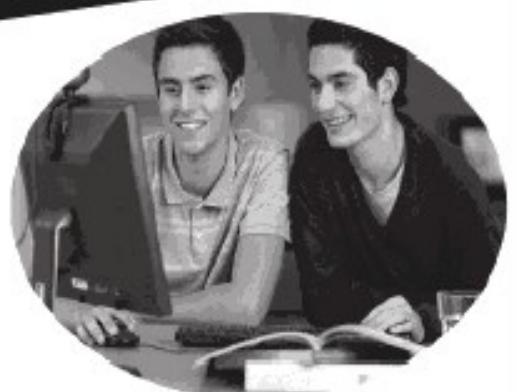
**Atlas Test Prep  
PREPARE NOW!**

**Enroll TODAY!  
Small Group Tutoring.  
Private Tutoring.**

**EDUCAID**

**EXPERT PRIVATE TUTORING**

AT YOUR HOME - 7 DAYS / YEAR ROUND



**DON'T JUST  
TAKE EXAMS  
- ACE THEM!**

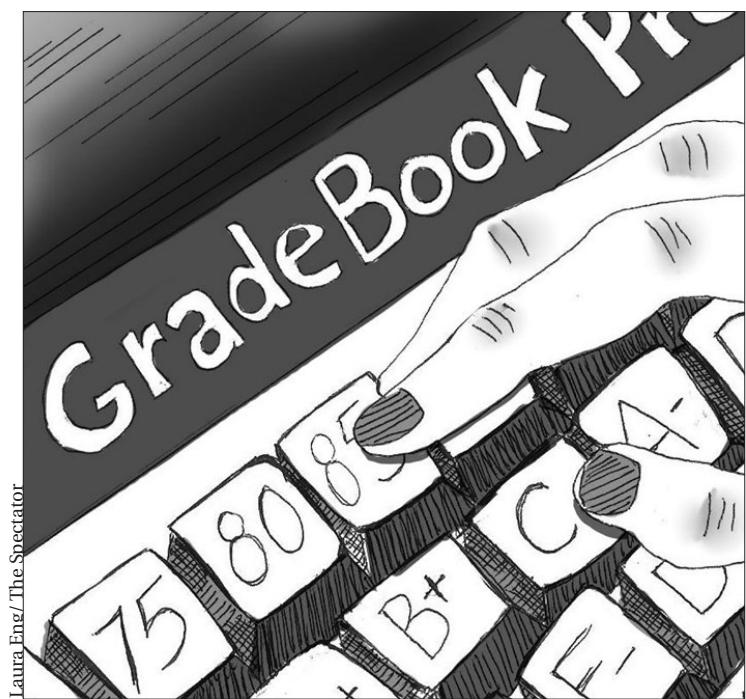
- Talented, patient, Ivy League tutors who want YOU to succeed !
- All Subjects / Exams : Regents / SAT -1 / SAT -2 / AP / IB
- Algebra / Geometry / Trig / Pre-Calc / Calc / Linear Algebra
- Computer Science / Statistics
- Biology / Chemistry / Physics
- Spanish / French / Italian & more
- English, (Grammar, Essays, Literature)
- History

**(212) 766-5002**  
**(718) 747-0173**

[www.EduaidTutoring.com](http://www.EduaidTutoring.com)

## Features

# The Practicality and Grime of Online Grading



Laura Enz/The Spectator

By ALVIN WEI

Teachers, like students, have many responsibilities: developing lesson plans, checking homework, and, of course, keeping track of grades.

There are various methods of recording grades and generating an overall grade for each marking period. Some teachers create a spreadsheet with an accompanying formula in Microsoft Excel to allocate grades regarding participation, homework, and exams. Several teachers, however, prefer to use online grading instead.

For teachers, online grading provides practical benefits. Grades saved online rather than on a single computer allow the

teacher greater access. Furthermore, online grading offers a medium of communication between teachers and students. Biology teacher Marissa Maggio sends e-mails to her students via Jupiter Grades (formerly known as Snap Grades), a web-based grade book for teachers, schools, and districts. Other well-known web-based grade books are Teacher Ease, GradeBook Wizard, and Think Wave.

"Jupiter Grades is a way of communicating with my students," Maggio said. "It lets me send notifications about homework and test dates."

For students, online grading gives them an overview of how they are doing in class. "A definite pro about online grad-

ing is the ability to see how you are doing in a class. It's also a lot easier to see in what areas you need to improve on," junior Jason Luo said.

Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang also used online grading when she was at the Queens High School for the Sciences at York College. She said, "It's helpful for parents and students to know where they are at."

Because parents can view all their children's grades online, online grading has eased parent-teacher conferences for teacher users. Maggio said, "Students know what their grades are and parents like to keep track of their children's grades, so there's no surprise when they [students] get their report cards."

Online grading also allows students to check for errors. Social Studies teacher Victor Greez, who carried over his use of Jupiter Grades from the Bronx High School of Science, said, "If anything is amiss, students know what is going on, so they can request it to be fixed."

Besides checking for grading mishaps, students can check if they have missed any assignments. Since parents have access to their children's accounts, they have the benefit of being able to inform teachers and students of these missing assignments. "If a student is neglectful to complete an assignment, students and parents have a responsibility too," Greez said.

Despite all these benefits

that online grading provides, it also has certain pitfalls. One disadvantage is parents can see their child's grades before the student see the grades, eliminating the student's personal independence. Greez said, "It is important for parents to be informed, but students should

with seeing their grades as soon as possible, further adding to the perception that the objective of schools is to achieve high grades. "When I haven't put the recent scores online, students would ask me to update them," Maggio said.

The emphasis on grades may divide the connection between teachers and students rather than strengthen it. "Online grading at times is systematic," Greez said. "It takes away the humanity of making personal connections with the students."

Because teachers determine students' grades, online grading may deteriorate the image of teachers into people who impart and test knowledge. "Sometimes I have noticed that students have a disconnecting image of me whether I am their friend or teacher," Maggio said.

However, several schools like the Bronx High School of Science recently imposed the use of Jupiter Grades on all teachers. "There's no transition period for the teachers to get used to using Jupiter Grades," Greez said.

Online grading offers many benefits, yet it is coupled with various disadvantages to the learning community. Ultimately teachers decide their grading system, whether they use a web-based grade book, a paid software, or a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. Greez said, "It is best to let teachers design their own policies."

**"There is transparency in seeing grades."**  
—Victor Greez,  
**Social Studies teacher**

ADVERTISEMENT

## DRIVER'S EDUCATION Spring 2013

**FRIENDS SEMINARY  
222 EAST 16TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10003  
(CLOSEST PROGRAM TO STUYVESANT H.S.)**

### ADVANTAGES:

1. RECEIVE SENIOR DRIVING PRIVILEGES AT 17 IN NYC UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF COURSE AND PASSING NYS DMV ROAD TEST
2. SAVE 15% UNTIL THE AGE OF 25 ON INSURANCE PREMIUMS
3. LEARN FROM NYS CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS

**BRING SIGNED APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO ONE OF THE REGISTRATION DAYS BELOW...**

**REGISTRATION DAYS:**  
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 6TH 4:30 PM  
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 13TH 4:30 PM

**CALL TO REGISTER BY PHONE  
AFTER FEBRUARY 13, 2013.**

**TO GET AN APPLICATION:**

FRIENDS SEMINARY SPRING 2013 [HTTP://BIT.LY/14sH0fC](http://bit.ly/14sH0fC) OR 718-745-3273 FOR MORE INFORMATION

# Features

*continued from page 1*

### Ben Zang, Senior

#### Effects of Vitamin A Deficiency and Helminth Infection on the Internal Gastrointestinal Microbiome

The considerable differences between developed and underdeveloped nations are not limited to differences in society or wealth, but also in the types of diseases that are prevalent in each. With the help of Dr. P'ng Loke of New York University, Zang explored the effects of Vitamin A deficiencies and Helminth infections, both of which are more common in developing countries, on the internal gastrointestinal microbiome. According to Zang's research, changes in this microbiome can cause many cases of Helminth infections, which occur when parasitic worms enter the intestinal tract and reproduce within the body. In fact, Helminths, the worms that cause this infection, are the most common agents of disease in humans of developing nations.

One of Zang's greatest encouragements came from Dr. Gastel's Intel class, which continued to push him forward no matter how tired he was. However, his occasional lack of motivation was not the only problem; Hurricane Sandy proved to be a much greater challenge to the completion of his project. Because the lab he worked at was greatly impacted by the hurricane, Zang was unable to work for a few weeks. When he returned to the lab, he had to sift through many destroyed samples. "I had to prioritize when the samples were usable," Zang said. This project has meant a great deal to Zang, not only in terms of what he has learned about science, but also in terms of what he has learned about responsibility. "I feel like I personally gained work ethics," said Zang, who expects his future to deal primarily with science.

### Jongyoon Lee, Senior

#### On the Caccetta-Häggkvist Conjecture

Assisted by two mentors at Hofstra University and MathCamp, Lee spent approximately 200 hours working on his project, which concentrated on mathematics, specifically graph theory, a subset of geometry dealing with collections of vertices and the edges that connect them. It revolved around the concept of directed graphs and their corresponding directed cycles. His project is a version of the Caccetta-Häggkvist Conjecture: that a directed graph D can contain a directed cycle of, at most, four if there are n vertices, with n representing a number greater than or equal to three, and the number of edges connecting to each point is greater than  $n - 2 / 3$ . "It's a pretty simple statement that holds a lot of weight," Lee said. "My research was more quantitative than synthetic proof-oriented, allowing for more opportunity to explore."

### Zofia Kaczmarek, Senior

#### Why Do Word Breaks Speed Reading?

Through a computer program that assesses a person's ability to read bodies of text when the spacing between words is altered, Kaczmarek, also under the guidance of Denis Pelli at New York University, discovered that breaks between words do indeed speed up a person's reading ability.

In her experiment, Kaczmarek timed how quickly a person read English texts in which spaces were replaced with combinations of letters and symbols. Each participant received ten different texts, each of which contained uniquely modified spacing between words. They were then asked to read the text as quickly as possible. Afterwards, they were given three questions to answer regarding the text. If the subject answered less than two correctly and was unable to summarize the text they read, they were retested.

According to Kaczmarek, her research does not have direct implications to other areas. "This is more of a basic research type of thing. You can't make a product out of it," she said. "We're still trying to figure out how people interpret the words they see and how they identify them and put them together and make them into a sentence. It's just another piece in that puzzle."



Justin Strauss/The Spectator

### Jordan Wallach, Senior

#### Optimizing the Ionic Conductivities of Imidazolium-Based Ionic Liquids by Varying Tethering Groups

After taking Organic Chemistry with Chemistry teacher Dr. Steven O'Malley, Wallach felt inspired to pursue the topic during the summer of 2012. He attended the High School Honors Math, Science, and Engineering Program at Michigan State University for seven weeks, where he researched the best way to maximize the ionic conductivity of ionic liquids.

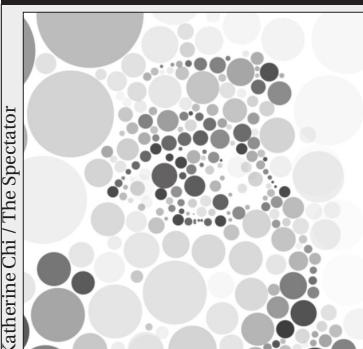
An ionic liquid is a viscous "molten salt" that contains a positive ion (cation) and a negative ion (anion). Wallach sought to maximize such a liquid's ionic conductivity by tethering different lengths of polyethylene oxide (PEO) to the benzyl imidazolium cation in the liquid. With PEO attached, the molecule could become more conductive. Wallach investigated which length of PEO would conduct best.

With the guidance of Dr. Greg Baker and the help of graduate student Zhe Jia at Michigan State University, Wallach discovered that shorter lengths of PEO maximized the conductivity of his particular model compound. Wallach found an application of his findings in dye-sensitized solar cells. While dye-sensitized solar cells use polymers to function, Wallach synthesized and experimented primarily with monomers. He hopes that if research is furthered to include polymers, it will help improve the cost and efficacy of solar cells.

Wallach performed his research not because he wanted to become an Intel winner, but because he was interested in the subject area. "I wanted to apply my knowledge of organic chemistry from Dr. O'Malley's class to the lab," Wallach said. "In the end, being a semifinalist was an added bonus."

When asked about his reaction to becoming a semifinalist, Wallach responded positively. "I'm honored to get that recognition. I put a lot of hard work into the project, and getting recognition is something I'm grateful for," Wallach said.

## Color Coded



By ARINA BYKADOROVA

The common expression goes, "Spend a day in someone else's shoes." How about spending a day behind someone else's eyes? Can we imagine the world and its familiar components that we see every day looking different, specifically in different colors? Color blind students and teachers at Stuyvesant offer us a small peek into the different world they see.

Color blindness is a completely genetic disorder carried on the X chromosome. Because men have both X and Y chromosomes and women have two X chromosomes, men are much more susceptible to it. If the related gene is mutated on a man's

one X chromosome, he will definitely have color blindness. On the other hand, if only one X chromosome of a woman is affected, the disorder may remain dormant and the woman's offspring unaffected. The mutated gene controls the formation of structures called cones, which are located in our retinas and control how we perceive color. The three types of cones process shades of red, green, and blue. Thus, contrary to popular belief, a color blind individual does not see in only black and white. Color blindness knocks out only one of these cones, leaving the affected person with the ability to perceive only certain hues.

There is one basic method of diagnosis: the Ishihara Color Test. This test, which consists of reddish numbers on greenish backgrounds and vice versa, measures for color blindness by degrees of contrast, from completely complementary numbers and backgrounds to ones that even people with normal vision must squint closely to see.

Junior Gene Gau recounts that he first took the Ishihara Color Test when he was five or six, when coloring was still pre-

dominant in the academic setting. He explains that yellows, greens, oranges, browns, and reds confuse him. "I also don't really know what mahogany, maroon, magenta, teal, turquoise, or burgundy are. My knowledge of colors extends as far as a box of 12-pack Crayola crayons, and that's it. When Crayola started throwing colors like 'scarlet' at me in the first grade is when I dropped out of Colors 101," Gau said. What some might call a limited palette, however, does not throw Gau off. Though he admits that shopping for clothes can be bothersome, especially when it comes to choosing between a blue and purple shirt, Gau appreciates being able to look beyond the many "vague and useless colors," he said. For him, it is an idiosyncrasy he can very well handle and even embrace.

Gau's feelings seem to meet the general consensus. "I guess it's the small things that change, whether it's doing a chemistry lab, reading the pH, or not being able to match colors," junior Aron Helfet said. Helfet confesses to buying green bananas instead of yellow ones, but intimates that it is not a big problem for him.

He finds that in the event that he needs help, the people around him are generally open to lending him a hand (or rather, an eye).

There are settings, however, in which color blindness may act as a liability. "Color blindness counts as a medical problem or disability, and it plays a huge part in job applications and in the process of becoming a driver," sophomore Jerry Dai said. "In general, I just won't be able to name all the colors I see to you. It's pretty hard to explain."

Chemistry teacher Dr. Steven O'Malley also notes the difficulty in explaining the color blindness phenomenon. Like Gau, Dr. O'Malley took the Ishihara Test at an early age and failed it. He pointed out that he could only see two of the eight plates in the test on his iPhone. That, however, is the extent of his individual case. Dr. O'Malley can generally distinguish between colors easily, but there are certain wavelengths of red and green light that look the same to him. To demonstrate, he pointed out the red fire blanket and the green sheet of phone numbers on the classroom walls. "It comes up very infrequently, but when it does, it's pretty pro-

nounced. I think the most striking thing about it is that it's very difficult to describe to someone who doesn't have it," Dr. O'Malley said. "You know, 'What do you mean you can't tell that that's red or green? Of course that's red and that's green.'" Dr. O'Malley, unlike Helfet, has no problems with pH tests. His color blindness has not affected his teaching experience at all, and, just for the O'Malley fans out there, his favorite color is red.

Just as interesting as the verbal responses of these students and faculty were their surprised reactions to the questions and this article's topicality. Vision is something we take deeply for granted. To ask how someone else sees the world and discover that their perception is different from our own creates a fascinating angle to view the sense of sight that we rely upon so heavily. To step behind someone else's cornea and to view the world as they do is also a huge step towards understanding how they think. And the more we understand each other, the tighter our community and the better life will be.

# Features

## lgent Ten

**Antara Majumdar, Senior**  
*Genomic Instability Induced By Long-Term Exposure to Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)*

Before sophomore year, Majumdar had never even touched a pipette, but it became one of her closest companions in her independent research of two years. In her project, Majumdar focused on Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), harmful environmental chemicals that are similar to carcinogens. Her goal was to investigate how PCBs affected animals and humans over a long period of time, in contrast to most of the existing short-term studies on PCBs. Majumdar said, "The long term study tried to characterize if the exposure of the chemical was different in any way and if so, how was it different? I looked for characteristics of carcinogenicity, proliferated signaling, a growth pattern that was higher for cells treated with the PCBs; and genetic instability."

Majumdar did this by comparing cells that were treated with PCBs and cells that were not and analyzing their chromosome copy numbers, the numbers of copies of the chromosome the cell had present. She saw that most of the cells treated with the PCBs had abnormal chromosome copy numbers, evidence that PCBs cause genetic instability in humans.

For Majumdar, this is only the first step in her research of pollutants. "In the future, I want to focus on certain genes involved in mutations that might actually be driving this genomic instability," Majumdar said. "I'm really looking forward to analyze the underlying causes."

**Miranda Li, Senior**  
*Behavior Regulation in the Social Ant Cerapachys biroi*

The guiding rule for the survival of any species is maximizing the species's diversity. Cerapachys biroi, a "social" species of ant native to Asia, has a unique method of preserving its diversity.

From mid-June to November of 2012, Li worked under the guidance of post-doctorate Peter Oxley in the Kronover Lab of Insect Social Evolution, where she experimented with C. biroi. After tracking the number of ants in 24 different developmental stages over a generation, she found that there were cases of cannibalism, in which workers and larvae would eat their own eggs. Li sought to discover the reason behind this.

Li harvested DNA from many colonies, genotyped them, and observed their recombination rates. Recombination, which occurs as a part of meiosis, is prevalent in mammals as a method to increase genetic diversity by mismatching genes. However, in C. biroi, an asexually reproducing species, recombination actually causes the species to lose certain genotypes. Eggs and larvae have significantly higher recombination rates than workers and pupae, and as a result, C. biroi colonies stop the problems early on to preserve the diversity of the entire species.

According to Li, this development in the relatively new field of insect research has implications that go beyond those of ants. "As a social insect, [C. biroi] is really good for modeling behavior for other insects and social systems," Li said. A system of eliminating organisms harmful for the survival of the species, called policing, is prevalent in many other social systems as well.

"Humans have policing in the immune system against pathogens and cancers. Closely related ants such as army ants also have policing in their colonies," Li said. "It's kind of like a model for other systems."

**Carolyn Yao, Senior**  
*The Number of Features Used to Identify a Word Depends on the Number of Possible Words*

Fact: A larger vocabulary doesn't necessarily mean faster reading.

According to Yao's research, knowledge of more words actually increases the number of features required to identify each word. Under the guidance of Professor Denis Pelli at the New York University Center for Neuroscience, Yao experimented in the field of cognitive science.

Yao created a computer program that tested people with three different groups of words. The first group contained 10 four-letter English words; the second group 26; and the third group 1708, virtually every four-letter word in existence. For the groups of 10 and 26, a list of the words were shown to the person taking the test beforehand; for the group of 1706, no list was given due to the large quantity of words.

A person taking the test would have a "run" in each of the three groups. A run consisted of 60 faintly visible words found in their respective list, all of which was found in a larger group of words quickly flashed to the viewer. The viewer would then type in the word he or she had seen. From the results, Yao discovered that the set of features required to identify a word increased as the reader's vocabulary increased, and consequently, a vocabulary limits a person's reading speed. When looking at an image, the brain breaks it down into different components; the smallest, discrete, independently detected component of the image is known as feature. Using features as a constant, Yao was able to develop graphical data supporting her project.

Though there are many practical uses for her research, such as the development of fonts and texts that are more visually friendly, Yao believes that there are other benefits to her research. "Research shouldn't just be about the applications. There's an academic motivation behind research," Yao said.

**Pranavan Chanthrakumar, Senior**

*The Behavioral Rescue of 5-HT 1A -R (-/-) Mice by DCP-LA and the Introduction of a Novel Paradigm for Anxiety in Rodents: the Pyramid Test*

In such a notoriously competitive and fast-paced school, Stuyvesant students are no strangers to anxiety, whether it's caused by approaching deadlines or menacing exams. Anxiety is a topic that Chanthrakumar felt so applicable that it became the focus of his entire project. Chanthrakumar said, "I feel like anxiety was a really close problem and one that I felt like had significance in my life and other people's lives."

Under the supervision of Dr. Probal Banerjee, a professor and researcher at the College of Staten Island, Chanthrakumar independently built a test to quantify the anxiety of mice. While previous mouse anxiety tests looked like an open rectangular field with walls surrounding it, Chanthrakumar's model resembles a five-leveled tiered pyramid. There are two possible outcomes when a mouse is simulated into his test. "An anxious mouse would spend time around the lower levels of the pyramid, near the walls where it feels more secure. But if the mouse is exploratory, it will climb higher and spend more time in the middle of the pyramid," Chanthrakumar said. Chanthrakumar's test may be used by scientists to more accurately test anxiolytic treatments in mice that could later be used to treat anxiety in humans.

**Amanpreet Singh Kandola, Senior**

*Identifying Memory-Encoding Neurons Associated with a Learned Experience through a Novel Image Analysis Algorithm*

For the average high school student, memory serves as a substantial tool in acing exams. For semifinalist Kandola, memory is important for a different reason; his project on a specific memory test. Kandola created a computer program that identified the neurons associated with memory. This computer program, an algorithm that allowed the analysis of images, was essential for quantification of the molecular concentrations that were involved with the memory test.

Kandola's interest in memory foundation acted as the impetus for his Intel project, as he had already learned about different electrical experiments that also incorporated memory tests. These experiments gave him the inspiration to take the next step in his own research. In order to complete the project, Kandola was assisted by Dr. Juan Marcos Alarcon of SUNY Downstate, who specifically researches synaptic plasticity, encoding, learning, and memory. Stuyvesant's Computer Science program was a great help to Kandola as well. Since most of his project focused on the algorithm he needed to code, a great deal of his work relied on computer science. The Intel class naturally played a big role in his research as well.

The programming and the lab work took Kandola two years to complete. Like the other competitors, Kandola "certainly learned what it feels like to work in a lab and to work with others," he said.

## Healthful, Scrumptious Energy

By HUWON KIM

The morning after a long night crammed with homework, projects, and general stress, a bleary-eyed junior opens the refrigerator, hoping to find something to keep him awake and perceptive in class. Just before he grabs a bag of ground coffee beans, he spots a cup of plain low-fat yogurt and some fruit. He turns his head to the refrigerator door to find a carton of milk and wonders where his mom stored the blender.

### 1. Fruit Smoothies

Smoothies are healthy mixes of vitamins and nutrients that can easily be manipulated for the right taste and texture.

Carbohydrates are the main sources of the energy we get from our food, but not all carbs are of the kind we want to consume. Natural sugars are looked upon more highly than processed ones due to the fact that the latter changes blood sugar levels unsteadily, causing energy to drain faster. Natural sugars, on the other hand, are often considered slow carbs, so the sugars found in fruits should do you lasting good. "It's better to have something that will give you a 'slow burn' over several hours," biology and Nutritional Science teacher Jessica Quenzer said in an email interview. Fruit is a

fine source of vitamin C and fiber, something many people lack in their diets.

The milk and low-fat yogurt make the smoothie drinkable and, well, smooth, but they are also excellent sources of protein and calcium, both of which are vital to your diet. The proteins that milk contains are easily digested, and the amino acids that result from the protein breakdown are incorporated more readily into our bodies for our cells' use than the protein we get from red meat. Dairy milk can also be substituted with almond milk for the lactose-intolerant and for those who want to try something new.

It is best to control your intake of fat when you can, so stick to low-fat and non-fat milk and yogurt. You need not be concerned with the loss of good taste that comes with the lessening of fat, because the fruits make up for it. In fact, while some people enjoy that tangible taste of sugar in their smoothies, adding table sugar, cookies, or candy ought to be avoided. "Keep in mind most yogurt already has a lot of sugar in it," Quenzer said. "You can experiment with various fibrous fruits for taste and texture." A dash of ground flax seed can also contribute to your vitamin B and fiber levels.

Smoothies are a healthy re-

placement for the morning cup of coffee, which contains caffeine and can cause uncontrollable shaking, sleep disorders, anxiety, and even depression when consumed too often. "Stay away from espressos," Quenzer warned. "I've had students vibrating so hard they broke beakers." Even though coffee may barricade against sleepiness, that barricade crashes abruptly in a few hours following consumption, ultimately giving the body very little time to adjust.

The Stuyvesant junior knew hunger would afflict him before his seventh period lunch and during soccer practice after school, so he considered packing quick snacks

### 2. Whole-grain Bread with either All-Natural Peanut Butter or Low-fat Cheese

Whole-grain bread, and whole-grain anything, contains fiber and nutrients like potassium, and is a good place to find "slow burning" carbs. Low-fat cheese, like milk and yogurt, is a popular source of protein, and with great variety in types, from cheddar to Brie and Gruyere, and there will definitely be a few that will fit your taste. Natural peanut butter works too, since peanuts contain unsaturated fats that, with the fiber from the whole-grain bread, will keep you nourished for quite a period of time.

### 3. Trail Mix

It's not only peanuts that contain the good, unsaturated fats. All nuts contain monounsaturated fats, which lower cholesterol levels, and polyunsaturated fats, which include omega-3 and omega-6 fats and lower blood lipid levels. Included in this amalgamation of healthy fats are potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, fiber, and protein. Mixed in with dried fruits, trail mix is the epitome of the healthy, convenient snack; it's easy to prepare and carry around.

Within these three snacks are smaller, simpler ones that can also be mixed and matched to create more personalized healthy snacks. Try topping various types of fruit (such as grapes, apples or pears) with different cheeses. Try combining low-fat yogurt with diced fruits, some nuts, and a layer of either whole-grain cereal or oatmeal to make a healthy yogurt parfait. Or try mixing in some peanut butter into your smoothie.

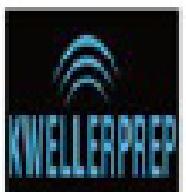
Eating healthy snacks regularly should be considered an important part of your daily eating schedule, for such a diet pattern protects against dramatic changes in blood sugar levels. For this reason, smaller and more frequent intakes of food have proven to be healthier than eating the three big meals we are accustomed to. Many small



meals also keep our metabolism active and our energy and mental alertness up. Healthy snacks pose a triple-win situation; little else can offer essential nutrients concentrated in a few mouthfuls while also satiating you and satisfying your taste buds at the same time.

On the subway ride back home from soccer practice, the junior reflected on his day. He realized that by starting off his day with a fruit smoothie, he continued to make healthy eating choices. Had he simply resorted to a quick cup of coffee, he knew that a donut drenched in sugar would come to accompany it for breakfast. Without dips in his mood and focus, the junior finally felt properly energized throughout the entire day.

ADVERTISEMENT

**Kweller Test Prep**

# PSAT & SAT Summer Camp

**Classes Start Monday, June 24, 2013**

**Call Today!**  
**1(800) 631-1757**  
**Forest Hills, Queens**  
**Midtown, Manhattan**

[info@KwellerPrep.com](mailto:info@KwellerPrep.com)  
[www.KwellerPrep.com](http://www.KwellerPrep.com)



**Small Groups 8 students or private tutoring**

ADVERTISEMENTS

# Interns Wanted

**Smart, Detailed, Excellent Writers  
Wanted to help with Established  
Tutoring & Test Prep School in Forest Hills.**

**Grant Writers & Organizers Wanted  
for assistance with the Student  
Scholarship Fund**

**Parker Towers Building  
104-40 Queens Blvd Ste. 1F  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
(Queens Blvd & 69 avenue)**

Please Email Resume & Cover Letter to:  
[FK@KwellerPrep.com](mailto:FK@KwellerPrep.com)  
Subject Line: Internship

**Limited number of for-credit  
community service internships available.**



**First in Family Fund**

# Editorials

## STAFF EDITORIAL

### It's Time for a New Legacy

"What did I do wrong?" It's a question that many Stuyvesant students find themselves asking come November and April once they receive rejection letters from some of the nation's top universities. After four years of working hard in one of the best schools in New York City, it's hard to imagine anything other than a college acceptance at the end of the line. But even our top artists, mathematicians, writers, athletes, and scientists fall prey to what seems like an unreasonable amount of rejections and deferrals. Obviously, this devastates star students, but many are suffering due to something completely out of their control—race. The majority of the Stuyvesant population is Asian American, and Asian Americans are considered to be the least desirable racial group at many universities, many of which enforce an unspoken "Asian quota." As a result, even the most qualified Asian American Stuyvesant students are receiving rejection letters simply because of their ethnicity.

There are just as many college-ready, elite Asian American students across this nation as white students. However, due to legacy practices and the need to preserve "tradition," Ivy League schools are restricting the number of Asian Americans they accept. Legacy admissions policies, where students are admitted on a basis of donation-potential alone (often due to having had family already attend the college), have become standard in college admissions offices. These students are far less qualified than non-legacy students of any race, but because they come from predominantly white, upper-class families they are considered more desirable. Recently, the Harvard Crimson published a statistic that 30 percent of legacy applicants are admitted, about four times the regular acceptance rate. That is unacceptable. Ivy league schools fail to carry out the holistic admissions process they promise in information sessions, giving priority to legacy students instead. In comparison, Stuyvesant's Harvard acceptance rate over the last four years is 10.17 percent, and that's including legacy students.

Students of all races at

Stuyvesant are being looked over because of legacy policies. However, statistics indicate that Asian Americans are being shut out more than any other group. Harvard, one of the schools many Stuyvesant students dream of attending, is infamous for both its favorable policies toward legacy students and its unfavorable policies toward Asian American students. Along with other elite universities on the east coast, Harvard maintains specific percentages of each racial group. According to the New York Times, the percentage of Asian students has stayed around 20 percent since the 1990s. Meanwhile, white representation at the school stays close to 60 percent. In the California system, which implements race-blind admissions policies, Asian representative is closer to 40 percent. This difference indicates that Harvard and other Ivy league schools either have utterly different systems of assessing their applicants or they have determined that Asian students are less desirable as a group.

This bias against Asian students isn't seen only in admission demographics. Take the SAT, a test we all have ample experience with. For high school students, it is often considered to be one of the most important steps into acing the college admissions process: a no-nonsense way to show the world your abilities through a cold hard score. But a recent analysis of Princeton University's admissions statistics by Thomas Espenshade revealed that, in order to gain acceptance to this prestigious university, an Asian American student needed to score an average of 140 points higher than a white applicant and 450 higher than an African American one on an SAT scored out of 1600. The numbers speak for themselves.

To think that these students are being denied acceptance because of their race makes it easy to lose faith in the college process. That hard work and a dazzling resume may not pay off in the way we've all been told is incredibly disheartening to any student, Asian American or otherwise.

It'd be easy to point to these students and say that Harvard

rejections will not ruin their lives. But for those who make it past the quotas, a greater hurdle looms: the price of tuition. At Stuyvesant, it is no secret that many of us come from immigrant families that cannot afford to pay college tuition - we're a Title I school, meaning that 40 percent or more of the students in attendance are on free or reduced lunch. A result of this is an "Ivy or bust" attitude in many Stuyvesant families. Why is that? It's not due to ignorance or arrogance. It's because Ivies and other wealthy universities tend to be more far more generous with their aid packages. Other respected private institutions will tell you to take out a loan, a loan that will follow you for the rest of your life. This is the real problem. Tuition is shooting up and little is being done to combat it. Our nation's top universities would rather continue a policy of race-based affirmative action than actively help students who are living in poverty. Across the board, students from any racial group are more likely to attend college if their family is affluent. A study conducted by Denver University showed that students in the top quartile were 25 times more likely to attend elite universities than those from the lowest quartile. The "American dream" is shattered for many Stuyvesant students every spring because they can't afford the education that will allow them to raise their families' economic status.

Rather than focusing on maintaining status quo racial breakdowns, colleges need to promote admissions policies with emphasis on merit rather than parental alma mater, and class diversity rather than racial diversity. What difference does the color of one's skin make if everybody is coming from similar upper middle class backgrounds and has similarly affluent parents back home? Learning alongside students from all walks of life can give you more insight into how the world works than taking a class as perfectly mixed as the cover of an admissions brochure. Colleges need to start playing fair and granting education to those who truly deserve it.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By Maria N. Nedwidek, Ph.D.  
Re: Defining What Defines Us

Thank you for the flattering description of my Genetics Research course in your feature titled "Defining What Defines Us," which was published on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 (Volume CIII, No. 7). I write to thank the gracious participants and contributors to the course's major lab component, which is the Research of the Genetics Research course. While the article mentions the term project, it does not specify the nature of the genome analysis exercise students accomplish when they do the project. Students engage in an intensive, two-day analysis of the sequences of their own physical genome, spending significant time after the lab work to analyze the results using computer algorithms. In the analysis, students look for precise correlations between their indi-

vidual DNA sequence data and their ethnic backgrounds. For the seven years that this unique and rare opportunity has been a part of my fall semester Genetics course, the research conducted by my students has been carried out at specialized educational lab facilities. To complete the work, students have taken excursions to the DNA Learning Centers at New Hyde Park in previous years, at Harlem this year, and at Stuyvesant last year with the gracious participation of a team of college research scientists under my guidance over two consecutive weekends.

The genome field lab exercises were conceived and are run by scientists at the prestigious Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the research home of Nobel Prize winner James D. Watson. The field labs are partially funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a major biomedical research philanthropy. Since

2006, students taking Genetics Research have been subsidized by grants from our Parents' Association and the Stuyvesant Alumni Association to perform this in-depth genome analysis. Many students have commented positively on the immersion experience of doing these labs and its personal impact in terms of allowing them to examine a part of their own genomes. Stuyvesant's biology department and I are grateful to our benefactors, to the Stuyvesant administration, and to the countless teachers and parents who have graciously consented, and will continue to consent, to allow Genetics Research students to participate in this enlightening, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of self-discovery.

Sincerely yours,  
Maria N. Nedwidek, Ph.D.  
Biology Department  
Stuyvesant High School

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse  
of the  
Student  
Body"*

### EDITORS IN CHIEF

David Cahn  
Edric Huang

NEWS EDITORS  
Lindsay Bu  
Noah Rosenberg  
Eugenia Sanchez

### FEATURES EDITORS

Teresa Chen  
Robert He  
Alvin Wei

### OPINIONS EDITORS

Benjamin Attal  
Risham Dhillon  
Severyn Kozak

### SPORTS EDITORS

Lev Akabas  
Timothy Diep  
Luke Morales

### HUMOR EDITORS

Jeremy Karson  
Robert Melamed

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS  
Danny Kim  
Sam Kim  
Justin Strauss

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS  
Jane Argodale  
Joyce Koltisko  
Emre Tetik

ART DIRECTORS  
Laura Eng  
Michele Lin  
Michelle Lin

LAYOUT EDITORS  
Mark Perelmuter  
Da-Ye Shin  
Anne Tan

COPY EDITORS  
Thomas Bajko  
Stephanie Yan

BUSINESS MANAGERS  
Andrew Fischer  
Deanna Taylor

WEB EDITORS  
Waqarul Islam  
Youbin Kim  
Eugene Lee

FACULTY ADVISOR  
Kerry Garfinkel

Please address all letters to:

345 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10282  
(212) 312-4800 ext. 2601  
[letters@stuyspectator.com](mailto:letters@stuyspectator.com)

We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length.  
© 2012 The Spectator  
All rights reserved by the creators.  
This issue was created in collaboration with the 2012-2013 Editorial Board.

## The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of past issues.

We are looking for issues published before 1995.

Please send any newspapers to:  
The Stuyvesant Spectator  
345 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10282

If you have any questions,  
e-mail us at:  
[archives@stuyspectator.com](mailto:archives@stuyspectator.com)

## A Note to Our Readers:

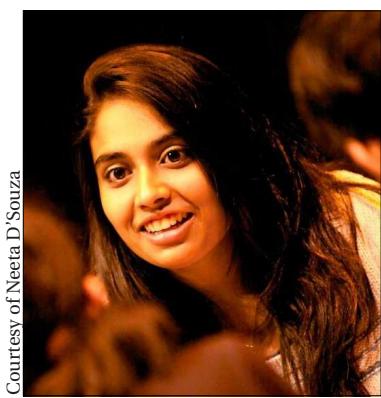
The Spectator will now accept unsolicited Op-Ed pieces written by outside students, faculty, and alumni. These columns, if selected, will be published in The Spectator's Opinions section. Recommended length is 700 words. Articles should address school related topics or items of student interest. Columns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

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

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

# Opinions

## Democracy for Men, Fear for Women



Courtesy of Neeta D'Souza

By NEETA D'SOUZA

After watching the evening feature of "Life of Pi," a woman left the theater with her friend. She had delicate features, and her shoulder length black hair must have shone in the moonlight; her smile was beautifully genuine. Offered a ride home by what seemed to be one of the city's public bus drivers, she accepted immediately because the Delhi night air can nip at one's ears like none other.

Instead of taking her home, however, her drivers brutally raped and beat her. She was left on the streets bloody, disheveled, and too weak to cry for help.

A few days later, she died of intestinal injuries in a hospital far from home. It doesn't matter what her name was; her story could have been the story of any woman in India.

Last summer, it could have even been mine.

During the summer before

my junior year, I went to India for a family visit and a community service trip. On this trip, I was finally old enough to walk the streets alone. As I unpacked, my aunts took my wardrobe to task, telling me that I couldn't wear simple jeans and t-shirts when stepping outside the house. For the first time in my life, I was given a curfew of 5 P.M. by my mother, with strict instructions to return home from my volunteering duties before dark. When I asked an older cousin about the stares I received by a group of men on a bus ride, I was told to look straight ahead and stick close to my family. When a neighbor's daughter was molested on a train, my family's entire block was abuzz with gossip and warnings: "If you don't watch out, you'll end up like her."

While living in this twisted alternate world, I couldn't help but notice the hypocrisy in Indian culture. A nation that is the world's largest democracy by population is allowing half of its citizens to be oppressed on the most basic of levels. According to America's National Public Radio, on average, a woman is raped every fourteen hours in India. When women are raped, they are victimized to such a level that they are usually forced to marry their rapist to "save their honor," simply because the social stigma against women who have sex before

marriage is so high that many parents believe no one would want to marry their daughters. Married women who are raped are, in the most extreme situations, forced to kill themselves;

one of the largest hindrances to progress in a country that has such great potential to grow and change politically, economically, and morally.

Perhaps this is why the ensuing protests that were sparked across India by the condition of the aforementioned young woman in New Delhi are so promising. For the first time, women in India are coming together to forge a voice for themselves, and their unity continues to stimulate debate about how to end a problem that was once considered too socially ingrained to be changed. Journalists and policy-makers speak of increasing police accountability, strengthening legislation for victims' rights, and giving rapists the death penalty. These solutions may bandage this problem in the short run, but to lower the high levels of rape in India, we must look to the root of the issue: the mindset that most Indians share about rape.

People in India should stop believing that rape is caused by a woman's "provocative" actions rather than a man's cruelty. Instead of teaching their daughters to expect the worst when they walk outside at night, they should teach their sons to respect the opposite sex. Indian communities need to stand together against rape instead of ostracizing those who undergo such trauma. Most importantly, rape should be condemned, not as an act that ends a woman's

desirability and capabilities, but as a violent and disrespectful violation of human rights.

As I write these words, news of another gang rape in New

**Rape should be condemned, not as an act that ends a woman's desirability and capabilities, but as a violent and disrespectful violation of human rights.**

their husbands' families usually see the suffering that they have been through as a consensual act of infidelity. This communally patriarchal mindset is

**It doesn't matter what the woman's name was. It could be the story of any woman in India.**

Delhi has spread across the world. Women in India need to understand that their fight will be long and difficult because they are challenging the underlying structure of their society. Still, they cannot give up hope. Change in India is desperately needed.

## Randomizing the Alphabet

By SUNNY ZHANG

Alphabetic order is convenient and orderly, but for me and my XYZ peers, it's frustrating and unfair. For years, alphabetical order has guaranteed my being placed last in everything from class seating arrangements to receiving tests and report cards. It's made me dislike the very idea of being last in anything. I'm very proud of my name, my family, and the history behind it, yet alphabetical order sometimes makes me wish my last name started with an A.

It is unfair that I'm always stuck at the sides or in the corners of a classroom because of my name. Seating arrangements affect more than a student's view of the board or how long it takes to organize papers. Teachers handing out test papers often start with the first row, awarding those lucky students a precious few more minutes on exams. In classes where

I sit in the front or middle, I'm more inclined to participate instead of dozing off or merely watching discussions. In classes where I sit in the back, I feel like I have to work twice as hard to gain a teacher's recognition. Also, when giving presentations in alphabetical order, there's the pressure of having to surpass everyone who went before me—and by the time it's my turn, everyone is too bored to pay attention. If order were random, would I be getting higher grades? Does alphabetical order affect not only our equality in the classroom, but also our chances of success? Perhaps.

On a systemic level, it's doubtless that minutiae can have large influences on our behavior, development, and performance in the classroom.

Various studies have been conducted on how minute factors influence behavior or rate of success. Malcolm Gladwell's "Outliers" uses the example of birthdays and elite Canadian

hockey players. Statistics show that hockey players born in the first few months of the year are more likely to play in ma-

**When giving presentations, there's the pressure of having to surpass all those who went before.**

jor leagues than younger competitors born in the same year; the reason for this is that youth hockey leagues determine eligibility by year. Since older children are bigger and more mature than younger children, even if only by a small amount, they are more likely to be recognized and chosen for elite leagues. When applied to a system of millions of children, the effects of this small detail are enormous. In our increasingly competitive world, even minuscule details like being taller by just an inch or two or more mature by merely a few months are capable of changing a person's whole life.

Applying Gladwell's theory to the insistence of alphabetical



Philip Shin / The Spectator

ordering at school, who's to say that continuously being placed last won't affect a person's personality, class participation, or grades? A 1999 study done by Marx, Furig, and Hartig has actually proved that there are "action-zones" in the classroom in which students ask more questions. A 1988 study done by Rennells and Chaudhari found that students who sit in the front, closer to the teacher, tend to do better on tests. When given the choice to choose their own seats, students who sit in the front are also generally more confident and engaging. Continuously placing students in the back deprives them of the advantages of sitting in front and even discourages some from becoming more proactive in learning.

It all comes back to something very simple: fairness. Everyone should be given a fair chance, even in something as seemingly trivial as seating arrangements. You might argue

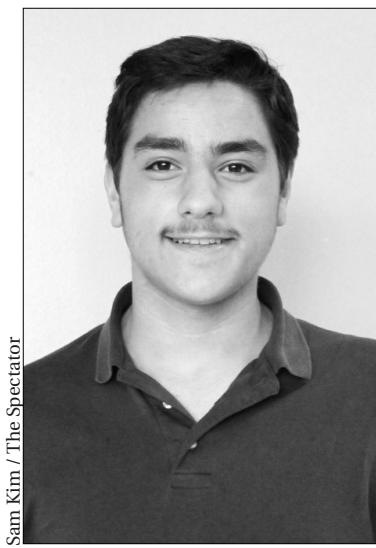
that there's no need to implement change because students who need help are always welcome to come forward, but there are many who are either too shy or afraid of criticism for bringing up something that is too commonly perceived as pettiness. Disadvantages of random arrangements—inconveniences in handing back homework or remembering students' names—can easily be overcome. There are ways to use alphabetical order randomly. Instead of seating students up and down the rows, why not go across? Start with the middle row or the end of the alphabet.

Let's end alphabetical order. No bias, no exceptions, no ABCs. For us XYZ people, it means more variety, fewer walls, and the reassurance that a teacher cares. If it does somehow place me in the back again, I'll consider myself unlucky, but being unlucky once is far better than having no say at all.



# Opinions

## Death of the American Dream: Xenophobia



Sam Kim / The Spectator

By JACK CAHN

What's the first thing you do when you see a disabled or obese person? Basic psychology says that as humans, we turn away from that which is different from us because we're scared of the unknown. As the immigration debate comes to the forefront of the American political agenda in the wake of the 2012 election, it's important to realize that it's the irrational fear of the unknown, not economic justifications, that is the real motivator behind anti-immigration legislation.

As immigration continues to increase in the United States, we've seen a disturbing backlash of increased xenophobia toward immigrants. The Southern Poverty Law Center found that between 2003 and 2007, hate crimes against Latinos increased by 48 percent. The FBI found that 11.3 percent of hate crimes occur in high schools and college campuses, and that 66 percent of victims of ethnically-motivated crimes are Latinos. Beyond these statistics are stories of innocent Mexican-American victims who are increasingly also becoming victims of xenophobia, violence, attacks on property, and even murder.

Xenophobia has become mainstream. Ask Americans what sentiments are evoked by the mere mention of Mexicans, and many will point at illegal immigrants "stealing American jobs." In fact, in our home of New York City, Mexican immigrants are routinely beaten because of their race. While many Americans try to rationalize their xenophobia using economic justifications, this is nothing more than a patently false rationalization threatening immigrants all over the US.

In fact, economic activity produced by illegal immigrant spending employs about 5 percent of the total US workforce, which accounts for 17 million jobs. Research conducted by USA Today indicates that they produce \$428 billion of economic activity, while the Public Policy Institute explicates that illegal immigration actually induces a 4 percent real wage increase for the average native worker due to the influx of spending illegal immigrants promote. According to research done by the Cato Institute, 74 percent of all economists say that illegal immigration has a "very positive impact on the economy."

RT TV captured the tone of

the American immigration debate: "Land of the brave, home of the free, and society of the intolerant; for decades the US has been praised for being as a country of diversity...but the tides are shifting in a different direction... Bleeding through her stars and stripes, [is] an ugliness incapable of masking... protests against the construction of new mosques, illegal immigration, and economic reform point to a fear and frustration, an emotional climate experts say, where many Americans are swapping patriotism for nationalism."

As the immigration debate takes center stage, it's important to remember that we are a nation rooted in immigration. Each and every one of us has benefited from America's open-door policies, which have allowed our families to live freely and prosper. This increased hatred for others is promulgated by the media and politicians.

### As immigration continues to rise in the United States we've seen a disturbing backlash of increased xenophobia toward immigrants.

To combat this, the American people must open their minds to the outside. We must move away from a policy of distrust and resentment toward foreigners.

Throughout our history, America has closed its doors to immigrants and we've regretted it every time. When FDR closed the doors to immigrants fleeing Nazi Germany, thousands died. When the Chinese Exclusion Act passed, thousands of Chinese were banned from immigrating to the US, enraging the international community and barring eligible individuals from the equal opportunity of the US. Shutting our doors has never had a positive effect on us or the world. By leaving our doors wide open to immigration, on the other hand, we allow talented, hardworking immigrants to make better lives for themselves, while contributing to the growth of our economy in the process.

## Geography is More than a Map

By JUSTIN WELTZ

1. The production of major crops is dependent on summer monsoon rains in:

- a. Burma and Thailand
- b. Northwestern Europe
- c. The Nile Valley
- d. Southeast Australia

2. Which pair of nations below is correctly associated by common religion?

- a. Peru and Italy
- b. Argentina and Britain
- c. Colombia and India
- d. Egypt and South Africa

3. Which pair of nations below has the highest population density?

- a. United States and Argentina
- b. Britain and Japan
- c. Australia and Brazil
- d. South Africa and Canada

4. Citrus fruits and commercial vegetables are produced in vast quantities on irrigated land in:

- a. Central Oklahoma
- b. Southern California
- c. Southern Louisiana
- d. Eastern California

5. Which pair of nations share a border with the Soviet Union?

- a. China and Vietnam
- b. Iran and Afghanistan
- c. West Germany and France
- d. Canada and the United States

-National Geography Olympiad

If you were not able to answer the questions above without referencing Google or the map in your planner, you are not alone. Neglect of geography is a rising problem in many schools around the country, including Stuyvesant.

In our modern age, people express contempt towards geography. With modern technology such as the GPS, people seem to believe that this subject is obsolete. This sentiment has its roots in the boring geography classes our parents remember, full of endless quizzes on capitals and useless memorization exercises. The reason we dislike geography is not because it's boring, but because classes have traditionally focused on rote memorization as opposed to practical applications. You might not be interested in making maps or giving tours, but as Norman Berdichevsky, author of "The Neglect of Geography and Its Perils," says, "History is more than a calendar and geography is more than a map."

Berdichevsky provides valuable insight into the importance of geography as a science. The multiple layers of geography include topics ranging from the origin of civilization to immigration problems, border disputes, and the effects these topics have on our past, present, and future. One of the first things students learn when they begin studying world history is that Mesopotamia developed between two powerful rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.



Philip Shin / The Spectator

They also learn that these rivers were crucial to the success of the first civilization because they nourished the top soil and allowed for successful harvests. If the students are lucky, the geography of this area will be compared to the Nile, and if they are still more fortunate they might also learn of the importance of the Yangtze or the Indus rivers to the cultures that were cultivated in their basins. The legacies, however, of great rivers like the Volga, the Danube, the Rhine, or even the upper Nile have been lost on Stuyvesant students as well as many children in the United States. One of my fellow Opinions writers recently related to me that upon telling someone that she was from Bosnia, that person said in disbelief, "You're from Africa?" We're in deep trouble.

With geographical knowledge, we can do more than just point to Bosnia on a map. We can use this knowledge to make cross-cultural comparisons, understand the importance of geo-political resources, and familiarize ourselves with the lay of the land in order to work in a host of different professional environments. For instance, a basic understanding of geography is vital to a large amount of professions. Jobs that utilize these facets of geographical knowledge include diplomats, real estate developers, transportation planners, data gatherers, economists, marketers, and geopolitical analysts. Furthermore, according to the Occupation Outlook Handbook, there is a projected expansion

of the geographer job market by 35% in the period between 2010 and 2020. Accordingly, there is an abundance of useful and professional applications of geographical knowledge in today's job market. Instead of giving students the geographical background they need to succeed, we're leaving them geographically illiterate upon admission to college.

High school teachers who believe that the geographical discipline was doomed after the creation of virtual maps and Google Earth could not have been more mistaken. Change is needed. Our school administration can start the process of change if it accepts AP Human Geography as a class and introduces electives that focus solely on geography. In these courses, teachers would cover the major land formations on each continent, the important bodies of water, different environments, natural barriers, and how these all relate to the development of civilization and societal changes. The end of the course would focus on current political borders and the effect they have on issues like population diversity, immigration, conflict, alliances, trade, culture, and countless other related subjects.

Until geography is better represented in schools, a complex, analytical, and truly contemporary science is lost to students. We are giving them facts, but not the necessary context.

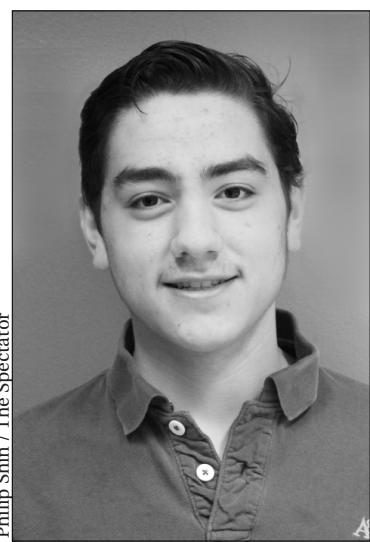
Answers: 1 (a), 2 (a), 3 (b), 4 (b) 5 (b)



Michele Lin / The Spectator

# Opinions

## STEM++



Philip Shin / The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

For (STEM = STUY; STEM < Best; STEM++) {

Great is not good enough. If you have an 88 average, you want a 90. If you win second place at a competition, you work harder next time to win first. If you get a 2100 on your SAT, you study even more to get above a 2250. Some people call it perfectionism, others call it drive. No matter what you call it, one thing is clear: people with it never settle with being just good. We don't even settle with being great. Junior Tahmid Ali said, "If there is one thing that my parents have taught me, it is that if you do something, you need to be the best." All of us, in our personal campaigns for excellence, motivate each other, creating an environment that pushes us to accomplish feats we would never have dreamed of elsewhere.

ranked eighth in the country for Science, Technology, Math and Engineering (STEM) education but striving for first. Why, as a school, are we satisfied with anything but being the best when, in our personal lives, we aren't?

There are many practical improvements to Stuyvesant's STEM program that our administration should consider:

Stuyvesant should create a special research program involving a double-period science class to replace Regents biology, chemistry, and physics requirements, allowing teachers to give students a more firm understanding of the material being studied while still offering a strong research component.

Stuyvesant labs should be overhauled completely. Our labs are universally accepted to be tedious by students and teachers alike. The purpose of labs should be to whet students' appetite for hands-on experimentation and scientific research, not to test our ability to follow directions to the T. What if students were asked to develop a protocol before the lab is executed when they get there?

Freshman should be given the opportunity to jump on the Computer Science track, thus beginning their coding journey early and giving them more time to take advantage of the unique classes Stuyvesant offers. At the higher end of the spectrum, Stuyvesant should expand the Systems Level Programming and Software Development classes, both of which are highly oversubscribed.

Freshman should be able to double-up on Geometry and Trigonometry, two classes whose topics are unrelated. This presents motivated mathematics students an opportunity to get ahead of their peers by studying both at once.

Students should be allowed to take classes during their lunch periods, something many other schools allow and is permissible under New York City regulations.

Of these, I'd like to discuss in detail the two I believe to be most important.

The proposal for a double-period honors track has faced criticism from some members of the administration. But instead of discussing how to expand our science program, the dialogue has revolved around how to shrink it. Rather than talking about more science research, the administration is considering the elimination of Stuyvesant's Chemistry and Physics Intel Research classes. Why? Because most Stuyvesant students don't become scientists when they graduate, let alone physicists and chemists. Others believe that there is little interest. (Though the double-period Honors Advanced Topics Research class for freshmen appears both popular and successful.) This logic is absurd.

Most Stuyvesant students don't become historians, writers, artists, musicians, draftsmen, mathematicians, or even programmers. In fact, few of

our classes actually prepare us for specific careers. Clearly, that isn't the point of high school. We go to school in order to learn how to think, problem-solve, and innovate.

More than any other part of the school, Stuyvesant's research and computer science programs do this. I joined Intel sophomore year. I spent hours

that explained why two large schools of research, which are commonly thought to contradict each other, don't actually do so. Now I work at Columbia's Lab for Rational Decision Making, studying risk behavior in adolescents and its basis in neurology.

This is what the Stuyvesant research program is about—using what you know to develop new ideas and build a research project around your interests. Research is about learning through doing. Instead of memorizing facts, students are taught to be creative and to take personal ownership of a narrow research topic. Research classes are similarly stimulating. Students are given the opportunity to work with their peers on projects that allow us to feel proud that we have created something new. If we expand Stuyvesant's research program to a double-period course over three years, we can do much to help students pursue their passions in science. Even if they don't become scientists, they will leave with a love for learning and a creative capacity fostered by a program unmatched by any other in the country.

Similarly, programming is a lesson in problem solving and puzzle completion. Class time involves learning the fundamentals: what the basics are in Java syntax, what an ArrayList is, what a class is, methods, etc. With this knowledge, we develop programs that accomplish specific tasks. Students are forced to use what they know to develop new solutions to complex problems. Expanding the computer science program by giving more students access to its teachers and classes and developing an applied CS course for subjects like biology and physics would be a logical next step.

Biology teacher and Research Coordinator Dr. Jonathan Gastel and Computer Science coordinator Michael

Zamansky have already begun moving us in the right direction, constantly spearheading improvements to the two stron-

**The objective needs to be improvement—not settling with being ranked eighth in the country for Science, Technology, Math and Engineering (STEM).**

**Stuyvesant ought to create a special research program which involves a double-period science class to replace Regents biology, chemistry, and physics requirements.**

This culture needs to spread to our administration. The objective needs to be improvement—not settling with being

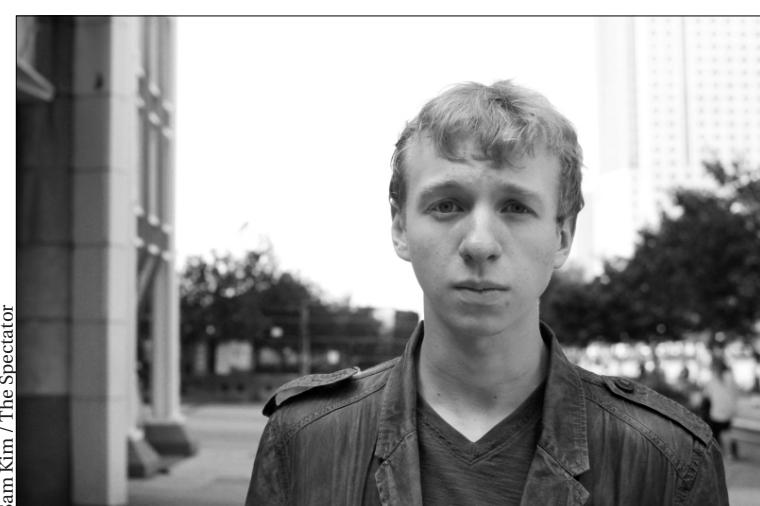
**Even if they don't become scientists, they will leave with a love for learning and a creative capacity fostered by a program unmatched by any other in the country.**

gest programs this school has to offer. It is common knowledge that they've faced an uphill battle along the way, and it is largely due to them that Stuyvesant is as strong a school as it is. It's time the rest of the administration as well as the student body join them in their quest to keep improving our STEM program.



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

# Opinions



Sam Kim / The Spectator

By DANIEL TEEHAN

Fyodor Dostoevsky once said that "the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." Unfortunately, this does not bode well for the degree of civilization in our society. There are widespread problems with nearly every facet of our justice system: the individuals investigated, the crimes for which they are arrested, the proliferation of plea bargaining, discriminatory mandatory minimum sentences, and the curtailment of civil rights for prisoners who have served their time. Of course, to discuss all of these issues in nuance is far beyond the scope of this column, so I will restrict this discussion to the single practice that at once encompasses and surpasses all other issues within the system: solitary confinement.

Shunned for decades in this country and unused by any other democracy on a large scale, solitary confinement underwent a revival in the U.S. during the '70s and '80s, when crime soared and the public was more willing to accept harsh measures to reduce it. To give you an idea of what life entails for these thousands of American citizens, we'll temporarily go inside "the hole," as the American Psychological Association (APA) phrased it in an article on the issue.

If you are in solitary, you are in complete isolation in your cell for 22 to 24 hours of the day. For

the remaining few hours, you are allowed to go "outside" alone (usually in a walled-in pen with no actual view of the outside world). You spend your eventless days in cramped cells that can be as small as a king-size bed, and which contains a toilet, a sink, all of your possessions, and, of course, a smaller than king-size bed. Starting to feel a bit claustrophobic?

You're probably wondering who ends up in these torturous conditions. Ostensibly, solitary confinement is meant to segregate prisoners for safety reasons and break up gangs, but a look at confined inmates reveals very different, often nefarious justifications. According to a suit filed by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), prisoners in New York are subject to isolation for reasons as arbitrary and petty as wasting food, littering, having an untidy cell or person, or smoking in undesignated areas. Surely these provisions are used as a method of intervention against prisoners with dangerously poor discipline and not, say, to target already vulnerable and discriminated-against groups? Unfortunately, according to Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), who chaired a hearing on solitary confinement, such groups (which include minorities, immigrants, LGBT inmates, and children) have indeed been increasingly targeted for confinement.

However, solitary confine-

## Desolation Row

ment inflicts its greatest damage on an even more vulnerable group: the mentally ill. The prevalence of the mentally ill in prisons is an ethical issue in and of itself, but the use of solitary confinement to deal with the complications that such prisoners create qualifies as nothing short of criminal negligence. The group constitutes 20 percent of the nation's incarcerated, and estimates put them somewhere between every other cell and every third cell in supermaximum security prisons. Mentally ill inmates are often given sparse access to psychiatrists and counseling sessions: one such prisoner who is supposed to see a mental health counselor monthly went nine

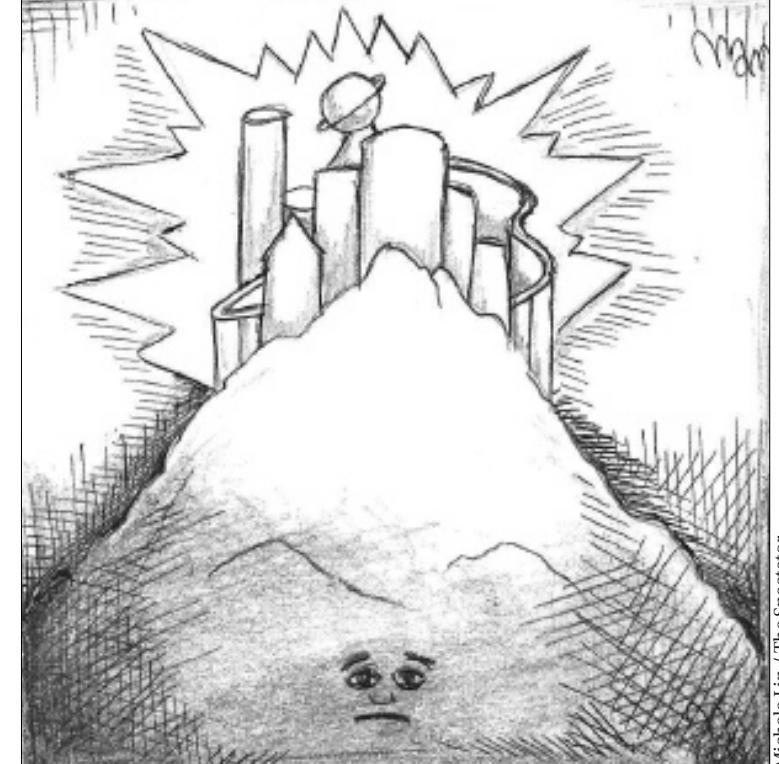
months without such a meeting. It is hardly surprising that the APA cites clinicians agreeing that when subjected to solitary, "inmates' psychiatric conditions will clinically deteriorate or not

improve." And yet we keep putting them there. Not only does solitary confinement degenerate preexisting mental conditions, it also consistently generates them in initially sane inmates. The first-hand accounts of men driven mad by this treacherous practice read as if written by Edgar Allan Poe: there's the prisoner who wraps himself in his sheets and sets them on fire; the man who cuts off his own fingers, ears, and genitalia; the inmate who lies naked in his own urine, smearing feces on his face like war paint and is later executed by the state after being declared mentally competent. In light of these chilling accounts, it is unsurprising—yet no less horrifying—that approximately 50 percent of prison suicides occur among prisoners in solitary confinement (recall that there are 80,000 prisoners in solitary out of a whopping 2.3 million in the general population). You might think that such immense human rights abuse would be the product of some grim calculation for the greater good, but you would

be wrong: it costs the state up to three times as much to keep a prisoner in solitary as it does to keep them in the general population.

Clearly, there is a deep pit below our city on a hill. Something must be done to rid our society of this cruel and unusual punishment. The efforts of Senator Durbin are laudable, and he has distinguished himself in the past by campaigning successfully to decrease disparities between mandatory minimums for crack and powder cocaine; he must emerge from these hearings with similar legislative willpower. Suits by the NYCLU and similar groups should also be keenly watched. But it's up to the citizens of this country to ensure that they are not complicit through their silence in the sins of a society that deprives some of its members—even its least sympathetic ones—of the basic rights and dignities that all human beings are entitled to. Only then will we achieve a degree of justice commensurate with the ideals of civility towards which we have so long strived.

**Prisoners in New York are subject to isolation for reasons as arbitrary and petty as wasting food, littering, having an untidy cell or person or smoking in an undesignated area.**



Michele Lin / The Spectator

## Arts and Entertainment

### Nothing But a Dream

By ANJELIKA AMOG and TIFFANI REN

Fyodor Dostoevsky once said that in the small, intimate space of room 1025, English Teacher Philip Mott's senior Shakespeare class staged a small-scale but strong production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." After a short behind-the-scenes film, the show, directed by Sydney LaStella, began.

The story consists of a complex web of relationships and lovers all centered around Theseus and Hippolyta, an Amazonian warrior. The beginning of the play, which has Theseus (Andy Tan) proclaiming his impatience to marry Hippolyta (Nicole Murphy), was lackluster. Tan and Murphy didn't add as much humor to their lines as they could have, and the relationship between Lysander, Hermia, and Demetrius was unclear.

As the play progressed, however, the energy considerably escalated with the entrance of the Mechanicals, a troupe of aspiring actors staging "Pyra-

**Much of the play's charm emanated from Alen Makhmudov, whose enchanting portrayal of Puck, a fairy jester, captured the playful and mischievous nature of his character with his energetic leaps across the small stage.**

mus and Thisbe." Particularly convincing was Win Wang's portrayal of the pompous Nick Bottom, who tries to upstage the group's leader, Peter Quince (Dipu Rahman). Wang conveyed this by constantly jumping in front of Rahman and changing his voice to convince his fellow thespians of his acting prowess. He adopted a deep rumble for the brave Pyramus, a high falsetto for the fair Thisbe, and a roar for the Lion. The rest of the Mechanicals' reactions were clear in their facial expressions—their disbelief evident from their raised brows and their snickers.

The relationship dynamics between the characters that are so central to Shakespeare's play were not effectively introduced. The affection between Hermia (Tasnja Mahmud) and Lysander (Daryl Sew) was initially obscured by Sew's stone-faced and cold acting. The relationship became much more pronounced as Sew began to use more dynamic physical gestures to convey his character's intimacy with Hermia. Teresa Huang as Helena was excellent

in her portrayal of a character who restlessly pursues her love

**The beginning of the play was lackluster.**

of a range of emotions. Her soliloquies showed that she could be indignant, with a shrill voice and an outward gaze to the audience, and also very vulnerable, with a softer, lower voice and questioning eyes and hand gestures.

Much of the play's charm emanated from Alen Makhmudov, whose enchanting portrayal of Puck, a fairy jester, captured the playful and mischievous nature of his character with his energetic leaps across the small stage. Although "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a comedy, Makhmudov's delivery of Puck's final message to the audience, a hint that the entire play may be nothing but a dream, was solemn. Makhmudov didn't fall into the trap of singsong voice—he spoke the couplets with rhythm, but also with a prose-like freedom.

Despite a rocky start and small performance, the cast and directors succeeded in putting together a strong production. For a short time, everyone in room 1025 was transported to Shakespeare's world of lovers and fairies.

Demetrius (Lirek Kulik), who loves Hermia instead. Helena's pining for a man bent on marrying someone else provides a mix of ridiculousness and the bitterness of unrequited love. While Huang's Helena was at first a source of humor because of her fruitless chase, its futility eventually evoked pity.

Huang displayed a mastery

# Pajama Day



By the Photo Department

# Arts and Entertainment

## Music

### More Than Just Another Folk-Indie-Rock Band

By JOYCE KOLTISKO

So what if one of them is heavily tattooed, one dropped out of medical school, and another has excessive facial hair? They still make good music. And it doesn't matter that one is a classically trained violinist and another loves punk-rock. If anything, these differences have enabled them to create the perfect fusion between the indie-folk lyrics and guitar melodies characteristic of Mumford & Sons and the upbeat and prominent percussion found in punk rock bands such as The Ramones. In their newest album "Shallow Bed," Dry the River proves to be more than just another "English-folk-indie-rock" band. Agonizing over each note, they have successfully created their own niche within the indie-music genre.

We often listen to music and expect what is to come. In our heads, we predict the note that naturally follows the one we just heard. This can be entertaining background music—perfect for daydreaming—but it doesn't offer much of a surprise. Some ballads found in "Shallow Bed," such as "Bible Belt," are just this. Yet others are startling and jump around just when you thought you'd gotten used to the rhythm. It is these quick shifts in melody, coupled with unusual or even unnatural rhythms, that make each song unique. As a result, it's easy to listen to the album from beginning to end without getting bored or feeling like the music has blended together meaninglessly.

"History Book," one of Dry the River's quieter tunes, is at first uncomfortable to listen to because of its bizarre rhythm, which randomly speeds up and then inexplicably slows down. As the song continues, however, it is our unfamiliarity with such a rhythm that draws us in and makes us want to hear more, unsure of what comes next. As the whispering vocals build up and the words are sung stronger and louder, we quickly learn that this song tells the story of a boy and girl recognizing the intensity and love involved in their relationship. Acknowledging this love is "as heavy as a history book can be," both are



willing to carry whatever burdens come with it. Although sweet in its meaning, few would recognize "History Book" to be a love song.

"Animal Skins" features a more powerful percussion than "History Book," and its vocals are best described as a slower and more subdued version of any Florence and the Machine song. The electric guitar brings the song to life as the singers howl, "With animal skins around us, we go home. Home we go." When first listening to the song, most of us overlook the actual lyrics and simply enjoy the lilting, clear vocals, which shine through the raw voices

**So what if one of them is heavily tattooed, one dropped out of medical school, and another has excessive facial hair?**

and echoes in the background.

If anyone were to encapsulate all of Dry the River in four minutes and twelve seconds, it would be this song. We quietly enter "New Ceremony" with what appears to be a light guitar lullaby, only to be introduced to a startlingly loud electrified folk guitar. Soon the sound of drums and violins floods our ears; although the two instruments are seemingly incompatible, they intertwine to form a beautiful melody that eases the transition between different tempos and dynamics. This rapid buildup and overlaying of instruments and voices communicates a sense of urgency within the song. "New Ceremony" warns of the dangers to come in a relationship if we constantly doubt and fear the future. When the drums strengthen, and when the chorus enters and we hear, "Don't wrestle with the night, don't think about the future now," and when each melody reenters in an overlaying pattern that complements the clear vocals, the end result can only be described as a release of all emotions.

The most refreshing part of "Shallow Bed" is Dry the River's ability to showcase all aspects of folk and rock music through various tempos and distinct melodies while still staying true to their own roots and musical style. They manage to create their own sound through a careful balance of clear vocals, poetic and meaningful lyrics, indie-folk guitar tunes, smooth violin melodies, and a prominent percussion. It is these things that will make them the next great band with no other labels categorizing their music necessary.

## Museum

### Comicality, Humor, and Distortion for the Keen Eyed Observer

By OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

A warm smile, familiarity in Alina's eyes, alluring like Marilyn Monroe, a high pitched tune, eerie squealing, a three-headed sculpture, and the sound of bombs going off. The entrance to Alina Szapocznikow's exhibit at the MoMA is not for the faint of heart. Once you pass its double door entrance, it is filled with hilarious and exceptional works.

Szapocznikow, born a Polish Jew, grew up in tragic circumstances amidst rising political tensions. After surviving the concentration camps during WWII, she began to study Classical sculpture but quickly abandoned it and focused on creating intriguing surrealist works.

One of the first sculptures in the exhibition is "Headless Torso." Realistic and bold, it bluntly depicts the female torso with large, plump breasts. The skin of the torso is of a grim tone, and the sculpture is embodied in the black tar look-a-like that Szapocznikow used: polyester resin and polyurethane foam. Standing out against the otherwise gray sculpture, the nipples of the torso are highlighted in bright pink. The form of the shoulders and collarbone are highly realistic, giving the sculpture a sensual tone. The figure makes the viewer almost want to break the "no touch" museum policy and run their fingers against the smooth texture.

However, realism is not a common trend in this gallery. Another sculpture, "Goldfinger," is made out of industrial elements and depicts upside-down truncated thighs that are covered in gold paint. The sculpture is a reference to a James Bond movie in which a woman is murdered by being covered from head to toe in gold paint. To represent the female genitalia, Szapocznikow uses nothing less than an automobile shock absorber, letting her sardonic sense of humor show through the unexpected but commendable use of such a hard and tenacious material to represent genitalia.

Throughout her career, Szapocznikow experimented with many types of unconventional materials. She used polychrome wood with polyester resin, creating sculptures and images that slightly protrude from the wood they are based on, eschewing the contemporary norm of exceedingly projected sculpture. In a short video shown at the gallery, she is shown explaining that the experience at the concentration camps did not take away from her ability to produce art. In fact, the sculptor's use of materials was inspired by what she saw in war museums.

A popular trend exhibited in Szapocznikow's sculptures is the restrictions placed on a woman. "Stèle," one of Szapocznikow's most famous sculptures, shows a large, black circular mass covering a woman's body, rendering only the knees



The Museum of Modern Art featured over 100 sensual and transformative works of art in [Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone](#).

and mouth of the woman visible. Deeper into the gallery, there is a small work that packs a lot of punch: a tiny figurine of a woman leaning against a significantly larger male's privates. Though it seems as if Szapocznikow is depicting the powerlessness of women in her society, the opposite is the case. Although there seems to be a clear message of female subjugation throughout the works, ironically, the sculptor had an opposite view of women in Polish society. In the gallery's accompanying short film, Szapocznikow explains that she believes Poland was a relatively open and equal society for women during her lifetime. According to her, Poland was the best place for a woman at the time because of the many freedoms and liberties women had.

Overall, the gallery completely exposes Szapocznikow's greatest works. It is not hard to see the detail and attention that the artist paid to the movement of her pieces. Even the silver prints, ink on paper drawings, and watercolors that cover the walls of her gallery have a fluid motion to them. There is striking beauty and honesty in most of Alina's work, including those that at first seem grotesque and vulgar. Though the exhibit is shown at one of New York City's most popular museums, it is seemingly atypical. The exhibition's setup is unconventional but effective. Just when the gallery seems to be coming to an end, the next entrance leads to a small shaded room with black walls and neon sculptures. The black walls enhance the beauty of the sculptures and highlight the neon colors.

When Alina Szapocznikow was once told: "You say nothing about yourself, but you show yourself," she replied, "Well, all artists are exhibitionists." Her paintings and sculptures are rewarding to sensitive viewers. Szapocznikow manages to show a small part of herself, whether it be her curiosity, humor, or perceptions of the world around her, through every painting and sculpture. Her art easily captures anyone's interest, and its quality is most definitely up to par.

Alina Szapocznikow's (1926-1973) exhibit "Sculpture Undone" is open for viewing at the MoMA through January 28th.

Judy Lee / The Spectator

## Theater

By NICOLE SANCHEZ

Dull lights slowly seep into the darkness. Fog suddenly envelops the area, clouding your view. Silence. A lively xylophone tune erupts from the soft percussion and shrill strings. A young man slowly steps out of the fog with a lantern clutched in his trembling hands, scouting nervously as he continues down the aisle. A haunting chorus resounds across the room, asking you, "Is the truth you built your life on a fleeting shade once here now gone to the hollow?"

"Hollow," a Be Bold! production by Brenda Bell and Michael Sgouros, is considered by stage manager Kerianne Murphy to be "the first dramatic play interpretation of 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.'" This Off-Broadway December musical tells a more sinister tale than some of the family-friendly Be Bold! company's past shows, which include "Cinderella" and "A Christmas Carol." Based on Washington Irving's book "The Legend of Sleepy Hol-

### Are You Hollow?

low," "Hollow" tells the story of the love triangle that exists between Ichabod Crane, Katrina Van Tassel, and Abraham "Broms Bones" Van Brunt. Crane is a young man who has come to Sleepy Hollow, New York to be a schoolmaster and music tutor. He enjoys the thrills of ghost stories and is even prone to believing them. Sleepy Hollow, a town full of superstitious people who have had their share of supernatural occurrences, thus suits Crane perfectly. The most famous tale is that of the Headless Horseman, a soldier who is said to have lost his head to a cannon during the Civil War.

Although the Halloween-themed story is a classic, Bell and Sgouros effectively make it their own by composing an original script out of what was once all prose. Murphy claims, however, that "the storyline is completely unaltered in this play. Be Bold! prides itself on basing its production of literature." Although their interpretation sticks closely to the plot, the Headless Horseman never actually makes

an appearance in the musical. Instead, we see shadows dart in and out. This proves to be more intriguing and effective because it forces the audience to question if there really is a ghost or if it is your imagination that influences what you see and how you behave.

The acting was better than expected and complimented the creative script surprisingly well. The actors fully conveyed their characters' fears and hopes through the smallest of gestures. From Crane's constant trembling to Van Brunt's arrogant gait, the body language made me feel as if characters were real people. Interactions between the actors felt natural, and perhaps the most powerful and convincing line of all was Crane's solitary sigh: "I don't have a heart to break."

Although the acting was brilliant and the script moving, nothing could save the music in this production. While the lyrics themselves were deep and captured the essence of the story successfully, the instruments were rudimentary and the singers

fell short of the mark. Most of the voices were flat and did not have the raw emotion necessary for the audience to truly connect. Perhaps the only exceptions were the "Soaring in the Shadows" and "Headless" numbers. The former, performed by Anna (Megan Corcoran), was a lonely, sad tune that cursed her passivity. Corcoran delivered the song with just the right amount of sadness and intensity to make tingles go up your arms.

The acting is on par with that of Broadway shows, and although the singing may flatten the effects, the overall quality is enough to keep the audience's spirits high. Unlike other performances of the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," this one successfully forces us to question our premises. Is it possible that ghosts really do exist? The musical evokes an uncertainty within us, and we are left wondering, "Does the wind whistle through your soul? An icy breeze that bores a hole? Are you hollow?"

# Arts and Entertainment

## Theater

### Talent Abound, A Pair of Star Crossed Lovers Take Their Lives

*continued from page 1*

between their families thickens and Romeo kills Juliet's cousin Tybalt. At the play's end, when both lovers are dead, their grief-stricken families reconcile.

Senior Clarissa Sorenson in particular gave a moving performance as Juliet. In her monologues, she displayed the

**The duels were intense and well-choreographed, accompanied by blood red lighting changes.**

utmost control of her character, lacing every line with Juliet's childlike sense of hope coupled with uncertainty about her future. At other moments, such as the one in which she meets Romeo and the famous balcony scene, she used small changes in facial expression to radiate

youthful charm. Each protagonist was buttressed by a strong supporting cast. Freshman Peter Samuel played a vicious Tybalt, who incessantly craves revenge against the enemy Montagues. Senior Joshua Bogatin's ruthless and tyrannical portrayal of Lord Capulet was overdone at times: instead of portraying Capulet as a controlling nobleman, who directs his family through calm, well-tempered speech, Bogatin reverted to shouting. This boisterous style was more suitable at other times; the play's funniest moment was when Lord Capulet, drunk at his own ball, boorishly greeted his guests with a loud and jovial "Gentleman! Welcome!"

Senior Howard Cheung played Friar Laurence, a member of neither clan with a wise detachment. Cheung established the necessary poise with the introduction of his character, but let his rawer emotions come through in scenes such as the one in which he chastises Romeo, portraying Friar Lawrence's rage with heavy breathing and an angry voice.

Yet with such a mighty cast, the male lead sometimes could not keep pace. As Romeo, Bloom started the play on a good note. His comically exaggerated acting fit the angst-filled Romeo of the story's beginning. However, Bloom didn't seem to grow with his character, who becomes more desperate as the play pro-

gresses. The loud and melodramatic delivery of his laments and curses about fate weren't convincing; he couldn't shed the earlier Romeo for the later, more emotionally fraught one.

If there was one element of "Romeo and Juliet" that the pro-

**Senior Clarissa Sorenson displayed the utmost control of her character, lacing every line with Juliet's childlike sense of hope coupled with uncertainty about her future.**

duction, with all of its superb crews, conveyed, it was the sense of dualism that pervades the whole play. The tech crew, led by senior Johnathan Chu, established the conflict between the Capulets and Montagues from the onset with two flags suspended from opposite sides the stage, one gold and one purple.

This was wholly consistent with the outfits provided by costumes director and senior Christine Lee, which were gold and purple for the two clans. The art crew, directed by senior Phoebe Young, provided a stunning backdrop that grounded the production in its old European setting. The directors also succeeded in creating a more serious and weighty tone as the play progressed and its inevitable tragedy drew nearer. In the second half of the play, scene changes were filled with percussion, played by senior Jake Soiffer. The sparse beating of drums, their sound recalling a funeral procession, ominously foreshadowed the carnage to come. And when it did come, it was gripping: all of the death scenes were intense, with tightly-choreographed duels and blood-red lighting changes.

However, in some aspects of the interpretation, the direction was all over the place. The vision of the production suffered from inconsistencies. Was the jazzy music featured throughout meant to bring Shakespeare's play to a modern setting, as is often done by theatre companies? If so, why did most of the costumes and art suggested an old, traditional setting? This anachronism didn't add to the play, and it only left me confused. In addition, Bloom's costume—even his hairstyle—gave us a character that might have been more suitable for the STC's Winter Musical

"Grease." Clad in black jeans, his air called to mind James Dean and other icons of the '50s. This was out of place with most of the other costumes and didn't fit the play's tone as it got darker.

Any directorial shortcomings, however, have to be forgiven because of the directors' masterful but simple manipulation of the stage. There was perhaps no better example of this

**All the crews and directors aimed to dazzle, but were also highly sensitive to the material.**

than the play's last moments. In the church tomb, Romeo and Juliet lie dead, side-by-side, their families crowded around them. After making peace, they gradually leave, staggering their exits from the dark stage to leave us with a final image: a bright light illuminating the two lovers, now presumably basking in their eternal love.

### Romeo and Juliet



# Arts and Entertainment

## The Oscar

### Best Picture Nominees

The quintessential Academy Award, Best Picture is as prestigious as it is difficult to win. This year's strong lineup of nine nominees will make it a hotly contested race.

#### *Life of Pi*

Director Ang Lee's adaptation of the popular novel "Life of Pi" is a visually stunning film about the travels of a shipwrecked boy who must survive on a raft with a group of circus animals, including a tiger named Richard Parker.

#### *Argo*

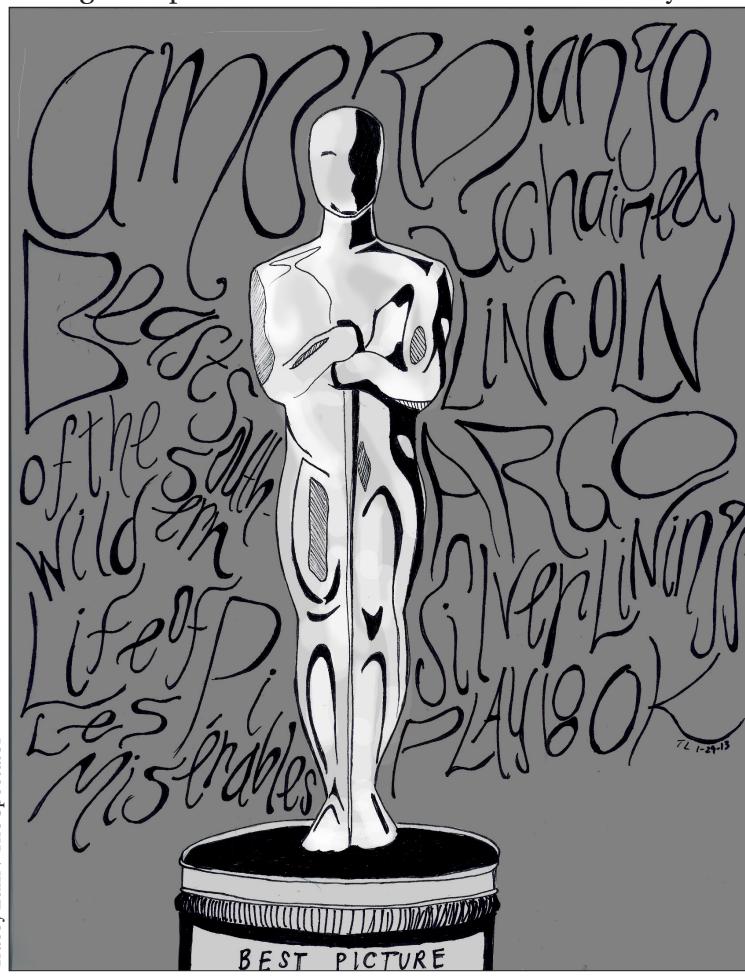
Co-produced, directed by, and starring Ben Affleck, this thriller is set during the 1979 Iran hostage crisis. The film details the CIA's daring attempt to rescue American diplomats from Tehran.

#### *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

Set in a remote bayou town in Louisiana, cut off from the world by a giant levee, this fantasy film follows a six-year-old girl named Hushpuppy who learns to make peace with nature and cope with her endangered community.

#### *Zero Dark Thirty*

This thriller, directed by Kathryn Bigelow of "The Hurt Locker" (2008), covers the top-secret CIA mission to locate Osama Bin Laden and focuses on the role of a CIA officer named Maya in this harrowing endeavor.



Tracey Lum / The Spectator

#### *Les Misérables*

A musical film adaptation of the classic play, "Les Mis" is the story of an ex-convict in 19th century France and his struggle to make a life for himself. With an eight-time Tony award-winning musical to live up to, this emotional tale was one of the most hyped films of 2012.

#### *Django Unchained*

The latest film of acclaimed action director Quentin Tarantino, this violently visual ride stars Jamie Foxx as Django, a freed slave who teams up with a bounty hunter to save his wife from a plantation.

#### *Lincoln*

Starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Steven Spielberg's critically acclaimed film "Lincoln" tells the story of our 16th President and his struggle to pass the 13th amendment outlawing slavery.

#### *Silver Linings Playbook*

Starring Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper, this romantic dramedy focuses on the relationship between two mentally unstable people with equally unstable families.

### Best Director Nominees

The Academy Award for Best Director is the highest honor that any filmmaker can receive. Closely tied to Best Picture, the two often go to the same film. Each of this year's nominees is also a potential Best Picture winner.

#### *Michael Haneke, "Amour"*

Known for his bleak style, this German director has won several awards in his 39-year career. Though recognized by the Golden Globes twice in the past, he received his first ever Oscar nomination this year.

#### *Benn Zeitlin, "Beasts of the Southern Wild"*

At just 30 years old, Zeitlin is the youngest nominee for Best Director, and "Beasts," up for four Academy Awards, is his first feature film.

#### *David O. Russell, "Silver Linings Playbook"*

Director of box office successes, including "Three Kings" (1999) and "The Fighter" (2010), "Silver Linings Playbook" is David O. Russell's second nomination for Best Director.

#### *Steven Spielberg, "Lincoln"*

Hailed as one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, Spielberg has been responsible for many hit films over the past 50 years, including "ET" (1982), "Schindler's List" (1993), and "Saving Private Ryan" (1998).

#### *Ang Lee, "Life of Pi"*

A talented Taiwanese director, Lee has directed a variety of hit films, including "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" (2000) and "Brokeback Mountain" (2005). He has won Best Director once before.

### The Safe Pick

#### By JANE ARGODALE

When director Kathryn Bigelow's newest film, "Zero Dark Thirty," was available in just five movie theaters across the country, it grossed over \$2,500,000 in the month before its wider release on Friday, January 11, 2013. It received critical acclaim early on and was nominated for four Golden Globe Awards and five Academy Awards, including Best Picture. With its critical and commercial success, "Zero Dark Thirty" should be a serious contender for Best Picture at this year's Oscars. However, part of what brought it so much success may be exactly what undermines it in the selection process: its controversial depiction of torture and use of allegedly false information given to the filmmakers by the CIA regarding the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

### The Academy Awards have a history of shying away from controversy.

scrutiny of what has been called an endorsement of torture. One Motion Picture Academy voter has already publicly said that he will refuse to vote for the film, not because of a serious deficiency in artistic merit, but

because of the way it portrays torture. The number of voters who have private reservations about selecting "Zero Dark Thirty" is likely even higher.

The Academy Awards have a history of shying away from controversy. Ang Lee's 2005 film "Brokeback Mountain," though banned from many theaters for its depiction of a sexual relationship between two men, was lauded by critics as a beautifully directed and acted look at a complicated relationship. The sexual orientation of its characters was secondary. "Brokeback Mountain" seemed destined to win Best Picture at the 2006 Oscars, yet lost to "Crash," a less critically acclaimed but also less risky film to choose. Of course, the selection of "Brokeback Mountain" would probably have met anger from many, but such a statement was necessary at a time when

the media had coined it "the gay cowboy movie," mocking its characters' struggles. The 2006 Academy Award selec-

**However, there is still nothing appropriate about publicly declaring a refusal to vote for the film over this controversy.**

tions demonstrated that in the face of enough controversy, some voters are willing to place their feelings—or at the very least, the public's feelings—above the quality of the film itself. "Zero Dark Thirty" is a much less

clear-cut example. Issues of national security and international reputation carry far more weight than bigoted commentary. However, there is still nothing appropriate about publicly declaring a refusal to vote for the film over this controversy. If its depiction of torture is distasteful or poorly done, it will no doubt have a negative impact on the film's overall artistic merit. There is a difference between not voting for a film based on how it addresses an issue and publicly attacking it, as if the film's purpose is solely political. The 2006 Oscars told the world that a character's resonance didn't matter if that character was gay, and the 2013 Oscars might tell the world that the uncomfortable reality of torture in the United States military has no place in the most American of forums: the movie theater.

# Arts and Entertainment

## Goes To...

### **Best Actor in a Leading Role**

#### **Daniel Day-Lewis, "Lincoln"**

Academy Awards may as well be old hat to Daniel Day-Lewis, who has been nominated for the category five times and won twice, for "My Left Foot" (1989) and "There Will Be Blood" (2007).

#### **Hugh Jackman, "Les Misérables"**

This is Jackman's first Academy Award nomination, but he has already won its theatre equivalent: the Tony Award for Best Actor. He showcased his Broadway talents this year as Jean Valjean in "Les Mis," which has been nominated for seven other awards as well.

#### **Denzel Washington, "Flight"**

A previous winner of this award for "Training Day" (2001), Washington is nominated this time for playing a pilot under scrutiny for a recent plane accident.

#### **Joaquin Phoenix, "The Master"**

Nominated previously in this category for "Walk the Line" (2005), Phoenix now plays a veteran who joins a cult in the middle of an existential crisis.

#### **Bradley Cooper, "Silver Linings Playbook"**

Bradley Cooper is probably best known for his role as Phil in "The Hangover" (2009), but his hard-hitting, serious role as Pat in "Silver Linings" has earned him his first Academy Award nomination.

### **Best Actress in a Leading Role**

#### **Jessica Chastain, "Zero Dark Thirty"**

With this nomination, Chastain faces a tough adversary: the media. "Zero Dark Thirty" has come under fire for its depiction of torture, and the Academy doesn't usually take risks with its choices.

#### **Emmanuelle Riva, "Amour"**

At 85, Riva, a French actress, is the oldest nominee for Best Actress. While she has previously been nominated for other awards, this is her first Academy nod.

#### **Naomi Watts, "The Impossible"**

Previously nominated for "21 Grams" (2003), Watt's performance as a mother searching for the other half of her family in an Indian tsunami has netted her yet another shot at taking home the gold statuette.

#### **Jennifer Lawrence, "Silver Linings Playbook"**

Nominated for her second Best Actress Oscar at only 22, Jennifer Lawrence exhibited enormous emotional capacity in her portrayal of the troubled Tiffany in "Silver Linings Playbook." Lawrence was previously nominated for her role as Ree in "Winter's Bone" (2010). While "Winter's Bone" focused on Ree's hunt to find her drug-dealing father to save her family's home, "Silver Linings Playbook" maintains a considerably more upbeat mood. After meeting Pat (Bradley Cooper) after his release from a mental ward, Tiffany becomes involved in a relationship with Pat founded on dancing, mental illness, and deals made through restraining orders. The film's spontaneity is primarily a product of Lawrence's ability to shift her mood as Tiffany's stability fluctuates. Her relationship with Pat is just as enrapturing of a roller-coaster ride; the two play off of each other seamlessly and with such vigor that the audience hardly has time to breathe.

Although Lawrence is best known for her work in blockbusters like "X-Men: First Class" and "The Hunger Games," she began her career in the TV sitcom "The Bill Engvall Show" and only later went on to act in numerous independent films. Lawrence admits to being more comfortable in such indie projects, rather than high-grossing films like "The Hunger Games."

On Sunday, January 13, 2013, Lawrence won her first Golden Globe for her role as Tiffany; as this particular awards show is often considered a predictor of the Oscars, Lawrence may have a fighting chance against other heavyweight nominees, such as Jessica Chastain and Naomi Watts.



Michele Lin / The Spectator



Laura Eng / The Spectator

#### **Quvenzhané Wallis, "Beasts of the Southern Wild"**

Quvenzhané Wallis, known to her friends and family as "Nazie," is the youngest actress ever to be nominated for the Best Actress Oscar, the third youngest to be nominated for any Oscar, and the tenth black actress nominated for the Best Actress Oscar. When she tried out for her debut role—which would turn out to be her breakout role—she was only five. However, the script had placed a minimum age of six for her character, Hushpuppy, and Wallis was forced to lie about her age for the audition. Upon seeing her, director Benh Zeitlin quickly casted her and reworked the script to give the dynamite girl a role more suited to her fiery personality.

Wallis has won a number of prestigious awards for her role as Hushpuppy, including the Austin Film Critics Association Breakthrough Artist Award, the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Young Performer, and the Santa Barbara International Film Festival's Virtuoso Award. Many others are still pending, including the golden Academy statuette.

Wallis is set to star in two films in the upcoming year: "Boneshaker," a short film by Frances Bodomo, and "Twelve Years a Slave," a film directed by Steve McQueen and set in the 1800s, starring heavyweights like Brad Pitt, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Michael Fassbender. Whether or not she wins an Oscar this year, "Beasts of the Southern Wild" is not the last time the public will see the young Wallis on screen or on the red carpet.

# Arts and Entertainment

## Film

### Django Unchained: Tarantino's Antebellum South

By TARA CICIC

One would think that slavery is an issue that artists must handle with care, sensitivity, and subtlety so that it might not offend. But in his latest film, "Django Unchained," Quentin Tarantino turns this notion on its head. Tarantino frames the topic as an ode to the Spaghetti Western, a genre that is quite at odds with the heavy subject matter. Spaghetti Westerns became known for their depictions of extreme sadistic violence and dramatic staging and music and were consequently considered crude and low brow.

The plot of the film is much like that of "Inglourious Basterds," Tarantino's previous film about a fictional group of militant Americans in Nazi Germany, in that it recreates history. This time, however, Tarantino turns his lens to the antebellum South. The title character Django (Jamie Foxx) is on a vengeful quest against the institution of slavery to save his wife, Broomhilda (Kerry Washington). His journey begins when he is taken under the wing of Dr. Scultz (Christopher Waltz), a bounty hunter who has his eyes on the Brittle brothers, a trio of cruel overseers who tormented Django

and his wife. Their first mission is to kill the brothers. Their second is to save Broomhilda from Calvin Candy (Leonardo DiCaprio), a powerful and evil slave owner. There are few tales of revenge against slave owners by former slaves and Django's bloody and impassioned siege is the reaction that many wish had taken place. Django is, in a sense, the rebellious and triumphant former slave that is conspicuously absent from history. In Tarantino's world, successful and massive rebellion is possible, yet Django's battle is only symbolically against the entire institution of slavery. To Django himself, it is an entirely personal journey, the goal of which is to be reunited with his wife. But by the end of the film, as a glimmering plantation burns, Tarantino's message is clear. Django represents thousands of slaves, and his tale is theirs too. Tellingly, Django was a popular name for the most revenge driven of Spaghetti Western's characters.

If Django is a representation of the tormented soul of the slave, then slave owner Calvin Candy represents the economically vibrant but decadent world of the plantation South. The chemistry between DiCaprio and Foxx is electric, but it is never fully exploited. It is Dr.

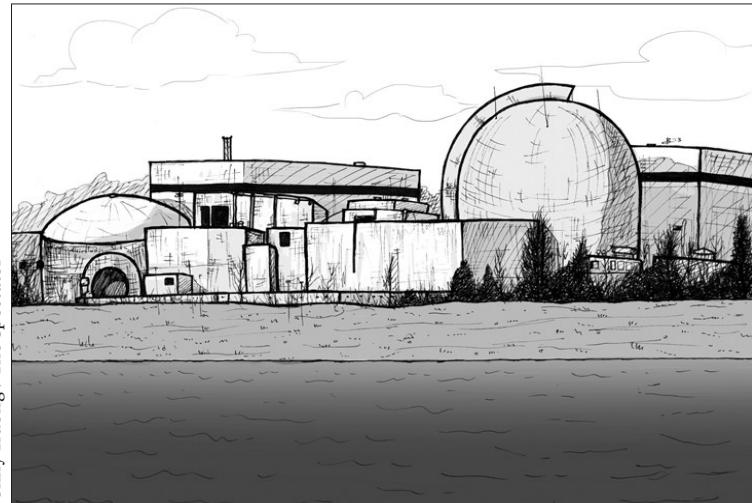
Schultz who eventually shoots Candy out of disgust. This lack of a confrontation is perhaps symbolic of the relatively anti-climactic end of slavery.

The film is stylistically stunning and incredibly violent. Heads are blown off, men are torn apart by dogs, and the viewer is introduced to some of the more violent punishments reserved for slaves. It would be unfair to sugarcoat the brutality of slavery and the scenes in which Django violently butchers those who have wronged him, but the character development and the more intellectual discussions that such a film owes to its material are sidelined by the violence and gore. A huge part of watching Tarantino's films has always been to get your blood rushing rather than your mind working, but perhaps Tarantino should have gone that extra mile in "Django Unchained." Though Django technically journeys from an enslaved man to a free mastermind, he often seems to be a tool that Tarantino employs to demonstrate his definition of cool. There is a startling lack of depth in most of the characters: although the entire cast gave excellent performances, only Waltz was able to lend his character true humanity. Everybody else is, essentially, a caricature.

## Music

### Music You Probably Wouldn't Enjoy Listening To

"Seabrook Power Plant" by Seabrook Power Plant



Bonny Truong / The Spectator

By JAMES KOGAN

Ubiquitous in every teenager's pursuit for the perfect music is stumbling upon melodies that do nothing more than induce headaches. When you're dealing with siblings or a future roommate, such tracks may provide you some respite from even more vexing sounds. For that purpose, I present to you Seabrook Power Plant, a group I personally find solace in but that many others understandably shrug away.

This is the group whose creations the Village Voice called "...a manic [expletive deleted] of merciless banjo torture." Brandon Seabrook, the group's banjo player and occasional guitarist, does to the banjo what sadistic Norwegians have done to metal—they have filled it with fast notes and dissonant melo-

dies, consequently scaring away many prospective listeners. However, the aforementioned Seabrook also draws into jazz, as much as he does into stoner metal and Middle Eastern music. His brother, Jared Seabrook, makes no folly of beating the living [expletive deleted] out of the drums. Tom Blancarte is equally cruel to his bass, rounding out the ferocity of his fellow band members.

The group's name is a play on the brothers' family title and, rather fittingly, the New Hampshire nuclear plant of the same name. Their song "Ho Chi Minh Trail" can easily be inserted into an action flick's anticipated chase scene, in which listeners are skiing away from assailants on some large Tibetan mountain. Despite its Eastern motif, this tune does not fail to bom-

bard you with long passages of blistering and redundant banjo plucking.

On the other extreme rests "Waltz of the Nuke Workers," which is as close as this group will ever get to a ballad. While it is pretty in some parts, it is equally off-putting and distress-provoking in many others. Meanwhile, reminiscent of early Black Sabbath, "I Don't Feel So Good" is the senseless churning of one's innards after a bad meal, complete with slow, menacing drumming and heavy droning guitar.

The band's seemingly unpleasant music only intensifies from there on, but there is still public appreciation for their postmodern improvisational technique. Aside from its extensive touring, which includes making stops at Williamsburg's DIY venues, the band also recently played a closing set at the New York Winter Jazzfest on Friday, January 11, 2013. While the band has yet to develop a full web presence, critical acclaim from The New York Times and other such publications have followed Seabrook Power Plant since its debut.

If you can find room in your heart for the ungodly marriage of "extreme wing of avant-garde jazz and the twitchier strains of hardcore punk" (New York Times, "Power Banjo, Extreme Jazz and a Bit of Twitchy Punk"), Seabrook Power Plant may be the band for you.

## Food

### Rice Pudding: The Next Big Thing in NYC



Illuminated signs hang from ceiling of Rice to Riches, located at 37 Spring Street.

By ANGELA SUN

Nestled between the burgeoning art galleries and chic boutiques of NoLita is a rice-shaped glass entryway that leads into an atypical dessert sanctuary. Rice to Riches, a respite from the all-too-popular frozen yogurt shops and cupcake carts lining the streets of Manhattan, specializes in selling rice pudding and rice pudding only. Unlike the rice puddings often found in diners or prepackaged at supermarkets that lack in taste, texture, and even rice, Rice to Riches uses firm sushi rice as well as quality flavorings and ingredients. Located on 37 Spring Street, Rice to Riches offers its customers 21 gluten-free flavors of this delectable dessert, with catchy names like Fluent in French Toast, Almond Shmalmond, and The Edge of Rum Raisin.

As customers pass by the busy front counter, they may sample different flavors before they commit to buying just one. The rice pudding is offered in four sizes: Solo (\$7), Epic (\$8.75), Sumo (\$25), and Moby (\$40), with Solo being one serving size and Moby being ten. The pudding is scooped and packaged into colorful, saucer-shaped reusable containers with flat spoons that fit conveniently into the lid. However, don't let the seemingly small sizes of the containers deceive you; even the Solo size is enough to appease two hungry people.

Seating is limited, with just one booth in the back accompanied by three small round tables and another surfboard-shaped counter in the front. Nevertheless, Rice to Riches is always packed with newcomers and regulars alike. The ambience of the shop is rather garish with bright lights lining the rice pudding bar and three LED screens hovering above customers with pictures of people joyfully eating their rice pudding. Illuminated signs line the inside and outside of the shop with phrases like "Eat All You Want... You're Already Fat," "Sleep 'til you're hungry. Eat 'til you're sleepy," and "If Loving Rice Pudding is Wrong, I Don't Want to Be Right."

A favorite flavor among many is the Man-Made Mascarpone, a milky rice pudding paired perfectly with tart cherries. Its texture lies somewhere between butter and cream

cheese with the soft rice grains adding just enough consistency.

Coast to Coast Cheesecake is a creamy mixture yielding both the slight sourness of cream cheese and the sweetness of an actual cheesecake, allowing customers to enjoy two classic desserts in one.

Take Me to Tiramisu, which replicates the popular Italian dessert of the same name, is an airymocha-flavored concoction layered on an array of espresso-kissed lady fingers in the form of a silky rice pudding. On the first spoonful, the taste of tiramisu delightfully explodes in the mouth, with the richness of the rice pudding smoothly following it seconds later.

For the more adventurous, Sex, Drugs, and Rocky Road is a surprisingly delectable clash of contrasting textures, consist-

**Man-Made  
Mascarpone lies  
somewhere  
between butter  
and cream cheese  
with the soft rice  
grains adding just  
enough  
consistency.**

ing of a creamy chocolate rice pudding and crunchy crushed peanuts. The tantalizing flavor of the chocolate transports you to a gourmet chocolate shop in Belgium without allowing you to forget the other, equally enchanting components of the rice pudding.

Rice to Riches's scrumptious treats will quickly dissolve former perceptions that rice pudding is bland and gloopy; it will force you to live by the philosophy of "If Loving Rice Pudding is Wrong, I Don't Want to Be Right." With more places like Rice to Riches, rice pudding may even take fro-yo's place as New York City's newest fad.

Ivana Su / The Spectator

# Humor

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

## Principal Jie Zhang Campaigns for Prom Queen

By MARIUM SARDER

Following Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang's arrival at Stuyvesant High School, she secretly began her campaign for Prom Queen. Students claim to have witnessed Principal Zhang bribing students with "treats" in exchange for their vote. "[Princi-

pal Zhang] came to visit the cast and crew of Romeo and Juliet backstage after our show to congratulate us, but I saw through her façade," senior Allison Geismar said. "She gave all of us brownies, but after she handed me an especially fragrant one she whispered, 'There is more where this came from. Remember: Zhang

for Prom Queen 2013."

The race for Prom Queen is a tight one. One candidate, Clarissa Bailey, is outraged with Zhang's tactics. "She tore down all my posters and told my teachers to fail me." At least it is safe to say: Zhang is one ambitious principal.

*continued on page 25*

## President Inaugurated into Second Term

By TIMMY LEVIN  
and JEREMY KARSON

Last week, the President was inaugurated into his second term in office. It was a difficult first term for the President, and even his supporters criticized him for falling short on his promises for nearly every issue. However, the people have spoken and decided to award him another stint in office, much to the chagrin of the Republican and Libertarian parties. Our "Dear Leader," as he sometimes is called, promises to implement several radical policies in the coming months to ensure a smooth and enjoyable second semester.

SU President Adam Lieber plans to begin his term with the "First Hundred Lays," in which He will perform sexual intercourse at least one hundred times throughout the term. This averages out to 1.11 bags per day (bpd). "As president, I feel it is important to maintain a certain intimacy with the student population. I'll establish emotional as well as physical

connection the only way I know how," Lieber said.

The President will also start an initiative to improve the health of the student population. He plans to implement the Affordable Care Act. Through this landmark legislation, the student government will work with providers to make sure that all students have easy and affordable access to Ritalin, 5 Hour Energy, and the finest free-based crack-cocaine.

As part of the same program, the President has announced the "Intoxication Proclamation," inspired by his idols, Abraham Lincoln and Charlie Sheen. The decree states that all second semester seniors must be inebriated during school hours at minimum two days per week. "I don't need no dang proclamation to tell me how many times I can drink during school," senior Andrew Reilly said. To further this program, Lieber plans on implementing school-wide weekly holidays, including but not limited to 'Twisted Tuesdays,' 'Wacky Wednesdays,' and 'Thirsty Thurs-

days.'

The President pledges to continue his War on Terror, not resting until the notorious Stuyvesant Theater Community is permanently shut down. "Those ragamuffins have been running amok in our school for far too long," SU vice president and junior Tahia Islam said. "We will oust them from power as soon as Seal Team Six responds to my Google Plus request."

Of course, the racial barriers overcome by Lieber's campaign will continue to garner media attention during the second term. "I never thought I'd see the day that a non-Asian would be elected for two terms in the prestigious Stuyvesant SU," NBC News Political Correspondent Chuck Todd said. "It's a true underdog story."

"I can't wait for my second term," said Lieber, a flamboyant "Second Term Senior" sticker pinned above his right breast. "If none of my other plans work out, at the least I'm excited for the new rate of bpd."

## Faculty Introduces Practical Health Final Exam

By SHANE LORENZEN  
with additional reporting by  
JEREMY KARSON  
and ADAM SCHORIN

In response to subpar test scores on January's Health final, the Health and Physical Education Department will be implementing a new practical Health final examination. Unlike the old multiple-choice exam, which required students to demonstrate their knowledge about trace minerals and gonorrhea, the new examination will require students to undergo a series of real-life tests.

The multi-part exam will take place over many days, beginning in June. The diet portion of the exam will require students to bring in daily lunch receipts. If the receipt is from anywhere but Whole Foods, they fail the class. "A healthy person just does not eat at Chipotle, Terry's or any of those greasy heart attack factories," Health teacher Barbara Garber said. "Oh and for those of you interested in extra credit, your score goes up ten points for every pound of quinoa you buy from Whole Foods."

The drugs section is slightly more difficult to pass. Here students will be asked to count and list all nicknames they know for prominent drugs such as marijuana, which has street names like Ganja, Mary Jane, and the Devil's Lettuce. "This part of the test is important because kids can know that cocaine is bad for

their health, but what if they get offered 'coke' out on the street?"

**When asked why there was no practical sex examination for Stuyvesant students Fang told us that none of the Health or Physical Education teachers were experienced enough to grade it.**

If they don't know these nicknames, they could end up as heroin mules, which would not be dope," Health teacher Lisa Weinwurm said.

After the drugs test comes the diseases section, which the department heads predict will be the most physically and mentally draining portion of

the exam. "Basically, we lock individual students into a room with liquid-filled flasks all labeled 'HIV' or 'Heart Disease' for ten minutes, and if they make any attempt to ingest even one of these liquids we're going to have to give them a zero on this final," Garber said. "I didn't even pass my first time around, so trust me, it's a stumper."

Finally comes the practical sexual examination. Every student will get a partner and the pair will be required to mate and propagate as quickly as possible. "We used to make the pupils carry around plastic babies, but knowing how to take proper care of them is irrelevant if you can't produce them," Health teacher Zhi Yuan Fang said. "Full credit for a healthy baby; half credit for stillbirths; double for twins."

The student reaction to this test can best be described as divisive, ranging from mild annoyance to complete indifference. "Well, I was hoping I could just wing the final, but this new one sounds pretty rough, so I am going to really have to hit the books," junior Jiten Patel said. "Maybe some binge eating will make me feel better."

On the other end of the spectrum, junior Megan Wilson isn't stressing the exam at all. "I hear that whoever comes last gets extra credit," Wilson said. "I will be the last to arrive to the exam center, and I will come last as well."

## Student Receives Oscar Bid For Documentary

By MARIUM SARDER

Junior and video production student Junpei Taguchi published his documentary "Lost in Translation" on YouTube in early January, receiving large amounts of praise from viewers. On January 10, Taguchi's documentary was nominated for Best Multilingual Documentary Feature in the Oscars. The documentary "Lost in Translation" features the lives of Stuyvesant students and captures their bitter struggle to understand cryptic physics lessons. "The film captures the confusion

you see on faces of students and encapsulates the lack of understanding we see every day," Taguchi said.

When asked why the film was in multiple languages, Taguchi answered, "None of the lessons were taught in English."

The Physics department is honored to be in such a prestigious film. When asked how he felt about the documentary, Physics teacher Dr. Eugene Majewski said, "Ah, yes! Very good. Very good!"

*continued on page 25*

## Nerd Colony Discovered on the Sixth Floor

By DENNIS NENOV  
with additional reporting by  
JEREMY KARSON  
and ROBERT MELAMED

A giant nerd colony was discovered on the sixth floor on Friday, January 18th by members of Stuyvesant's elite security force. Officer Tyrone Smith, sensing the presence of foreign beings on Stuyvesant's sixth floor, called immediately for reinforcements. A vast security team trained in ID confiscation warfare prepared to raid the compound where the wicked thugs were housed: the Boaz Weinstein library.

"We broke open the door of the compound and saw herds of creatures heavily armed with TI-84's," School Safety Agent Leader Arina Garcia said. "We used every tactic we learned from our strenuous one-week School Safety Agent course and successfully voided all of their lunches."

However, this seems to have had no effect upon the creatures, who never went outside for lunch anyway.

The creatures were later identified by Biology teacher and Research Coordinator Dr. Jonathan Gastel as members of species Stuyvesantas nerdas. These "nerds," as they are colloquially called, have long been present in the Stuyvesant student body. However, a centralized colony has now appeared in a new room on the sixth floor. The nerds congregate here daily to pay homage to their Commander, Boaz Weinstein himself.

The nerds all participate in mysterious cultural customs, such as reading for pleasure and doing "optional homework." They take strange courses, such as science electives and Advanced Placement math classes.

Some students are fearful of the nerds, and try to interact with them as little as possible. "I went to the library because I needed to print something, and I encountered all these strange animals infesting the entire room," freshman Jensen Foerster said. "It felt like I was at a Star Trek convention."

Some teachers, however, chose to interact with the nerd colony more directly. "I saw all these nerds, and then I noticed

I had a box of Wonka Nerds in my pocket," Computer Science teacher Rick Platek said. "I thought to myself, how funny would it be to feed Nerds to the nerds. And I did, and it was awe-

**"This is a very strange species of nerds, a type I haven't seen since graduate school."**

— Dr. Jonathan Gastel, Biology teacher and research coordinator

some."

The Stuyvesant librarians have been serving as the human ambassadors to the nerds. "We make sure they return their textbooks on time and don't get too excited when discussing mathematical equations or the laws of physics," librarian Christopher Bowlin said.

It is widely believed that students who come into contact with these nerds are slowly turning into nerds themselves. "There's absolutely something infectious about the nerds," senior and mega-nerd Wilson Stamm said. "When I first got to Stuy as a freshman, I was a cool cat. Now, I can name the first 100 digits of pi, and my favorite film genre is historical fiction."

In fact, nerdiness is at risk of becoming a true epidemic at Stuyvesant. "You may think you're not a nerd because you wear sunglasses and play basketball on Chambers Street after school," Assistant Principal of Pupil Services Eleanor Archie said. "But you are so, so wrong."

# Sports

## Dancing Along to Catchy Songs

*continued from page 24*

spectful—it's really important. You can't be in my class unless you can respect one another," Choy said. "Even if they feel like they have two left feet and say, 'I can't do this,' no one is laughing at them. Your job is to bring out the best in your partner."

The first thing the students work on is posture and dance holds. Normally, the class learns merengue, tango, rumba, waltz, swing, and foxtrot, in that order. This term, Choy decided to teach the waltz first because some students are self-conscious about moving their hips in the merengue. However, she is thinking of switching back to the normal progression because the merengue is very lively and gets everyone laughing right off the bat.

Students are graded on a variety of factors. 60 percent of the grade is based upon the physical education rubric, which includes participation, effort, preparedness, cooperation, attendance, and punctuality. The remaining 40 percent is based on skills and tests. The students are observed and scored at the end of ev-

ery marking period. They can often be seen practicing during free periods or after school in the hallways. "I ask them to and I hope they do," Choy said. "Just like sports, you're not going to get better unless you practice." There is also a cumulative final test on all the dances, with a grade based on performances for each dance.

Some of Stuyvesant's student-athletes currently taking this class understand its difficulty. "It's just the same thing: practice, and to have a good partner. You guys have to work well, because sometimes you dance with someone and you both know the steps but then you guys don't work well and it doesn't look good," Wu, a member of the girls' lacrosse team, said.

"Sometimes there are more guys than girls. A couple of my guy friends actually just dance together. Normally, it's as balanced as Ms. Choy can make it. So there's not really a problem. If you want to make sure you dance with the opposite gender, you've got to make sure you ask them, and not wait for someone to come to you," Kwok said. "If you think it's awkward, then it becomes

awkward. Relatively, it's not that awkward because it's just something that you do and it's fun."

Overall, most seniors enjoy taking this class. "I already signed up for Ballroom again for the second term, so I hope to learn more. I think it's very useful in the future for social gatherings," Jin said.

"I think the most interesting thing about ballroom is how catchy the songs are, which I think is ridiculous. I've had to ask Ms. Choy many times what song she was playing because it got stuck in my head so much," Kwok said. "Finding out the songs and then randomly dancing around the house, that's a fun part. Outside of the ballroom class, it can add to your daily experience."

"When you ask me have I gotten girls with the skills I've learned in ballroom, the answer is definitely yes," senior Howard Chen said. "I was at a wedding in the beginning of January and there was this girl who was really cute and I said, 'Can I have this dance?' and she said 'Sure.' Then I used all of my ballroom skills to lead her."

## Fuhgettaboutit, Brooklyn's Back

*continued from page 24*

upcoming move, the main focus is not that a hockey team is going to Brooklyn, but that Brooklyn is receiving a hockey team. Since the Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in 1957 to widespread disappointment and resentment, the borough has not had a major professional sports team. Now, all of a sudden, after a 55-year hiatus, it has two.

The Nets and the Islanders represent a new chapter in Brooklyn's athletic history, which includes being the breeding ground for legends of all sports, ranging from Vince Lombardi to Michael Jordan, from Joe Torre to Mike Tyson. It also boasts the distinction of being where Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play in the major leagues, made his name.

The Nets have started the process of rejuvenating a borough that has long been defined by its own grittiness and the stereotypes of snobbish Manhattanites. The Islanders' recent announcement is continuing Brooklyn's evolution,

during which it has already emerged as a hipper, more appealing place. Owner Charles Wang has wanted to rebuild the current Coliseum for many years, but voters in Nassau County have not agreed to pay \$400 million dollars for its construction. The Islanders' move has come at both an opportune and extremely logical time. The decrepit Coliseum will be abandoned and not looked back upon in a couple of years—plus, Brooklyn is hot.

Not only will the Knicks, Rangers, and their fans enjoy an inter-borough rivalry in terms of one-upping each other in the regular season and maybe even the playoffs, but their owners will also be competing for both fans and revenue in the respective leagues and in the New York area. The cliché remarks about Brooklyn's brownstones and coffee shops may not cease, but now they will be diluted with chatter about the upcoming Islanders matchup, or maybe even the next Nets home playoff game.

### ADVERTISEMENTS

#### Bradshaw College Consulting

Gerald M. Bradshaw L '76  
International College Admissions Consultant  
Post-Tribune Educated Advice Columnist  
PSAT/SAT/ACT Tutor  
Leadership Program



624 West Brookside Dr.  
Crown Point, IN 46307

Direct (219) 663-3041  
Toll Free (866) 687-8129

[www.BradshawCollegeConsulting.com](http://www.BradshawCollegeConsulting.com)  
Email: [gerald\\_bradshaw@post.harvard.edu](mailto:gerald_bradshaw@post.harvard.edu)

#### Success Starts with Ivy Bound Ivy Bound Test Prep

*Enhancing academic Success since 2001.*

- Private Tutoring
- Online & In-Person Classes
- At YOUR home...  
At YOUR convenience

**SAT**  
**ACT**

Raise your SAT scores.  
Improve your grades.  
Boost your scholarship potential.



Ivy Bound Test Prep  
[info@ivybound.net](mailto:info@ivybound.net)  
877-975-1600

**MANHATTAN BOOKS**  
"More Books For Your buck"

New / Used Textbooks

Art Supplies

Sewing / Knitting Supplies

Toys & Games

Childrens Books

Book Rentals..& more

JOIN OUR REWARDS PROGRAM

eENCORE  
REWARDS

- Add points to your card with each purchase  
- Get exclusive deals, specials & discounts

#### Ivy Global | Recent Matriculation

Harvard University (17)  
Yale University (5)  
Princeton University (9)  
MIT (2)  
University of Pennsylvania (10)  
Tufts University (2)

Columbia University (8)  
Cornell University (14)  
Dartmouth College (10)  
Brown University (8)  
University of Chicago (5)  
Emory-Riddle University (4)

Duke University (3)  
UC Berkeley (5)  
John Hopkins University (4)  
Georgetown University (7)  
Carnegie Mellon University (3)  
Northwestern University (3)

#### FREE SEMINARS ON

- US College Admissions
- SAT Prep
- College Essays

Register at [www.ivyglobal.com](http://www.ivyglobal.com)

**15% OFF**

Stuy Students receive 15% off Ivy Global courses in New York. Discount offer not valid to students attending Bronx Science or Brooklyn Tech. Please email info@ivyglobal.com for info.

#### PREMIUM SAT PREP

- 99th Percentile Instructors
- Classes: \$650-\$1600
- Tutoring: \$100/hr

#### MEET OUR TEAM

Matt F. Princeton	Natalie Y. Harvard	Janice G. Columbia
Jason P. Yale	Ainslie K. Brown	Gideon N. Brown
Victoria C. Harvard	Mallory B. Yale	Jaymin K. Harvard

[www.IVYGLOBAL.com](http://www.IVYGLOBAL.com)

# Sports

## Wrestling

### The Season for the Spartans

By SAMUEL FUCHS

With a new coach this year, the Stuyvesant Spartans started off the season unsure of their chances of making playoffs. Their season began with a bitter loss to Martin Luther King Jr. High School, with the Spartans losing by three. Following a forfeit by Automotive High School, Stuyvesant lost another match to Springfield Gardens, further lowering their hopes for the playoffs.

The Spartans, however, rallied to win their next three matches, one of which ended in a blowout win with a score of 78 to 6. Stuyvesant's only other loss of the regular season came from Alfred E. Smith, who beat the Spartans by three points. The Spartans then closed off their season with three straight wins by over 20 points on their way to the playoffs.

The 7 – 3 season was a successful close for the Spartans, as they achieved their goal of qualifying for the playoffs. Unfortunately for them, however, they lost in the first round to their rivals, Bronx Science, who left Stuyvesant trailing by 14 points.

According to senior and co-captain Matthew Moy, the heavy loss was mainly due to missing players. "We were in it the whole time and even had a lead at one point," said Moy. "But we were missing like three guys so that really screwed us over." Moy had hoped for a deeper playoff run, as did the rest of the team, but they ended up falling short. After losing many key players from the previous season, the Spartans were short of players.

"We did some good recruiting and were able to fill all the weights with decent guys," said Moy. "We got more popular and more people joined so we had a shot of going undefeated."

Undefeated or not, the Spartans needed to open up facing MLK, their most formidable opponent. "MLK was the best team in our schedule and we barely lost to them and we were missing a few key guys," said Moy.

Injuries were a big factor for the Stuyvesant Spartans. An injury can leave the team with no one to wrestle in a specific weight class, forcing a forfeit for that round. The Spartans were not at full strength for the majority of the sea-

son, whether it was due to injuries or school-related matters, and this played a big part in the resulting season record. "Our two other losses were unexpected, but can be explained," said Moy.

Despite the uncertainty at the beginning of the season and its less-than-stellar conclusion, the Spartans are left with a certain feeling of pride. After spending a season of working almost every day, the Stuyvesant wrestling team showed itself to be fitter and better-conditioned than many other teams. A lot of young players stepped up to fill the gaps this season, and they will likely be signifi-

**"We did some decent recruiting and were able to fill all the weights with decent guys"**

—Matthew Moy, senior and co-captain

cant players next season.

Although their season is over, seniors like Moy and co-captain Paul Ma get to have one last taste of PSAL wrestling, as they are currently gearing up for City Championships. They won't compete as a team, but they will represent the Stuyvesant Spartans nonetheless as they compete against the city's best in individual matches.

## Boys' Basketball

### Rebels 7-Game Win Streak Ends with Loss to Irving

continued from page 24

vision. The two teams had already met before—in their first matchup, Stuyvesant won 34-25. This time, at Stuyvesant's home gym, the Rebels showed up with great defense that in turn led to efficient offense. The Rebels ended up dominating the Panthers, winning 64-36 and putting their record at 10-2 for the year.

The game started out evenly matched with the Rebels leading 15-10 at the end of the first quarter. However, the score would have been much higher were it not for the Rebels' sloppy and inefficient play; they failed to convert several easy opportunities to score, including missing multiple open lay-ups and free throws. The fact that they consistently turned the ball over did not help their cause either.

In the second quarter, the Rebels hit their groove and started out with a 7-0 run. The team began to click on defense as their traps and full court press put tremendous pressure on the Panthers. By forcing turnover after turnover, the Rebels were able to then convert on the offensive side for easy buckets. At the end of the third quarter, the Rebels had a comfortable lead of 54-26, which allowed their starters to sit for the rest of the game. "I really liked how everyone got a play today, everyone got some minutes, got some buckets, it was really nice," junior and co-captain Matthew Dalton said.

With the starters sitting, the team's play regressed to its earlier struggles. The Rebels turned the ball over on multiple occasions and did not help their cause either.

In the second quarter, the Rebels hit their groove and started out with a 7-0 run. The team began to click on defense as their traps and full court press put tremendous pressure on the Panthers. By forcing turnover after turnover, the Rebels were able to then convert on the offensive side for easy buckets. At the end of the third quarter, the Rebels had a comfortable lead of 54-26, which allowed their starters to sit for the rest of the game. "I really liked how everyone got a play today, everyone got some minutes, got some buckets, it was really nice," junior and co-captain Matthew Dalton said.

With the starters sitting, the team's play regressed to its earlier struggles. The Rebels turned the ball over on multiple occasions and did not execute their plays well. "We've still got to work on running our plays in practice," senior Thomas Cui said. "[We need to] run our plays right—don't break up our plays too quickly." Cui, the team's leading scorer, was again a huge factor in the Rebels' offensive success. While the rest of the team struggled with their free throws, Cui went 7-9 from the line and had a game-high 20 points.

**"The game taught us that we had to be faster on our feet. We did not get back on defense and let Washington Irving continuously get all the rebounds."**

—Imtiaz Hassan, junior

The team, however, still has many areas for improvement, including getting off to better starts. The team has led by more than five points after the first quarter in just three of their ten wins. Although the Rebels have already clinched the playoffs, they have four more games before the playoffs start and need all the momentum they can get.

ADVERTISEMENT

**IDENTIFY YOUR ACADEMIC STRENGTHS, FIND YOUR WEAKNESSES AND WIN VARIOUS PRIZES**

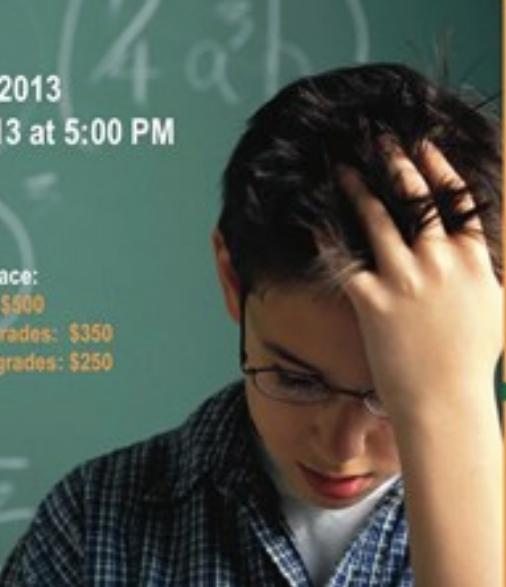
**Test Sessions**  
10:00AM – High School  
12:00PM – Middle School

**Grades 6 – 11**  
**Date: Saturday, February 9, 2013**  
**Register By: February 2, 2013 at 5:00 PM**

**Prizes:**

<b>First Place:</b> 11 grade: \$1000 9 and 10. grades: \$750 6,7 and 8. grades: \$500	<b>Second Place:</b> 11 grades: \$500 9 and 10. grades: \$350 6,7 and 8. grades: \$250
--	---

<b>Third Place:</b> 11. grades: \$250 9 and 10. grades: \$200 6,7 and 8. grades: \$100
---



## PLACEMENT TEST

**IVY LEARNING**™

*A Better Way To Learn*

### Ways to Apply:

- 245 Ave U Brooklyn, NY
- 770 Grand Blvd Deer Park, NY
- 43-49 45th Street Sunnyside, NY

Brooklyn: 1(718) 676-0009  
Deer Park: 1(631) 671-4380  
Sunnyside: 1(347) 435-9576

[ivylearning.org/ny](http://ivylearning.org/ny)

# THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

## Boys' Basketball

### Rebels 7-Game Win Streak Ends with Loss to Irving



Senior Thomas Cui shoots a jump shot over Washington Irving's Joshua Martinez on Wednesday, January 16, 2013.

**Washington Irving High School 51,  
Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels  
36**

By SAMANTHA LAU

Though the Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels were riding a seven-game winning streak heading into their game against Washington Irving on Wednesday, January 16, they still needed to prove themselves considering that they were 0-2 against teams in the top half of the division. Additionally, the Rebels had lost to Irving in their second game of the season with a score of 73-56, so they knew that facing an undefeated team ranked first in their division was going to be a challenge.

"We knew this game was going to be one of our toughest games all year and that we would have to play hard," junior and co-captain Matthew Dalton said. "We knew if we

executed, we would be able to beat them."

The first quarter started out slow with numerous fouls called on the Runnin' Rebels. There was also a lack of communication on the court, which allowed Washington Irving to out-rebound the Rebels. The quarter ended with the Runnin' Rebels down by ten with a score of 17-7.

The Rebels showed no improvement in the second quarter, constantly turning the ball over with bad passes. There was a lack of execution on offense during the first half, which resulted in the Rebels trailing by 17 points at the end of first half, 30-13. "During halftime, the team talked about being more aggressive on offense," senior and co-captain Ian Outhwaite said. "We were giving up and letting Washington Irving get all the rebounds in the first half."

Stuyvesant, however, made

a comeback in the third quarter. The Rebels' defense picked up, allowing them to go on a 9-0 run, and they supplemented the improvement on the defensive end by scoring 13 points in the period. Yet by the end of the fourth quarter, Washington Irving closed what was an already decided game by making five free throws.

"The game taught us that we had to be faster on our feet. We did not get back on defense and let Washington Irving continuously get all the rebounds," junior Imtiaz Hssan said.

The Runnin' Rebels know that they have to work hard for the next game. "We just won seven games in a row, so we have been riding a high from just our wins," senior and co-captain Shmuel Barkan said. "We got cocky and slacked off a little, but this is what the team needed to bring us back down to earth."

**Stuyvesant Runnin'  
Rebels 64,  
High School of  
Economics and Finance  
Panthers 36**

By ARI HATZIMEMOS  
and RAYYAN JOKHAI

Already on a six-game winning streak, the red-hot Runnin' Rebels clashed with the High School of Economics and Finance Panthers with hopes of further solidifying their spot in the Manhattan A Southwest Di-

continued on page 23

### Fuhgetaboutit, Brooklyn's Back



By ALISON FU

The last time the Nets won a championship was 1976, when they were still known as the New York Nets. The team had not yet left the ABA, and Jay-Z was only fourteen years old. After two separate moves, from Long Island to Newark and then from the Prudential Center to Barclays Center, the once-again renamed Brooklyn Nets have been playing like a legitimate threat to the New York Knicks, their rivals across the river, both in the Atlantic Division and the Eastern Conference.

The last time the New York Islanders won the Stanley Cup was in 1983, in the midst of their early-'80s dynasty. Perhaps in conjunction with the end of their lease, the Islanders are looking to leave their decades of futility in Nassau County and

hopefully experience an outcome that parallels the Nets'. Back in October, the team announced that they would be moving from the Coliseum in Long Island to Brooklyn for the 2015-2016 NHL season. By doing so, the Islanders would be sharing the newly erected Barclays Center with a Nets team that has made a smooth and so far successful transition to their new arena.

The migrations of the Nets and the Islanders have started the process of regaining Brooklyn's mojo. With the establishment of both professional basketball and hockey teams, the sports industry has officially been incorporated into the borough's personality, and it no longer has to remain in the shadow that the Mecca and its surrounding skyscrapers cast across the river.

In its eagerness to regain its

former glory, Brooklyn will be welcoming a new professional sports team that calls the borough home with open arms, along with an enthusiasm that will only continue to grow.

The Nets have been a much-maligned franchise throughout the majority of their existence, yet their rechristening in Brooklyn has exemplified the recaptured potential that this borough has as a marketing base and reminded the athletic world that Brooklyn's sports legacy is continuing. The Jay-Z and Mikhail Prokhorov collaborations on a billboard in Times Square and the sudden influx of the Nets' new black-and-white jerseys on the backs of pedestrians walking down the streets of Manhattan have showcased the Nets' rebirth with the help of a new uniform, logo, and identity.

The Nets' increased level of play gives local New Yorkers a glimpse of what can be with prolonged success, and also spotlights the opportunities that will present themselves to the Islanders if they undergo a re-branding with the Brooklyn name attached. Most of all, it has imported a discernible buzz into the region of and around Prospect Heights, bringing back the hype that used to surround the loud, irrepressible borough.

Regarding the Islanders'

continued on page 23

### Dancing Along to Catchy Songs



Seniors pair up and learn to dance swing, one of the six dances taught by physical education teacher Silvana Choy in her Ballroom Dancing classes.

By MATTHEW MOY

You may have seen groups of students waltzing around the school to catchy tunes. "What are they doing, and why do they seem so relaxed in the middle of winter and finals?" you may ask.

These students are enrolled in Ballroom Dancing (PES87QD), a Physical Education class open only to seniors. The class is taught by Silvana Choy during periods one, two, and five. Many seniors sign up for it, but not all of them get it. "It was an interesting alternative compared to the other boring gym classes I could've taken. I thought it would be fun and useful," senior Matthew Jin said.

Other students enroll with foresight, one of the most memorable moments of their high school careers just months away. "I felt that it could be useful during prom and it's always good to learn some new dances," senior Albert Kwok said.

"When you're at prom and a waltz comes on, all the peo-

ple who didn't take ballroom don't know what to do. And then you have all the ballroom kids on the floor showing off their skills," senior Maggie Wu said.

Most students who choose to take this class have no experience with formal dancing, apart from one cycle of square dancing during freshman year. "I would say it's very different. Square dancing is more like a group dance. Ballroom is one-on-one," Jin said. During the first few days of ballroom, the students reviewed square dancing as a warm-up.

In fact, Choy didn't have any experience when she was asked to teach the class in September 2002 by former Assistant Principal of Health and Physical Education Martha Singer. Choy took private lessons the entire summer prior to that year to learn all the dances that would be incorporated into the class.

"As far as coordination and things like that, I just tell the kids in the beginning of the class that they have to be re-

continued on page 23

### New Changes to PSAL Eligibility

By SAMANTHA LAU

The Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) will implement new eligibility rules to start in September 2013, overriding the 4+1 rule, the eight-credit rule, and the attendance requirements.

The current eligibility requirement includes a 4+1 rule, which states that a student must pass four credit-bearing subjects and physical education at the conclusion of the last semester. Two of these subjects must include English, mathematics, social studies, foreign language, or science. With the recent changes, this rule has been revised into a 5+1 rule. Students must pass five credit-bearing subjects and physical education. However, seniors are allowed to fail one of the five classes as long as it is not required for graduation.

Furthermore, the eight-credit rule was revised into the ten-credit rule. The former regulation mandated that students must accumulate at least eight credits, excluding physical education, over the two semesters

prior to the eligibility period. The new rule states students must accumulate an additional two credits, once again excluding physical education.

In regards to the revised attendance requirement, students previously had to have a minimum of an 80 percent attendance rate during that marking period. The new rule, however, states that students must maintain a minimum of a 90 percent attendance rate by the end of each marking period. This means no more than three absences.

All of the requirements will go into effect in September 2013, with the exception of the ten-credit rule, which will go into effect on February 1, 2014. While Stuyvesant students should have no problem with either the 5+1 rule or the ten-credit rule, attendance may present a challenge to some students. "Having a limit of absences sounds like a good idea, but three per marking period sounds very minimal," senior and co-captain of the girls' gymnastics team Alisa Emag said.