



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"*

Volume CI No. 1

September 8, 2010

stuyspectator.com

"Stuy's Arsonist" Pleads Guilty

By DANIEL BEER

Mohammed Minhaz Hassan, the former Stuyvesant junior arrested and charged with setting the first two fires in a string of arson events during the 2009-2010 school year, has been spared jail by Manhattan Criminal Court, and instead will be banned from attending Stuyvesant High School his senior year. Hassan was arrested on Thursday, November 19, 2009, after being captured by surveillance cameras furtively entering and exiting the sixth and seventh floor boys' bathrooms, seconds before two fires began. He pleaded guilty to charges of disorderly conduct on Monday, June 28.

Hassan originally appeared in Manhattan Criminal Court at 100 Centre St, on Friday, November 20, 2009, and was released from police custody on \$2,500 dollar bail. He was charged with second-degree attempted arson, fifth-degree arson and reckless endangerment for setting the fires. According to the Daily News, if convicted on all counts, the then-16 year old could have faced up to seven years of jail time.

Instead, Hassan was banned from entering his senior year at Stuyvesant and is currently at-

tending high school in the Bronx. Hassan could not be reached for comment.

Following Hassan's arrest, another arsonist continued setting fires in the school building. He was never caught, leaving a wake of taunting messages at the fires. One note read "I'm smart enough--you can't catch me."

At the time of Hassan's arrest, Hassan's father said the subsequent fires following his son's arrest were proof of his son's innocence. He also suggested that Hassan was being framed because of his race.

Stuyvesant students and faculty have expressed mixed feelings about the severity of Hassan's punishment.

"The punishment was too easy. Essentially the arsonist got expelled, which can also be punishment for kids who fail or cut classes," sophomore Nick Miller said. "I think a more severe punishment should be given to a clearly more severe wrongdoing."

"I feel this is an adequate punishment because he set areas of the school on fire and could possibly have endangered the lives of many people," junior Kathlene Escoto said.

There has been no significant updates in the search for the second, copycat arsonist.

College Office

By MAYA AVERBUCH
with additional reporting
by ALLIE BURNS and CHRIS
LEE

The college office underwent major remodeling during the summer months in order to create a more hospitable environment for both students and counselors. Changes included the removal and creation of several walls, consolidation and restructuring of electrical rewiring, replacement of ceiling tiles, installment of new desks and countertops and a division of one of the rooms.

The renovation, which is supposed to be finished by the end of September, began on Sunday, December 13, but progressed slowly because construction could only take place during school recesses, during which time the activity would not disrupt with the workings of the office.

The project was the senior gift from the Class of 2006. Senior gifts used to be organized by the Parents' Association (PA), which would collect donations from the graduating seniors and their parents in order to fund a school project. Sue Schneider, a Class of 2006 parent, was charged with overseeing the renovations, along with former Chair Academic Affairs Marjorie Weinman.

"The way the office was set up before, if you came in as a student and you needed to meet with one of the coun-

selors, you had absolutely no privacy. So if somebody was in one of the inner offices and was crying, as would sometimes happen if somebody didn't get into their early decision, you could [...] hear everything going on," Schneider said. "We realized something really had to be done to help the counselors."

According to Schneider, the project was protracted due to planning complications and budget constraints. Following the unanimous decision to renovate the college office, two years were spent in search of a more commodious area the office could be moved to. However, that plan never came to fruition.

"As we were looking, [Principal Stanley Teitel] was tightening up on space and getting more and more students in, so there was no way to move into a larger space, and we gradually accepted the fact that we had to work with what we had here and make it accommodate the needs of the counselors," Schneider said.

Additional time was squandered as the PA attempted to plan the remodeling using the help of three parent architects. However, their limited budget forced them to cut back drastically on the project, and they eventually turned to the technical expertise of school machinist Kenneth Levigion.

"I threw some suggestion at them, and they liked it. I

showed them what [Assistant Principal Technology Edward] Wong and I did in room 251, and we just walked through here and said, 'What about this? What about that?' and it all came to terms," said Levigion, who carried out the renovation with the help of the school's custodial staff, after refining his plans with the help of Principal Stanley Teitel, the college counselors and the PA representatives.

He added that the use of leftover materials from previous renovations in rooms 251 and 615E greatly alleviated some of the budgetary concerns.

According to Levigion, a major factor they took into account when restructuring the office was the burgeoning school population. "Right now we only have three counselors, but this room right here is divided into two, so that if Mr. Teitel ever gets the extra money to hire another counselor, the room is here," he said.

"[We] wanted to show [our] gratitude to the counselors because they work really hard in this office, and [we] wanted to make sure that as the classes grew each year, and the workload got heavier for the counselors, that at least the environment was more pleasant," Schneider said. "It was a team effort because we had nowhere near enough money to be able to do what we did, and we managed to get it done."

Student MetroCards Saved at a Price



Students swipe into the subway to commute to school.

By ZOE WU

After several months of discussion about the possibility of eliminating the free student MetroCard program, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) decided, on Tuesday, June 17, to save the program, despite the New York State Legislature's refusal to cover the entire cost. In order to counteract the detrimental financial effects

of continuing the program, the MTA made plans to increase fares and tolls in its preliminary budget plan for next year.

The MTA Board announced its original intentions to cancel the student MetroCard program with the release of its 2010 budget plan in December. The MTA declared that the plan would not be changed unless the city and state were willing to cover the full cost, according to The

Daily News article "New York City Students Will Get to Keep Free MetroCards," published on Friday, June 18.

The proposal immediately sparked protests, culminating in a walkout organized by the New York City Student Union (NYCSU) on Friday, June 11, just

continued on page 3

Changes in 2011 Regents

By ANNE CHEN
and ANIKA RASTGIR

Due to recent budget cuts, the Board of Regents approved cost-cutting measures that will affect New York State students who are to take Regents exams in 2011. More than half of the savings will come from the elimination of various exams.

The Board is responsible for supervising educational matters in the state. It presides over the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the University of the State of New York. The NYSED is facing a projected deficit for the 2010-2011 school year of approximately \$11.5 million dollars for pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade programs, according to an NYSED memo published on Tuesday, June 8.

The projected deficit is based on the 2010-2011 Executive Budget for the State of New York. The cost of running the NYSED's testing program has continued to rise over the last few years due to factors such as inflation, the addition of examinations, the need for test security and increased cost of certain testing contracts. At present, the NYSED requires about \$45 million dollars to run its testing program for elementary (Grades 3-5), intermediate (Grades 6-8) and high school students.

Earlier this year, the Board of Regents requested an additional seven million dollars from the 2010-11 state budget to avoid major testing reductions. According to a memo from Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education Dr. John B. King Jr., published on Monday, August 2, the state

granted some of the requested seven million dollars. The partial grant allows for the administration of the January 2011 Regents, the administration of the June 2011 Foreign Language Regents Exam in Italian and the translation of exams into Chinese, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish, all of which were to be eliminated.

Since not all of the additional funding was approved, certain cost-cutting measures will be implemented for the 2010-2011 school year. In the memo, Dr. King noted that the Board of Regents would try to avoid cuts in assessments that are required for high school graduation, but several changes were still instituted. Among those affecting high school students, the most significant is the elimination of German, Hebrew and Latin Foreign Language Regents exams.

Students who take those languages will not take the Regents exams, but will be able to earn Regents credit if they show proficiency other ways. "With respect to the elimination of the Regents Comprehensive Examinations in German, Hebrew and Latin, students who successfully complete coursework in these languages and earn units of credit may apply those credits towards the requirements for a Regents Diploma or Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation," State Department of Education spokeswoman Jane Briggs said in an e-mail interview.

According to Assistant Principal

continued on page 2

Opinions

Article on page 9.

Inundated with Reluctance Instead of Aid

Recent floods in Pakistan have uprooted millions of lives, yet relief is nowhere to be found.



Article on page 14.

Arts & Entertainment

Treasures Uncovered

Rummage your way through some of the eclectic collections in the city.

News

Changes in 2011 Regents

continued from page 1

World Languages Arlene Ubreta, school administered finals, which Stuyvesant students currently take along with the Foreign Language Regents in June, will be sufficient measures of student proficiency for students taking German and Latin. She believes that only administering finals will

"It will not affect Stuy students as many teachers teach and give tests at a level above the Regents." —Patrick Yong, junior

be effective since "our standards are higher than of the Regents," she said. "According to our grading policy, the final carries more weight than the Regents."

Some students feel the changes will have little effect on Stuyvesant. "It will not affect Stuy students as many teachers teach and give tests at a level above the Regents," junior Patrick Yong said.

Principal Stanley Teitel con-

firmed that this change would not affect Stuyvesant's graduation requirement. "At this moment, the requirement is three years of a single language at Stuyvesant," Teitel said. "The Regents is not a specific requirement."

Although the Foreign Language Regents exam is not required to graduate high school, students feel that not offering all Foreign Language Regents would cause "our drive to pursue languages that better appeal to us to be diminished," senior Mithi Hossain said. "[Students] try hard to learn [...] if they know there is an examination in the near future."

Others, however, disagree that Regents exams make students want to learn. "[Students] think that as long as they do well on the Regents they don't have to expand their knowledge on the language anymore," sophomore Yee Gee Cheng said. "Most schools teach more than what's on the Regents [...] so the school can make their own language final to challenge the students to learn beyond the state requirements."

Additional exams cut are the August administrations of the Algebra II/Trigonometry and Chemistry exams, which will save approximately 800 thousand dollars. The August test administrations are typically for students retaking a Regents exam. Students who fail either exam will be forced to retake the exam at the next available testing date in January or June.

Furthermore, the Board of Regents is getting rid of component retesting for high school Mathematics and English Regent Exams. Component retesting allows a student who has failed a Regents exam twice to retake only the portion of the exam that he or she failed instead of retaking the whole test. Component retesting

is solely for the Math and English Regents. Eliminating it will save about 1.6 million dollars.

High school students are not the only ones being affected. Other decisions, such as ending Social Studies exams for fifth and eighth graders and Foreign Language Proficiency exams for eighth graders, will save about 800 thousand dollars and two million dollars, respectively.

"I don't think the social studies tests and the language proficiency tests are necessary since teachers cover the same material in depth in high school," junior Cheng Ma said.

"If we were to simply be tested on our knowledge of Spanish, Italian and French, our drive to pursue languages that better appeal to us would be diminished."

—Mithi Hossain, senior

While various students feel the elimination of several Regents examinations is inconsequential,

some teachers are opposed to it. New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), a federation of more than 1200 unions whose stated

federation sent a letter to state lawmakers in April requesting that additional funding be granted for the testing program. Only a portion of the funding was granted.

These cost-cutting measures affect more than examinations. Beginning in August 2010, cost-cutting measures will also provide for the use of online scoring materials and answer keys for Regents exams, rather than paper-based equivalents. Schools will be responsible for downloading these utilities prior to scoring. This measure will save about 600 thousand dollars. Another decision, which will save 1.25 million dollars, is decreasing the involvement of education specialists who help create and develop tests.

Projected budget deficits are estimated to increase from 11.5 to around 21 million dollars for the 2011-2012 school year, according to Dr. King in the memo published on Monday, August 2. Other changes, such as alternate means of funding and further exam reductions, will take place for the 2011-2012 school year.

The NYSED is confident it will be able to maintain a successful testing program, even in the face of financial difficulties. In a memo published by NYSED on Tuesday, June 22, Education Commissioner David Steiner said, "While none of us wants to see these cuts made, the Board of Regents [...] approved responsible and appropriate measures-measures that will permit the core elements of our testing program to continue, while we increase the rigor of those remaining exams. The Regents and I are committed to giving tests that are better aligned to national standards and that measure the skills and knowledge necessary for success in school, college and the workplace."

"At this moment, the requirement is three years of a single language at Stuyvesant. The Regents is not a specific requirement."

—Stanley Teitel, principal

goal is to improve the quality of education, does not support eliminating the exams. "We recognize the seriousness of the state deficit, but this is no time to cut funding for the state's assessment system," said NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira, according to the NYSUT Web site. "This is a time to improve the system and create better assessments to guide instruction."

According to the Web site, NYSUT calls Regents exams "the gold standard for end-of-course assessments" and believes that "reducing the number of test administrations could lead to a lower graduation rate or a lower standard for graduation." The

that coffee helped launch the French Revolution and the Scientific Revolution," sophomore Dina Levy-Lambert said.

Junior Bill Lin questioned the effectiveness of the assignment. "I doubt that an essay on six drinks and the history behind them will help you do better in AP World. Six drinks and their importance doesn't have much to do with world history," Lin said. "They should have chosen a better essay topic about something that will actually help with the AP exam."

Although past AP World History students were not required to complete such homework, Lambert did not find the assignment unfair. "I don't mind having to read the book, even if previous students never had to do this assignment, because I feel that it prepares me for the class," she said.

Lockers Assigned

This school year, all lockers were assigned to students by the administration. It is the first time in three years that neither juniors nor sophomores have been able to choose their lockers.

According to Principal Stanley Teitel, the administration decided to do so in the spring of last year at the suggestion of Technology Coordinator Edward Wong, because the system would be easier and more equitable than one in which students choose lockers.

"We felt that [the old policy] was kind of unfair because some of you are away and don't have access to a computer," Teitel said. "It might have been three days before you finally checked your e-mail and realized, 'I can pick a locker,' but all that's left is way down the corridor on the first floor."

Prior to the 2007-2008 school year, the administration assigned all lockers. Starting in the summer of 2007, juniors were given the option to choose their lockers through the student tools section of the school Web site. The following two years, both sophomores and juniors were allowed to select lockers.

Some students were ambivalent about the new policy. "The positive aspect of it is the increased chances of getting to know new people, or people who you haven't talked to as much before," junior Sangmee Kim said. "However, the assigning can also prove to be inconvenient for some if they [...] have to go out of their way between classes in order to reach a locker all the way across the hallway."

Others feel it is best to allow students to choose the location of their locker. "I am on the varsity volleyball team and other sports teams, so I was really hoping to select a locker near the third floor gym," junior Cecilia Shao said. "The administration cannot possibly be aware of everyone's extracurricular schedule and needs."

Air Conditioning in Gym Completed

Students won't have to endure the heat during physical education class or Advanced Placement (AP) examinations any longer. Air conditioning units in the third and sixth floor gymnasiums were successfully installed on Monday, July 19.

The installation began mid-May of the previous school year, which was later than expected because engineers had to rewrite plans to accommodate for more coolant pipes. In turn, the school's air conditioning system became inoperable for the remainder of the school year.

The project was scheduled for completion in a month, but took longer due to complications with the wiring and valves.

To pay for the installation, Principal Stanley Teitel secured 247,000 dollars worth of funds this year from the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA).

The school building is leased from the BPCA, an organization that funds the physical development of local buildings that adhere to BPCA standards of safety, structure and aesthetics.

"It wasn't a grant or project," Teitel said. "They are really just improving their building."

Teitel believes that the air conditioning is necessary because "the gyms can get very hot, and we use them in May for AP exams," he said.

Senior Shelley Li said that

without air conditioning, "we focused more on trying to make ourselves as comfortable as possible rather than learning. The coolness will keep me more alert and concentrated when I take AP exams later in the school year."

"The last few months of school, it was very hard to concentrate without air conditioning, and we had to have physical education outside," sophomore Bushra Islam said. "Now, the school will be cool during the hot days."

Junior Kathleen Escoto agreed. "We can worry less about having a heatstroke and more about our work. It's hard to concentrate in hot, sweaty rooms," she said.

AP World Summer Homework

For the first time in recent memory, the Social Studies Department has assigned summer homework to rising sophomores enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) World History (H3WX).

Students enrolled in AP World History were asked to read "The History of the World in Six Glasses" by Tom Standage—a book that analyzes the role of six beverages in the development of world cultures: beer, wine, spirits, coffee, tea and coca-cola.

After reading the novel, students were expected to write a two-page typed paper ranking the drinks in order of their roles as "catalyst[s] for advancing cul-

ture," according to the assignment posted on the school Web site. The paper was to be submitted through Turnitin.com.

"We selected a book that was easy to read, relatively short and highly recommended by master teachers of AP World History," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said.

According to the assignment posted on the school Web site, the purpose of the assignment is "to start thinking beyond dates, people and events, and think more about historical themes and trends [...] that have shaped world history."

The idea for the summer assignment was proposed in May of the 2009-2010 school year by the AP World History teachers.

"It's a way to review the most important highlights of the Freshman course, while giving students a preview of the course's second part," Social Studies teacher Brenda Garcia said. "It's preparing them for more challenging work in the AP class."

Students who completed the assignment found some of the book's hypotheses to be intriguing.

"The book is very interesting and enjoyable, because it gives a unique way of looking at world history. [...] For example, in the passage about beer, it says that it could have been one of the reasons hunter-gatherers started farming, and in the passage about coffee, the author explains

English Class Sizes Reduced With New Teachers

By ISAREE THATCHAICHAWALITI

With the addition of two new English teachers, Maya Zabar and Dr. David Mandler, and the return of two teachers from maternity leave, Annie Thoms and Kim Manning, the English department was able to cap Freshman Composition classes at 27 students and sophomore English classes at 30 students for the 2010-2011 school year.

The new hires are two of 11 additions to the faculty, including in the mathematics, languages, social studies, biology, physics, physical education and technology departments. This was made possible by the approximately 1.5 million dollars the school received in Title I funding.

Schools qualify for federal (Title I) funds, which are used to improve school-wide instructional programs, if they have a high percentage of low-income students, according to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Because 42 percent of Stuyvesant students were entitled to free or reduced school lunch

of paying [the sophomores] back since they had larger freshman English classes," Grossman said.

Sophomore Hayden Karp-Hecker recognized the benefits of a smaller English class. "You'll have more face time with the teacher, and so you'll progress more in English," he said.

"Technically, though, these are one year positions [for the new hires], since the Title I money could dry up at any time, and we'd be forced to let them go," Grossman said. "Both new teachers understand this coming in."

Dr. Mandel and Zabar were selected from a group of four candidates, chosen by Grossman.

"I heard from a few principals in other schools who'd been forced to let good English teachers go due to their

"Freshman Composition specifically refers to reduced class sizes. This year, I'm happy to be calling it Freshman Composition."

—Eric Grossman,
Assistant Principal
English

"Technically, though, these are one year positions [for the new hires], since the Title I money could dry up at any time, and we'd be forced to let them go."

—Eric Grossman,
Assistant Principal
English

during the 2009-2010 school year, Stuyvesant qualified to receive Title I funds for the first time this year.

"It seems to me [to be] a very wise allocation of funds," Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm said, citing the importance of teacher-student interactions in the classroom.

Due to budget cuts last school year, Freshman Composition classes, typically capped at 28 students, were replaced by freshman English classes of up to 32 students.

"Freshman Composition specifically refers to reduced class sizes," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said. "This year, I'm happy to be calling it Freshman Composition."

This year, sophomore English class sizes were also reduced, from the typical 34-student class size to 30 students. "That's Mr. Teitel's way

own schools' budget cuts," Grossman said. "Beyond that, I got the [Department of Education] to send me a list of all excessed teachers. Because of the one year nature of the positions, I was only allowed to hire from the pool of excessed teachers, and I called a tremendous number of them and conducted phone interviews. I chose the four candidates who seemed most promising to teach demo lessons."

On Tuesday, August 3, in Room 615A, the four candidates each taught a demo lesson for approximately 30 minutes, bringing in reading material and conducting class activities and discussions. In attendance were Grossman, English teachers Vito Bonsignore, Megan Breslin, Walter Gern, Kim Manning, Sophie Oberfield, and Kelly McMahon, who has been on a leave of absence for the past few years, and a number of alumni and rising seniors.

"An interview or a resume won't say how [the teachers] will do," Serge Lobatch ('08) said. "[Attending these demo lessons] is the best way I can give back to the school."

"For a school like Stuyvesant, where people come from all over the city, it is particularly important [to have student MetroCards]," Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm said. "It was really shameful the way the MTA, the city and the state all tried to pass the buck."

In response to the protests, the State Legislature reached a deal with the MTA, after months of debates between MTA officials and lawmakers. The Legislature refused to cover the entire cost of the student MetroCard program, but it agreed to pay 25 million dollars in addition to the city's continued 45 million dollar annual contribution, according to The New York Times article "Deal Saves Student MetroCards," published on Friday, June 18. Although the MTA attempted to bargain for additional funds, it backed down and agreed to continue the program at a loss.

"We recognize the very difficult financial environment for not only the state and city, but for the hundreds of thousands of families in New York City who frankly could not afford to pay the added cost of transit fares for school transportation," said MTA spokesman Jeremy Soffin, in a statement released on Thursday, June 17. "We heard loud and clear at our public hearings, in meetings with student leaders and in protests around the city, that charging students would have a life-changing impact on the ability of New Yorkers to receive a quality education."

The New York City Department of Education Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) was supportive of the MTA's decision. "The use of MetroCards for public transportation provides a cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative to either school buses or the use of private cars for pupil transportation, particularly in a city with the traffic congestion already present in New York. We hope that the recent agreement reached with the MTA to continue the MetroCard program will continue for many years to come," General Education Transportation Director of the OPT Robert Carney wrote in an e-mail interview.

According to The New York Times article, the MTA had an 800 million dollar budget gap at the beginning of 2010 and proposed eliminating the student MetroCard program as one way to decrease that deficit. The same article also reports that, although the city and state funding will benefit the MTA, the funds fall short of the usual 90 million dollars given to the program. Calculations provided by the MTA show it would have gained 214 million dollars each year by eliminating the program, according to The Daily News article.

In order to compensate for the toll it is taking on the student MetroCard program, the MTA outlined proposals for fare increases at its Board meeting on Wednesday, July 28. The Financial Plan for 2011-2014 that was released at the meeting calls for a single fare to increase from 2.25 dollars to 2.50 dollars, with an extra one dollar charged with the purchase of a new Pay-Per-Ride card. Two competing plans, which will later be voted on, are offered for the current 27 dollar weekly and 89 dollar monthly MetroCards. The first plan calls for the prices to increase to 29 dollars and 104 dollars, respectively. The second plan calls for a 28 dollar weekly MetroCard limited to 21 total rides over a 7-day span and a 99 dollar monthly MetroCard limited to 90 total rides over a 30-day span. The 1-Day and 14-Day unlimited ride

The Stuyvesant High School Parents' Association also sent out listserve messages, with information about various protests and links to local politicians' petitions to continue student MetroCards, to parents.

"The only reason why I take the LIRR is convenience and comfort," she said. "It's actually kind of a luxury."

Wan points out the fare hikes are inevitable. "The outcome was fair because it's unlikely that the fares would have stayed at the current prices," she said in an e-mail interview. "Given time, they would have increased, for one reason or another."

While students can expect to get their free MetroCards in September, the plans for higher tolls and fees to help lower the MTA's budget gap have yet to be finalized. The Board is scheduled to vote on the proposed plans in October, and the MTA will be holding a number of public hearings in September to allow commuters to voice their opinions. If the plans pass, the new tolls and fares will go into effect in January 2011.

Student MetroCards Saved at a Price

continued from page 1

six days before the MTA was supposed to announce its final plan regarding student MetroCards. Around 1,000 students walked out of their classrooms, in the afternoon, and gathered at City Hall Park as they demanded that the student MetroCard program be continued, according to the NY1 News article "Students Stage Walkout over MetroCard Elimination," published on Friday, June 11.

Stuyvesant was one of many high schools to be involved with the various protests. Posters around the school advertised the walkout in the days leading up to it, but it is not known if any Stuyvesant students participated in it. Additionally, in February, then-sophomore Tong Wan helped organize a collection of expired student MetroCards with protest messages written on them by Stuyvesant students, as part of a larger collection held by the NYCSU. The accumulation of MetroCards was presented to the MTA at the public hearings held on Wednesday, March 3.

Wan believes the protests played a vital role in saving student MetroCards. "I doubt the

"We recognize the very difficult financial environment for not only the state and city, but for the hundreds of thousands of families in New York City who frankly could not afford to pay the added cost of transit fares for school transportation."

—Jeremy Soffin,
MTA spokesman

"[The MTA has] been raising fares many times. They need to have better money management."

Additionally, if the plans pass, tolls on bridges and tunnels for drivers who use E-ZPass will increase by 10 percent. Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Railroad (LIRR) tickets will increase by 7.6 to 9.4 percent, thereby increasing the cost for students who use the railroads to get to school.

Other students say they can understand the MTA's justification for the increased cost.

"I can certainly see where the MTA is coming from," senior Elizabeth Ha said. "If it needs to make more money, it will have to raise the price of something."

Ha, who rides the LIRR to school, also pointed out that many LIRR riders can get to school by bus and subway, if they do not wish to pay for more expensive LIRR tickets.

"The only reason why I take the LIRR is convenience and comfort," she said. "It's actually kind of a luxury."

Wan points out the fare hikes are inevitable. "The outcome was fair because it's unlikely that the fares would have stayed at the current prices," she said in an e-mail interview. "Given time, they would have increased, for one reason or another."

While students can expect to get their free MetroCards in September, the plans for higher tolls and fees to help lower the MTA's budget gap have yet to be finalized. The Board is scheduled to vote on the proposed plans in October, and the MTA will be holding a number of public hearings in September to allow commuters to voice their opinions. If the plans pass, the new tolls and fares will go into effect in January 2011.

MetroCards are expected to be canceled.

Some students feel that such a fare increase undermines the MTA's intentions of helping poorer families.

"Free student MetroCards are great," senior Lucy Qian said. "But some families might still struggle if [the MTA] increases the prices [of MetroCards]."

Junior Jennifer Lam agrees that students will still be victims of higher fares. "Many students use buses and subway on weekends or holidays [when student MetroCards cannot be used]," Lam said.

"I can certainly see where the MTA is coming from. If it needs to make more money, it will have to raise the price of something."

—Elizabeth Ha, senior

News

Teachers' Summer Studies

By BRIAN KIM

Robert Sandler and Lisa Shuman



Robert Sandler and Lisa Shuman received grants from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Sandler will study the Gilded Age at Columbia, and Shuman will study Jefferson in Monticello, VA

Social Studies Teacher Lisa Shuman received a grant this summer from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to study the life of Thomas Jefferson in Virginia. Shuman participated in a seminar titled "the Global Impact on The Declaration of Independence," which took place at both the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and Jefferson's personal estate in Monticello from Sunday, July 18, to Saturday, July 24. The program focused on Jefferson's writings and political thoughts and their implications for international ideas of independence and nationhood. Participants in the seminar were granted three hours of graduate credit in American History from the Adams State College in Colorado.

"I was drawn to the international focus of the program," Shuman said. "It was led by a Har-

vard professor, David Armitage, as well as other guest lecturers."

Shuman was struck by the different sides of Jefferson shown through the program's two locations: the University of Virginia, which he founded and designed, and Monticello—his estate which utilized slave labor. "The University of Virginia represents the idealistic side of Jefferson—the idea of good quality education for everyone. At the home you really start to see the other side of Jefferson, the dichotomous nature of the man."

Shuman says she plans on incorporating what she learned at the institute in her classes at Stuyvesant. "In a Foreign Policy class, you can utilize the material in engaging a pivotal question: when did United States Foreign Policy truly begin?" Shuman said. "Was it with the Declaration of Independence?"

This is not the first summer

study program Shuman has attended. "Every time I do it, it offers great insight into any social studies issue," Shuman said.

Social Studies teacher Robert Sandler participated in a Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History summer seminar titled "New York in the Gilded Age" at Columbia University from Sunday, July 11, to Saturday, July 17. The seminar focused on the period of American history between Reconstruction and the beginning of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. Lectures were given on topics such as the rise of political machines, the role of women, the transportation revolution and New York's unique position as a center of industry and commerce during the time period. In addition to attending lectures, participants in the seminar were asked to read *Empire City: New York Through the Centuries* by Kenneth Jackson—the professor in charge of the course—and David Dunbar, as well as Andrew Carnegie by David Nasaw—a guest lecturer at the program.

"He [David Nasaw] gave a really enthusiastic lecture about Carnegie's life," Sandler said. "He talked about his gospel of wealth."

The program also had a travel component, with participants visiting sites such as historic Coney Island and various areas of interest in Manhattan. "We took a tour of the Lower East Side," Sandler said. "I actually helped give that tour."

Sandler plans to incorporate a great deal, if not all, of the material covered by the program into his New York History elective class's curriculum. "If students don't get to go to Columbia and take his [Professor Kenneth Jackson's] famous course, they're going to get the bulk of what he teaches through me," Sandler said. "My challenge, as always, will be fitting everything in."

Clarissa Bushman



Clarissa Bushman received a national Endowment for the Humanities grant to study the life of Winston Churchill.

Social Studies teacher Clarissa Bushman received a grant this summer from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to attend a three week seminar on Winston Churchill and the Anglo-American Relationship at Cambridge University and Goodenough College, London from Sunday, July 11, to Saturday, July 31. The seminar was conducted by the NEH specifically for educators, with program faculty members coming from institutions such as University of Alaska Anchorage and the University of Leeds. Participants in the seminar spent two weeks in Cambridge pursuing independent research in the university's Churchill Archives Centre and were given a special reading room for their exclusive use. The Archives Centre allowed

participants to access original documents created and received by Churchill over the course of his career.

"My work revolved around the relationship between the economist, John Maynard Keynes, and Churchill and the reinstatement of the gold standard for the British pound in 1925," Bushman said in an email interview.

In addition to perusing the documents held in the Churchill Archives, seminar participants attended discussions moderated by Churchill Centre faculty members covering Churchill's 1930 autobiography *My Early Life*. The discussions were structured to provide a model for participants wishing to teach similar material to students in their own classrooms.

After concluding indepen-

dent research in the Churchill Centre Archives, participants in the seminar travelled to Goodenough College, London, where they stayed for the program's final week. There, several field trips were conducted by the Institute. "We saw many sites of interest to Churchillians" Bushman said.

Although she focused her research primarily on Churchill's relationship with Keynes, Bushman learned several interesting tidbits about the Second World War.

"The most unusual thing I learned about was about the carrier pigeons during the Second World War," Bushman said. "Several pigeons were actually decorated during the war, and one even made it home with a broken breastbone."



Harry Poppick / The Spectator
Oana Pascu and Peter Brooks received grants to spend part of the summer at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Peter Brooks and Oana Pascu

Computer Science Teacher Peter Brooks and Math Teacher Oana Pascu spent five days this summer at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)'s Summer Mathematics Institute (SMI) Teacher's Workshop. The workshop was held from Monday, June 28, to Thursday, July 1. It focused on high school mathematics forming the basis for college mathematics and playing a crucial role in the professional business world. The program was a joint venture between RIT and Google and featured speakers from both RIT faculty and corporations such as Xerox and Eastman Kodak.

Brooks attended the SMI's computer science workshop sessions. "The most interesting [session] was given by the director of their program on computer game design. Theirs [RIT] might be the first full academic program in the country dedicated to game design," Brooks said in an email interview.

Pascu attended the SMI's mathematics workshop ses-

Daniel Tillman

Administrative Dean and Social Studies Teacher Daniel Tillman received and participated in two teacher fellowship programs over the summer break—the Goethe Institute Transatlantic Outreach Program and the one-week National Endowment for the Humanities' Empires of Wind summer institute.

The Goethe Institute Transatlantic Outreach Program is a study tour, designed to give teachers a comprehensive view of the political, economic and cultural state of modern Germany. Tillman was one of 16 teachers selected out of an applicant pool of 800 to participate in the program. "We traveled to Munich, Frankfurt and Berlin as well as Weimar and Göttingen in former East Germany," Tillman said in an email interview. "We visited German schools, businesses, museums, etc."

To keep a record of his travels within Germany, Tillman created a blog at <http://nospam-mrtsgermanodzy.blogspot.com/>. "The German Foreign Office, the Goethe Institute and the Robert Bosch Foundation fund this program annually in order to improve the world's opinion of Germany," Tillman said.

The Empires of Wind summer institute was held in San Diego, California, and featured lectures from leading academics and members of the University of California San Diego faculty on the significance of the Pacific Ocean in American History. "Empires of Wind demonstrated that

sions and lectures. "They invited speakers from Xerox and Kodak to say how they use math in their fields," Pascu said. "One of the talks was given by a guy at Kodak about how they use different algorithms to alter photographs."

Pascu does not plan on directly integrating the material covered at SMI into her classes' curricula, but she does think she can use what she learned in more conceptual contexts. "It's not stuff I could teach in a regular day," Pascu said. "But it is something I could mention to kids, like the deeper math some of the [computer] programs they use."

Brooks took the time to investigate RIT's facilities while attending the institute. "What I was most impressed by was not the material covered in the workshops, but rather the impressive robotics labs that I found while snooping around between sessions," Brooks said. "I wish I had taken photographs of some of their robotics construction areas."

Daniel Tillman

the exploration and colonization of the North American West Coast was done largely via sailing



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator
Tillman was one of 16 teachers selected out of an applicant pool of 800 to participate in the program.

vessels before the late-1800s," Tillman said. "Most of us have the view that railroads and wagons on trains were the means."

Participants in the institute visited many museums and sites of historical interest in the greater San Diego area.

Tillman says he relishes the travel opportunities afforded him by his summer fellowships. "I enjoy seeing the world through other people's eyes," Tillman said. "It's like changing the variables in a mathematical equation in order to better understand the constants."

Features

The Magic Touch



Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

Seniors started a baking business in Chinatown at 30 Mott Street.

By NANCY MA

When a birthday party for senior Alexander Wong was pushed back, due to some lousy weather, no one would have thought that the occurrence would spark the beginning of a business. Back in June, senior Danica Chan, a friend of Wong, had already baked a cake for the party. Not wanting it to go to waste, she brought it to school to try to sell. She managed to sell a slice to one of her friends, who eventually brought her to see math teacher Jim Corcoran because he insisted that she come and sell to him as well.

"He bought a slice of cake from me and dubbed me the Magic Cake Lady," Danica Chan said. This name would become the name of a bakery that is now run by Wong and Danica Chan, along with seniors Catherine Hong and Janus Chan.

The students play differ-

Wong advertise tirelessly to friends and everyone else they know. Wong also wrote the description for Magic Cake Lady's fan page on Facebook.

The students began the business by selling pastries from a table set up near the door of a bubble tea café called Silk Road Mocha, located at 30 Mott Street, which is owned by Danica Chan's aunt. However, they have moved their pastries into a covered and chilled display case by the counter.

Their menu changes every week, so there is always variety. So far, Magic Cake Lady has made different types of cupcakes, brownies, lemon bars, chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter cookies, peach pies and apple pies. Originally, Danica Chan and Hong stayed in the store on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., but did not receive many customers.

"We don't get much business in our little café, and a lot of people look at our cupcakes, say 'Oh, how cute!' and then leave," Danica Chan said. "People in Chinatown just don't want cupcakes like kids in Stuy do."

Danica Chan and Hong now bring shipments of pastries to the store every morning and leave them for the café employees to sell.

"It's really useless for us to sit in the front of the store all day and basically do nothing more than wait for customers," Danica Chan said.

The team plans to visit more cafés in the West Village and offer to supply them with baked goods. There, they hope to find a better market and more people willing to buy baked goods. They also hope to supply cafés with baked goods throughout the school year, which would require them to deliver fresh pastries, every morning, before school starts at eight.

"I'm sure that once we get in the rhythm, it won't be so bad," Danica Chan said. The help of their friends and family further encourages the students. Chan's aunt, by allowing Magic Cake Lady to sell its products in her bubble tea café, helps to support the business. Danica Chan's grandfather allows the group to bake its goods in his oven, since Chan does not yet have a working oven. While Chan's family members have been mostly supportive, they insist that she focus on schoolwork during the school year.

"They insist I wait until I get a college degree before pursuing a culinary education and that this is good as a hobby, but not a career," Chan said.

For the moment, running their own business is enough to keep these students occupied. While many students were unable to find available jobs this summer, the members of Magic Cake Lady solved their problem by creating an establishment for themselves. For them, a cake from an unfortunate delayed birthday party turned into an entire pastry business.

"They also hope to continue to supply cafés with baked goods throughout the school year, which would require them to deliver pastries fresh every morning before school begins at eight."
—Danica Chan, senior

ent roles in running the business. Danica Chan and her sister Tiffany Chan, a freshman at Baruch College, do the baking, making fresh batter and dough each night. Janus Chan and Hong decorate the cupcakes. Hong also makes signs and banners and takes pictures of the baked goods. Janus Chan and

By LEA BELTRAMINO

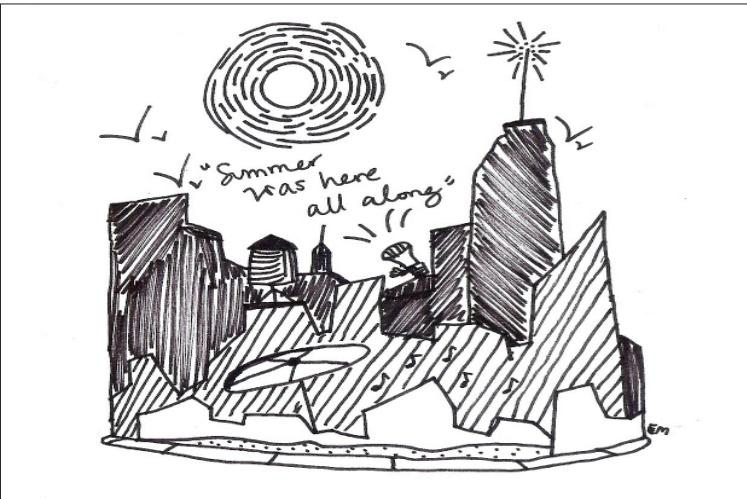
Although long vacations in Europe are certainly exciting, and trips to camp are memorable, this summer, many Stuyvesant students discovered that there was plenty to do and see right in our very own New York City.

"Even though everyone makes fun of Brooklyn, it's a place chock full of places to enjoy yourself during the summer," se-

"Even though everyone makes fun of Brooklyn, it's a place chock full of places to enjoy yourself during the summer."
—Paula Tsvayg, senior

nior Paula Tsvayg said. "It's [Coney Island] usually followed by a visit to the beach to its right and generally an evening spent with

Livin' it Local



my friends daring each other to eat as many hot dogs as possible."

Other students use their time as a way to explore the special opportunities available exclusively during the summer. One such event is Shakespeare in the Park, during which the Delacorte Public Theater of Central Park offers free tickets to Shakespeare productions on a first come, first serve basis. "The Public Theater also organizes a week-long summer program for teens known as Shakespeare Lab Jr., which is a fun Shakespeare acting workshop," senior Jane Cotler said. "I participated this year as well as last year."

Many others follow the traditional path of looking for a job or internship to keep themselves busy during the summer months. Senior Amanda Pagul found a job as a dental assistant where she learned about the profession but was also left with free time to enjoy her summer. "Because I don't work every day, I have been able to spend a lot of time enjoying my time in the city," Pagul said. "I have been able to live a simple

but gratifying two months visiting museums, watching movies, shopping and enjoying the diversity of the city. One time I even found a shop where they sell dollar sushi downtown."

Finally, spending the summer in New York City allows for the perfect time to love hating tourists—those who travel from all over the world to see what we have at our fingertips. Although their tendency to clog up our streets and subways as they take pictures of seemingly pedestrian things is sometimes irksome, their awe for the city that we call our home is gratifying. "Sure, it's annoying and [tourists] get in your way, but at the same time, you feel a sense of pride that they're so in awe of the city you live in," Sophomore Samantha Hom said.

Although you may not have spent your vacation on a beach in Spain or a castle in England, just staying around New York can leave you with more than enough memories to carry you through the school year.

A Community Beyond Stuyvesant

By JUDY CHEN
and CONNOR JUSTICE

During the sweltering summer heat, when Stuyvesant students are away from school, or even during the school year, after they have left the building, an entirely different group of people enters and replaces them. These people are regulars of the Community Center at Stuyvesant, a place that opens many of the high school's facilities, such as the pool and the gyms, for public use.

The Community Center at Stuyvesant High School is managed by the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy (BPC). Yearlong, the community center aims to provide the opportunities and facilities needed to maintain "good health, life-long learning, and pleasure," according to the center's pamphlet. Both member and non-member participants take this opportunity to use some of Stuyvesant's facilities, including the gyms on the third and sixth floors, the pool and the weight room. Classes and sessions include yoga, lap swim, free swim, basketball, dance and fitness seminars.

Having access to the gyms and pools, however, is not the only reason people use Stuyvesant during the summer. Weekly high school admissions workshops for middle school students and parents also took place this summer, with the first workshop held on July 20th and the last session held on August 10th. "They are learning about the different types of high schools so



The pool was used over the summer for community activities.

they can visit the schools in the fall," director of operations for the Office of Student Enrollment Kathleen Brannigan said.

The workshops were aimed at informing students about schools, including small and charter high schools and large comprehensive high schools, as well as careers and technical education. Thanks to the well-maintained facilities, friendly staff and non-exclusivity of the center, many people use the Community Center at Stuyvesant. This provides an eclectic crowd with facilities to exercise, swim or hang out at. At times, the center's popularity is a drawback, such as during the heat wave in July. "One evening in early July it was extremely hot and there were 5 people in each [swimming] lane," frequent patron Paul Cantor said. "Usually it's not too bad."

During the summer, the community center operates Monday through Friday, from seven p.m. to 10 p.m., and Sat-

urday through Sunday, from one p.m. to nine p.m. From the months of September to June, facilities are open Monday through Friday, from seven p.m. to 10 p.m., and Saturday through Sunday, from one p.m. to nine p.m. Unfortunately, the shortened winter hours make it hard for some members to make it to the community center.

To orient people with the various program options available, interpreters are available for parents who do not speak English. This resource was established by the Department of Education to keep parents informed about the various public school programs, information sessions and workshops available to students.

So as the Stuyvesant administration tries to get students out of the building when extracurricular and after school activities end, the doors open for yet another Stuyvesant community beyond that of the classroom.

Christina Bogdan / The Spectator

Features

By MELISSA SETO

Summer vacation is the only long period of time during the year that actually belongs to students—a time when they are free to explore and learn without the restrictions of the classroom. This summer, with the stresses of school halted, some Stuyvesant students ventured into new terrains and heights. Whether it was hiking up the Rock of Gibraltar or trekking the Great Wall, they all had experiences that taught them to see things in a new light.

Canada

Junior Tiffany Tang went on a guided tour of Canada for three days. Tang visited Niagara Falls, Toronto and one of the Thousand Islands. She found the ride on “The Maid of the Mist”—the boat that brings people across the Niagara River to get a closer look at Horseshoe Falls and American Falls—to be most memorable.

“I’ve never been up close and personal to [Niagara Falls],” said Tang. “I was really close to the water. It was really cool.”

Tang had seen the falls before, on television, but had finally realized the true size of it when she saw it in person. “It was a lot shorter than what I imagined,” Tang said. “I have always assumed the falls to be [massive], but now I have learned that you can’t fully grasp something until you have seen it yourself.”

Japan

Senior Bryant Ly, along with 20 other Stuyvesant students who studied Japanese for three or more years, spent two weeks in Tokyo, Japan. Though accompanied by Japanese teacher Chie Helinski, they were allowed to explore on their own, and thus got a huge taste of Japanese culture. Their years of studying in the classroom were put to the test when they were forced to use their Japanese skills in real life situations.

Life-Changing Summer Travels

One time, when Ly saw a girl struggling to carry her suitcase down the stairs, he had to quickly think of the correct way to say, “How can I help?” in Japanese. Ly was able to immerse himself further in the intricacies of Japanese culture. For example, he saw the otaku (anime and gaming) culture of Japan and also visited many important temples. The students also ate at the world’s famous fish market, Tsukiji. “We literally had the best quality sushi in the entire world,” Ly said. However, the place Ly found most unforgettable was the Hasedera temple at Kamakura. “I found



“Going to the museum and listening to the woman speak had a much greater impact [on me] than reading from a textbook.”

—Elana Shapiro, senior

Hasedera most peaceful, because it was in the mountains, and the view was breathtaking,” Ly said.

Moreover, he noticed the differences in the manners and culture of the Japanese. “They are more polite and have a good work ethic,” Ly said. People always said “Good morning” while bowing.

Not only was Ly able to utilize and expand upon his knowledge of Japan, but he also realized how interesting the differences among people and cultures in the world can be. “It has influenced my college choices,” Ly said. “I now want to get out there and see what the rest of the world is like.”

China

Junior Kamay Jin participated in a program called Global Youth Leadership Conference (GYLC) that toured around China for two weeks. Along with about 300 other high school students from around the world, she visited Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai. There were two aspects to the program: learning about leadership from various people in China and visiting famous landmarks. Jin found that the most rewarding part of her trip, however, was the bonding experience she had with the other students in the program. “The most important part of the trip was meeting people from around the world, forming bonds with them and traveling with them all around China,” Jin said. For example, one of the most poignant bonding experiences of the trip was at the beginning of the tour, when Jin and the eight members of her group scaled the Great Wall. When they fi-

nally reached a point where they couldn’t go any further, Jin felt a special bond had formed among her group, as they had overcome

“It has influenced my college choices, because I now want to get out there and see what the rest of the world is like.”

—Bryant Ly, senior

a monumental obstacle together. Jin admitted that before the trip she had trouble talking to unfamiliar people. She kept herself encircled in a group of close friends. However, because of the program, she learned to be more comfort-

able with approaching others. “What I learned from GYLC was that people [from other countries that are] my age aren’t much different from what I’m like,” Jin said. “In the core, all people are the same.”

Spain and Israel

Imagine hiking up the Rock of Gibraltar while seeing Barbary Apes face-to-face, and finding a skyline of both Europe and Africa when reaching the top. This is one of the many amazing highlights of senior Elana Shapiro’s trip to Spain and Israel with the B’nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO)—an international organization whose goal is to empower Jewish youths to become more involved in Judaism. The program, called BBYO Passport to the World, was a conjunction of a one-week visit to Spain and a three-week stay in Israel. Shapiro climbed the Rock of Gibraltar—a mountain located in a province near Spain that was property of the United Kingdom—when she was in Spain. She was stunned by the view from the top of the mountain. “I’ve never been that close to Africa before,” Shapiro said. “It was amazing to see [more of] the world.” She came from North America, traveled to Spain and was technically in the United Kingdom. She could see Africa and other parts of Europe and in a few days would travel to Israel—which was a part of Asia. By the time Shapiro and her group reached Israel, “[they] felt like world travelers,” she said.

However, one of the most significant highlights of her trip was when she went to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Israel. Before the guided tour of the museum began, a Holocaust survivor spoke. “I’ve heard Holocaust survivors speak before, but this was especially powerful,” Shapiro said. “Going to the museum and listening to the woman speak had a much greater impact [on me] than reading from a textbook.”

Starting the School Year Right

By YING YU SITU

Whether it’s waking up early again, returning to heavy workloads, or figuring out how to balance extra-curriculars, the transition back to school from summer is always a difficult one. It’s hard to let go of the last bits of summer and forget the days when time was limitless. To make this transition easier, however, here are some tips to help shake off some of the summer slump.

The Heavy Workload:

As we progress through the grades, we are expected to be responsible for a wider variety of material each year. But as the workload increases, so does its difficulty.

“Switching grades was hard,” senior Tyng Feng said. “I assumed that since I did so well the last two years, I would do just as fine junior year. I didn’t expect that it would suddenly become so hard to just stay afloat.”

Students have many methods for coping with the difficulties of an increased workload, and Feng offers one such solution.

“Time management and prioritizing everything you have to do is always a good idea,” Feng said. “Organization is key. I order my work by decreasing difficulty, and work my way down [the list]. It helps prevent late night panic because by midnight, the only thing left I have to complete is a really easy assignment.”

Juniors Eric Heo and Nina Wang

use a similarly effective method.

“By the time I’m completely exhausted, the only thing left to do is something that requires little to no effort,” Heo said. “My biggest problem though is keeping on track. I found that I got a lot more

night before the test, since I was so used to repeating the material over and over [each day],” Wang said. “It also boosted my participation and prevented me from failing any pop quizzes.”

Balancing Extra Curriculars:

As Stuyvesant students, we tend to stack up on extracurricular activities. Whether our motives involve getting college credit or meeting new people, some of us may not be able to balance extra activities with our already ample amount of school work.

“Last year, I was juggling an outside job, dance classes and two clubs. It was too much work in the end, and I ended up doing poorly in dance and school,” junior Cathy Fung said. “In the end, I had to drop out of a club and cut back on my work hours.”

Fung said that the most important thing to do is “know your limit.” If just thinking about what extracurricular activities you’re participating in this year makes you nervous, it’s pretty clear that you may be taking on too much.

“I had a full schedule, so my mom sat me down and made me cut out anything that wasn’t absolutely necessary,” Fung said.

If you are considering taking on multiple activities, the most important thing to do is to stay organized and take advantage of every minute. We have free time all throughout the day, such as on the train or during lunch, so we should use our time wisely and do some work.

We hold on tightly to the last bits of summer, refusing to forget the days where time was limitless and free of demanding workloads and essay deadlines.

projects and tests than homework, so I broke down studying and project-ing into daily sessions.”

“Studying everyday meant that I had really little to study the

Another strategy is to make daily schedules, ahead of time, and budget extra time every day for something fun.

Lack of Motivation:

After summer, it can be easy to forget the motives that powered our work the previous year. This can often result in a drop in productivity as students find the work they have to do meaningless and droning.

Students usually find that this feeling is caused by the stark contrast between their lives during the slow, sunny days of summer and the daily grind of back to school.

“I’m super lazy during the beginning of the school year, since I’m so used to just lounging around in the summer. It gets to the point where I wonder how I could do so much stuff last year,” senior Vanessa Yuan said.

Some of your greatest tools in conquering this sluggishness, however, are focusing and “thinking about what motivated you last year,” Yuan said.

For other students, looking towards the future is what gets them to do their work.

“I think about the consequences that come from not doing my work,” said sophomore Jennifer Ly.

Whether these consequences are failing a test or not being allowed into a class you want, the fear of failure is oftentimes the fire that you need to turn off the video games and pull out the textbook.

Procrastination:

At one point or another, procrastination has affected even the best of us. It has led to sleepless nights full of studying or homework that could have been completed earlier. Once procrastination is conquered, however, you will find that you not only have more free time, but that the quality of your work has increased, as well.

“I try to avoid procrastination at all costs,” senior Mohit Kumar said. “Once I start, I can’t just stop and go back to doing work. If I just ignore the urge and start right away, I find that an hour or so [has] passed and I’m completely into [my work].”

While many of us view schoolwork as something that separates us from our friends, with a little creativity you can turn it into a way to spend even more time with your friends.

“I use the buddy system,” sophomore Morgan Goldstein said. “Sometimes I’ll do my homework or study with my best friend. If I even try to shirk my duties, she’ll scream at me. It’s a fun way to do work and I get more face-time with her.”

Going back to school will always be difficult. However, if you follow these tips and try to relax, after the initial shock of getting up early and doing work has worn off, you will not only see your stress level decrease, but will have a much more enjoyable and productive year, as well.

First Step Forward

Full Service College Counseling
Contact us for a free consultation.
914.260.7744

email: director@1ststepforward.com
www.1ststepforward.com

Jamie Lulow - Director
MSEd and NYS Certified School Counselor



MICHAEL M. CHAN

LICENSED REAL ESTATE AGENT

T 212 227 0021

F 212 227 1120

C 718 702 5946

MCHAN@NYLS.NET

WWW.NYLIVINGSOLUTIONS.COM

DOWNTOWN OFFICE

100 JOHN STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10038



The Spectator

"The Pulse
of the
Student Body"

THE STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER



- Want to leave feedback?
- Did you miss the last issue?
- Just curious for more information?
- Browse through the archives.
- Browse through our videos.

Visit the Spectator

on our website at

WWW.STUYSPECTATOR.COM

**The LAYOUT department was responsible
for creating this ad.**

GET INTO THE College OF YOUR Dreams



At Ivy Advocate, our mission is to get students into the school that is perfect for them. We offer the most professional services that can be found. Unlike other consultancies who have teams of "experts", all clients deal directly with the President of Ivy Advocate, Nitsan Hargil, CFA, who has published over 2000 pages of research and has made dozens of television appearances.



- Expert college consulting
- Professional college essay coaching
- Complete application overview
- High School curriculum planning
- Financial Aid planning

www.IvyAdvocate.com

FREE 45-Minute
consultation with our senior admissions consultant,
Nitsan Hargil, CFA



Ivy Advocate
Professional College Counseling
Nitsan Hargil, CFA, President
Nitsan.Hargil@IvyAdvocate.com

Office 212.939.7240
Cell 917.586.3351

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Bridging the Racial Gap

When Justin Hudson walked onto the podium at Hunter College High School's graduation ceremony in June, he delivered something very different from the quintessential speech that emanates pride and gushes with gratitude. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I don't deserve any of this. And neither do you." With his audacious speech, Hudson brought light to the myriad inequalities that plague our educational system: "If you truly believe that the demographics of Hunter represent the distribution of intelligence in the city, then you must believe that the Upper West Side, Bay-side and Flushing are intrinsically more intelligent than the South Bronx, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Washington Heights, and I refuse to accept that."

The problem of the lack of racial diversity at Hunter High School is just as obvious at Stuyvesant. Although 70 percent of the students in New York City's school system are black or Hispanic, only five percent of our school's population comes from these groups. Though the population of Stuyvesant is eclectic in certain regards, ultimately, the lack of racial diversity is a hindrance not only to those being rejected from our school, but to our own students as well. We have been given the tools to grapple with the issues of racial inequality and economic discrepancy in a supposedly egalitarian society, and it is our responsibility to do so.

A diverse intellectual, socio-economic and racial environment is a means of enriching the educational experience. Not only does it encourage students to become aware of our increasingly complex society by challenging stereotyped preconceptions, but it also fosters mutual respect and communication skills necessary to become good global citizens.

One source of the racial disparities that exist in our school is the admissions process, which is solely dependent the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). For decades, critics have argued that the test is intrinsically flawed—culturally biased against black and Hispanics. According to The New York Times article "A Demographic Breakdown of Who Took, and Passed, the Test," published on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, five percent of black students who take the test are offered admission to one of the eight specialized high schools, in comparison with 34 percent of Asian students who take it and 30 percent of white students who take it.

While such striking differences have long existed, a formal evaluation of the test has never been conducted, so the race factor has never been studied adequately. But even more so, the test also has little actual value as an indicator of intelligence or future student success. The DOE must study the exam to at least quell the complaints of rejected students and their parents, as

well as to figure out how to improve the exam. If educators find the test has room for improvement, they can introduce an experimental section, similar to what exists on the SAT, to try new kinds of questions. The real question, however, is how to encourage all of New York City's communities and racial and ethnic groups to have the best chance for a quality education, whether in a specialized school or in their zoned school.

According to the same article from The New York Times, the percentage of black and Hispanic students who take the specialized high school test is disproportionately lower than their representation in the student population. Of the 27,000 students who took the test in the fall of 2009, 23 percent were black, 26 percent were Asian, 20 percent were Hispanic and 15 percent were white. Sixteen percent were listed as unknown because they were enrolled in private school, did not sign ethnic identification forms or were multi-racial. These numbers differ drastically from those of the overall school system, which is 40 percent Hispanic, 31 percent black, 15 percent white and 14 percent Asian.

In order to encourage minorities to take the test, The Department of Education (DOE) created the Specialized High School Institute (SHSI), which runs a 16-month tutoring and test preparation program for economically disadvantaged seventh and eighth grade students who have high citywide test scores, high middle school grades and good attendance. However, since its inauguration in 1995, the number of black and Hispanic students at Stuyvesant has declined from approximately nine percent to the current five percent, according to statistics from The New York Times article "Cortines Has Plans to Coach Minorities Into Top Schools," published on Saturday, March 18, 1995. The program faced further difficulties in giving a leg-up to minorities after the Supreme Court banned efforts to increase school diversity by taking into account students' race. According to school chancellor Joel I. Klein's comments in the article, the city's outreach efforts have been fruitful, but a large racial disparity still exists in part due to "the number of Asian students who are coming to the city, taking this test and passing it at a very high rate," Klein said. "It reflects a real commitment and a real ethic in terms of preparing."

If preparation is the key, for entrance into a specialized school or for educational success anywhere, we need to assess what makes a student ready for higher-level academics. Aside from the fact that students in low-income areas have to learn in under-funded, often failing, schools, they are often not provided with adequate guidance counseling, parental support, general tutoring or test preparation.

Although an affirmative action plan does not need to be implemented, in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling, an outreach program to raise awareness of the SHSAT is in order. Parents of elementary school students need to be sent letters informing them about the importance of the high school process and the need to start preparing for it. Workshops should be established in every school to inform both parents and students about the general admissions process, free test prep opportunities offered by the DOE and other non-economically burdensome test prep programs. All middle school students should be provided with a booklet that outlines the SHSAT and have access to a well-informed counselor who can answer any questions about it. To take it one step further, just as the PSAT, a precursor to the SAT, is administered to high school sophomores and juniors, mandating all public school seventh graders to take a practice SHSAT is a viable possibility.

Also, more specialized schools could use the broader admission processes employed by schools around the city to help identify top students. For those students who are unable to afford private tutors—who have gotten answering the multiple choice questions down to a science—we could evaluate students beyond the one test. Do you think the test you took in the fall of eighth or ninth grade is a valid indicator of whether or not you should be entitled to four years of one of the top educations in the country? Schools like Townsend Harris High School bases admissions off of middle school grades. Bard High School Early College takes into account a test, essays, interviews and teacher recommendations. Hunter evaluates essays after you have passed a certain multiple-choice testing threshold. If such techniques could be combined efficiently to accommodate the 27,000 students who take the SHSAT, we might be able to have a more diverse intellectual environment. We recognize that such a proposal might be financially and logically burdensome, but it is an important topic for discussion in order to reform our flawed system.

Expanding the opportunities for students of different ethnic backgrounds is one step towards improving our city's education system, but we cannot lose sight of Hudson's remarks about the injustice that exists in a system where only the elite few who make it one of the city's crown jewels succeed. The rest, he said, are left "to wallow in the mire of a broken system." Eventually, we should aim to follow Hudson's bidding and use the tools at hand to provide the entire city, and eventually the entire world, with the type of quality education we receive at Stuyvesant.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Ani Sefaj*

MANAGING EDITOR
Samira Siddique*

NEWS EDITORS
Maya Averbuch
Chester Dubov*
Nicole Zhao

FEATURES EDITORS
Hannah O'Grady
Max Wycisk

OPINIONS EDITORS
Shilpa Agrawal
Christopher Natoli
Varun Sharma

ARTS &
ENTERTAINMENT
EDITORS
Sadie Bergen
Emma Pollack
Hyemin Yi

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

SPORTS EDITORS
Scott Chiusano*
Eddie Cytryn*

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS
Christina Bogdan
Joann Lee
Harry Poppick

ART DIRECTORS
Nils Axen
Emily Martin

LAYOUT EDITORS
Shanna Chen
Harry Ngai
Vivian Sze*

COPY EDITORS
Samantha Levine
Tong Niu

BUSINESS MANAGERS
Karen Paik
Mark Zhang

WEB EDITORS
Jennifer Kuo
Cameron Sun

FACULTY ADVISOR
Kerry Garfinkel

We reserve the right to edit letters
for clarity and length.
© 2010 The Spectator
All rights reserved by the creators.
* Managing Board Members

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

**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 or
drop it in The Spectator box
in the second-floor mail room.

Opinions

A Rendezvous with Destiny



By DANIEL SOLOMON

Summers are fleeting moments in the lives of many young people—times of flight from responsibility and rare instances of liberation from the shackles of a daily routine. With such freedom comes the temptation of sloth and all that it entails—no work and all play, the deterioration of academic skills and the loss of discipline. Fortunately, most Stuyvesant students follow the Middle Way when it comes to vacation by balancing labor and leisure, keeping their heads in books and not losing their sense of focus. They realize that despite the way the dog days of August drag on, the fall, and its many dimensions, will soon arrive.

This reality is apparently lost on our country's richest and most powerful people, who have been content to let the good times roll, basking in the sun and sums of summer, while saving nothing for the winter of deficit and depression. The wizards of Wall Street gambled everything—our parents' pensions, our college accounts and the health of the overall economy—on risky, complicated bets, and when they lost, handed the taxpayers the bill for their recklessness. America's politicians shied away from the problems of our day and instead voted themselves pay raises, gave the wealthiest unaffordable tax cuts and embroiled our nation in two wars from which we are now struggling to extricate ourselves.

The BP oil spill is the latest manifestation of this confluence of corporate irresponsibility and lack of political will. The oil company's executives ignored the dictates of common sense in

their quest for ever higher profits, irreparably ravaging the wildlife and waters of the Gulf Coast, while destroying the livelihoods of innumerable fishermen. Our government didn't do a much better job. The regulators who were supposed to call BP to task were asleep at the wheel and, in some cases, looked the other way as the corporation skimped on safety. If the actions of these officials look cowardly, one should look at Congress, whose behavior towards the environment has been positively sinister. For years, representatives and senators have pocketed polluters' money and refused to address the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, instead aiding and abetting the rape of our natural world. Even the current administration—this generation's great liberal hope—has pronounced global warming legislation dead—an act of cowardice that does not befit a man of President Obama's stature.

We have witnessed the disastrous effects of this behavior and the way it has threatened our peace and prosperity. As Stuyvesant students—the world's future leaders and CEOs—we should condemn this behavior for what it is: cynical, calculating and counterproductive. Conversely, our intelligence should help us realize that ultimately, America needs a culture of responsibility that rewards financiers for dynamism and not destruction—one that holds up for admirable men and women who speak truth to power and punishes those who lack resolve. We know that everyone must have skin in the game; politicians shouldn't be able to exempt themselves from legislation that they have written and businessmen shouldn't be allowed to escape the consequences of the chaos they cause. Together, we shall meet fate's test—what Franklin Roosevelt once called a "rendezvous with destiny"—and help America endure the winter by bracing for the challenges of the impending fall.



By SHILPA AGRAWAL

When my friend and I, two high school students with no prior teaching experience, told the principal of a small government school in Bangalore, India, that we would be teaching English to his fifth and sixth grade classes, which are combined due to lack of space and teachers, he hardly looked up from his book to nod us away. We walked into a classroom with no teacher in sight, where students were cleaning the floor and conversing as if they were not in class. Elated to see two young girls take over, they said their morning greeting, "Good morning, teachers"—the only English words some students knew—in unison. Even though we couldn't speak the Indian language of Kannada fluently, our broken-Kannada-teaching was more effective than the teaching of a solely Kannada-speaking teacher, since that teacher would be teaching a language - English - he or she is completely unfamiliar with.

What we were supposed to be teaching, but avoided at all costs—to the apathy of the school administration—was the government curriculum, which is designed to prepare students for a culminating exam. This curriculum outlines each lesson, is based solely on rote memorization and completely lacks class discussions.

The foundation we were teaching through, The Dream School Foundation (DSF), strives to give children within the city of

Bangalore a right to quality education. It provides teachers for government schools in Bangalore and holds after-school sessions for students to further their learning with better instruction than they receive in school. While improving education can seem like a tremendous and daunting task, small, localized efforts can be rewarding and effective for both teacher and student.

In New York State, quality control has become a pressing issue. On July 28, 2010, The New York Times reported in the article, "Standards Raised, More Students Fail Tests," that this year, when the New York State exams for grades three through eight were made less predictable in order to more accurately represent a student's ability, the number of passing students fell in both English and math. In English, the percentage of passing students fell from 77 to 53 percent, and in math, it fell from 86 to 61 percent. Such statistics were no surprise to me since many classes, like my Indian fourth grade class, are devoted solely to test preparation and put 45 minutes of instruction to waste. Even worse, a curriculum that is designed around taking a test makes children lose interest in a whole year's worth of education.

The problem exists beyond primary schooling, as well. As students at Stuyvesant, we should be thankful that our courses are, in theory, designed to teach us beyond the Regents, but in some other New York City high schools, students struggle to pass their Regents exams. In all but two Regents exams—Comprehensive German and Comprehensive Spanish—New York City schools lie below the state median. There could be many reasons for this problem, including socioeconomic issues, school administration failings and class teaching methods. However, while trying to get to the root of the issue, we could still begin the more important goal of improving the situation.

Though this is not a promotional article for volunteering organizations, there are many ways one can get involved to help improve education. The popu-

lar Teach For America organization has managed to make a big impact across the nation, giving kids from low-income families access to quality education. More locally, there are other organizations that can assist children with discovering their passions, such as 826NYC—a branch of 826 National, founded by renowned author Dave Eggers—which helps kids between the ages of six and 18 with their creative and expository writing skills. There is also an organization called READ, led by teenage volunteers, which helps disadvantaged elementary school students who are reading below grade level to meet their academic goals.

Teaching in Bangalore this summer was a rewarding experience for me and the students I taught. It was amazing to see their improvement in reading—some could even read a Dr. Seuss book with me at the end of the three weeks—as well as in conversational English. By the end of my time there, despite what at first seemed like a language barrier, I could really communicate with them and it was more than gratifying.

Volunteering can also help us Stuyvesant students, who receive some of the best educations in the country, to have a better understanding of the world and the lives of students who are not given an education of the same quality. Although it will take a long time to eradicate problems that take away from having a child-centric education, we can all take baby steps by volunteering in organizations that promote tutoring students. Hopefully, we will also come to realize that our class-wide English discussions and hands-on labs are, in fact, part of a quality education that should not be taken for granted.

The Dream School Foundation
<http://www.dsfindia.org>

Teach For America organization
<http://www.teachforamerica.org>

826NYC
<http://www.826nyc.org>

READ
<http://www.readnyc.org>

Inundated with Reluctance Instead of Aid



By SHILA AGRAWAL and MAYA AVERBUCH

For the past month, torrential downpours have devastated Pakistan, and the country's three rivers have overflowed their banks, flooding everything around them. According to the United Nations (UN), the number of people affected by the disaster is greater than the number affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 Haiti earthquake combined.

Yet, despite the magnitude and devastation of this natural disaster, American public response

has been minimal. Initial media coverage was slim, and financial aid has been slower to arrive than it had for the Haiti earthquake. According to the Vancouver Sun article "Why Donors Hesitate to Fund Relief for Pakistan's Flood Victims," published on Monday, August 30, the UN launched a "flash appeal" on Thursday, August 9, to raise nearly 500 million dollars for the cause, but within ten days, only half of this money was pledged. This stands in great contrast with the recent earthquake in Haiti, which gathered 600 million dollars in the same initial ten-day period.

Reasons cited for the reluc-

tance include America's complex relationship with the Pakistani government, as well as the anti-Muslim sentiment that prevails in much of the country. Increasing Taliban influence in some of the same areas affected by the floods, namely the Swat Valley, has dissuaded many Americans from getting involved with the same humanitarian fervor that they had exhibited in the past.

Pakistan is also notorious for its corrupt and ineffective government. President Asif Ali Zardari—who spent eight years in prison in the past, under charges of embezzlement—flew to his French chateau at the peak of the floods. Many people are skeptical that such an irresponsible leader can be trusted with foreign aid to rebuild his country, especially since Zardari has been referred to in the past as Mr. Ten Percent for demanding that every new business pay him ten percent of profits when he was the husband of the former president, the late Benazir Bhutto. The government has received further criticism for its inability, or unwillingness, to successfully combat Al-Qaeda members—and perhaps even Bin Laden—who are said to be hidden in the country's tribal areas. Furthermore, the prevalence of the Taliban, who attempted to impose strict Sharia law, has deterred

the support of liberal-minded Americans. According to The New York Times article "In Pakistan, Taliban Hint at Attacks on Relief Workers," published on Sunday, August 26, Taliban members have threatened to shoot foreigners who attempt to provide aid. With such staunch opposition, it is no wonder Americans are reluctant to dig into their wallets.

Our post-9/11 era has been filled with anti-Muslim sentiment, as can be seen in the uproar sparked by the proposal to build an Islamic community center and mosque near the World Trade Center site. This does not bode well for Pakistan, which, at its birth in 1947, was carved out of greater India as a haven for Muslims. The affiliation of a large segment of its population with radical Islamic countries and extremist groups that the U.S. is at war with, has left Americans with less sympathy for the suffering Pakistanis than for their Haitian counterparts. The Haitians had an additional advantage in that their country's vicinity to the U.S. made their plight seem all the more pressing.

Despite the complex relationship with Pakistan, it is important to remember that the 20 million people affected by this disaster cannot all be held responsible for the tumult that exists in their nation. Every one of them is an in-

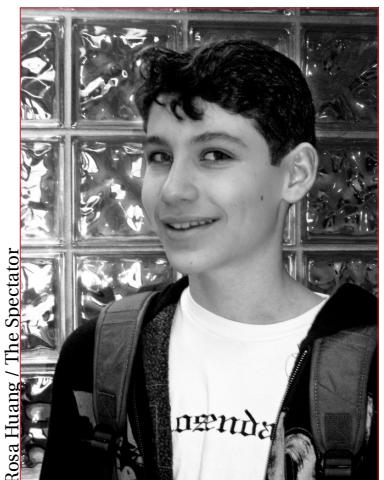
dividual in dire need of our support. While this is a complicated situation, it is important for us to look past the political issues that shadow our nations' relationship and help the cause while it is desperate.

The concern over where ones money is going is valid, but money can always be given to reputable aid organizations such as Doctors Without Borders or The Red Cross. Support from Western nations and persons can also help combat the influence of the Taliban, who have proven to rule in an abusive and dictatorial manner.

While Pakistan at large may be a long way from rebuilding itself, our immediate responsibility is to provide the suffering people with clean water, food and medical attention, as we had done at the time of the Haitian earthquake. Stuyvesant itself managed to raise over a thousand dollars for Doctors Without Borders, and there is no reason to deny Pakistanis the same assistance. As important as it is to donate, it is necessary to maintain awareness of what is happening in all parts of the world, no matter how many oceans exist in between. No matter the form, we must somehow take action instead of sitting back and waiting for the country to work itself out.

Opinions

Fundraising Outside the Box



By JEREMY KAPLITT

In the past year, statewide budget cuts have affected nearly all school functions, ranging from eliminated electives to diminished support for extracurricular activities. Traditional means of fundraising are inadequate to compensate for the widespread loss of funding. Given the state of affairs, we need to find a more creative way to counteract the potential deleterious effects of budget cuts on our school. Let's tap into Stuyvesant's long—as evidenced by its Wikipedia page—list of notable alumni and, in an innovative manner, enlist their help to raise money for our school.

With so many illustrious individuals who walked these halls before us, surely there would be enough who would willingly showcase their talents for fund-raising events. By giving lectures or performances at their alma mater—a relatively small time commitment—they would allow current students to continue to support some of the same

programs that they themselves benefited from when they were students at Stuyvesant. Imagine the quality of events that could be produced with such diverse alumni, including Nobel Laureate Richard Axel, well known author Gary Shteyngart and comedian Paul Reiser. Perhaps Drew Nieporent could even assist in a post-production buffet. With a manageable entrance fee, these Stuyvesant celebrity events would not only be entertaining, but would provide new social activities that appeal to a variety of students, as well. The continually growing roster of famous alums would also serve as a reminder of what current students can accomplish when they move on from Stuyvesant.

from Stuyvesant. Though many of us complain about the budget cuts, no creative solutions are ever suggested. The time has come for us to try an alternative approach to fundraising, and using the alumni network would be a strong first step. Acting now would be a great way to improve school spirit and help provide classes, clubs and publications with the funds they sorely need to preserve the unique and

In the same way that a major activity like SING! is considered by many to be the highlight of the school year, merging the talents of Stuyvesant's past with its present has similar potential. Stuyvesant has many dedicated and talented students who can easily cooperate to organize and produce these events. Such an exciting and unique function would revive school spirit and remind us how special an institution Stuyvesant can and should always be.



By TERESA YAN

With the school year just beginning, thoughts of the New York State Regents Exams are probably far away. Yet, this summer, the Board of Regents revealed something that does re-

quire some thought: the Regents are too easy, officials announced, and will be made more difficult.

Educators and students have long known that the Regents exams are flawed. One problem is the method by which Regents grades are derived. The exams are scaled, meaning a raw score is converted into a percentage using a score chart. This can work to the test taker's advantage or disadvantage and ultimately, does not reflect a true percentage of correct answers. The scoring of Regents exams is also problematic. Since teachers grade their own school's tests, a natural bias may grow to be more unfair as principals' and teachers' bonus pay, school shutdowns and funding become increasingly dependent on standardized test scores. Furthermore, the Regents exams often test specific curriculum material and repeat questions, while only tweaking a few details.

State of the Regents

Because of this, classroom time is reserved for rote learning and endless practice of old Regents, which are critical practices for achieving success on these tests.

have been experiencing business booms. Politicians have their numbers to crow about. In short, everyone wins, except for students.

became clear that other statewide tests were easy, compared with the 2007 national exam. Interestingly, minimum passing math scores were at the 19th percentile nationally, and the 2009 test results indicated that New York students' achievement was below the national average.

Since changes made to the inherently flawed Regents exams only serve to make matters worse, the tests should simply be eliminated. Our state only needs

Admissions offices are only given exams that can indicate whether or not a student from New York State is prepared for college and proficient in a variety of subjects. SAT Subject Tests serve that very purpose. New York is the only state that requires Regents exams. Good results have not been achieved from Regents exams, and it is unlikely that colleges will consider Regents scores during the admissions process. To leave things as they are in the status quo is impossible, and to sharply raise the Regents to reasonable standards is unrealistic and can cause great damage to graduation rates in the coming years.

However, there are many reasons for the low standards of the Regents. Some people point fingers at the No Child Left Behind Act and its demand for annual improvements. The act makes it possible for a school to be shut down for not demonstrating increasing test scores. It then becomes easier to water down the tests than to change the system. With such policies, test making

cause great damage to graduation rates in the coming years.

Getting rid of the Regents exams would be a radical change, but if students cannot use them as an accurate self-assessment, there should be no reason for the exams to be interwoven with the education system. But, regardless of the changes ahead, it's time for students to win something.

Cartoons



The Dishonest Student

Katherine Chi



Arts and Entertainment

Traditional Pastries with a Japanese Twist

By STACY WANG

If you're craving something tasty and are daring enough to try something new, head down to Takahachi Bakery, located

"We have sixty different breads. If you come here once a day, you gotta to come for two months, to try them all, not including sandwiches."

—Kimie Kobayashi, employee

between Church and Murray Street, for not your typical selection of American baked goods. Yes, the bakery offers the usual almond croissants, pear tarts and chocolate chip cookies, but it also has koshi-an croissants, yuzu tarts and almond miso

cookies.

"To bake bread, we start with water, flour, yeast, eggs—the basic ingredients—but we try to put something to make it a little Japanese, like red bean, green tea powder, ginger and yuzu (a type of citrus fruit)," Takashachi employee Kimie Kobayashi said. Simply put, Takahachi Bakery sells fare that has a Japanese twist.

Takahachi Bakery became a new addition to the Tribeca neighborhood back in June. Its owner, Hiroyuki Takahashi, also owns two restaurants, one in the East Village and the other in TriBeCa. He decided to open the bakery in TriBeCa because "...he thinks this is what the people need...and we want to make TriBeCa people happy through good food. Including Stuyvesant kids," Kobayashi said. Except for drinks and cakes, the bakery is self-serve. Customers can simply grab a tray and a pair of tongs and pick their own goods from the overwhelming number of choices available. If a customer is hesitant to try a dish, the people who work at Takahachi are very friendly and are more than happy to describe any unfamiliar ingredients in their foods.

Seating is in the back of the bakery and consists of wooden chairs and tables and a comfy sofa running along one side of the wall. The wall adjacent to the seating area contains a large glass window through which customers can see workers baking and preparing the food.

Takahachi offers not only a wide variety of pastries, but also sandwiches, juice, coffee, tea,



Customers purchase treats at the Takahachi Bakery.

pizza, gelato, sorbet and soups.

"The bakery foods here are familiar, but a little different. There's a little twist in everything," customer Linda Wexelblatt said. Even sandwiches and salads are made with a bit of Japanese flavor. Turkey-Avocado sandwiches (\$6.25) replace the plain old turkey, while salad becomes soba salad (\$5.50).

"I love it," customer Julian Vinocur said. "The pastries are really good, really fresh...It has a more unique personality to

it."

Other unique goodies include An-pan, a soft bun that is made of sweet red bean paste and mochi, and the Almond Miso cookie, which is pleasantly sweet and goes well with a cup of tea (\$2.25 hot or \$2.75 cold) or coffee (\$1.25 hot or \$1.75 cold). For the adventurous, the Genmai Cha (\$2.75 cold) made of green tea and roasted rice, has a mild, quirky seaweed flavor to it.

"We have sixty different

bread," said Kobayashi. "If you come here once a day, you gotta to come for two months, to try them all, not including sandwiches." However, even if you came everyday to try the overwhelming number of pastries available at Takahashi bakery, by the end of two months, they would be putting up new menus and offering new treats. Prices can be high, but it's definitely worth going to try some of their subtly unique creations.

Cartoon



Arts and Entertainment

The Rica-New York Connection

Costa Rica is renowned as one of the most beautiful places on the planet. Chirping Macaws, cacophonous Howlers and majestic Leatherbacks find their home here, in greater numbers and concentration than they are found anywhere else in the world. Yet, after visiting this Central American Garden of Eden early this summer, and after spending two weeks in a town with only 2,000 more people than are in our school, I found that the similarities my family and I shared with the Hernandez family of central Costa Rica left the most enduring impression.

I learned to love what seemed to be a Spanish-dubbed version of my old life, with more rice and beans.

Driving through traffic-free streets of the coffee town Santa Maria de Dota, with parked cars and pedestrians only sporadically lining the sidewalk, I felt like I had just entered a rustic back-country that I had forgotten existed. I met my host family for the first time on the far side of town, up a hill and through the commercial center via the main avenue. Julia Hernandez Ureña, my soon-to-be host mother, smiled, and her face instantly cracked into a dozen wrinkles. Jose, my 16-year-old host brother, stood shyly in the back as Sionny, my 22-year-old host sister, greeted me first. "Bienvenidos, hermano," was the first phrase she said to me. Welcome, brother.

We exchanged some customary greetings and asked simple questions about each other's lives and summers as the Hernandez family hailed one of the few cabs in the city. Julia, Jose and Sionny knew the cabby by name, and the ride was jovial and swift. I entered the family's home and left the comfort of a mainly American, English-speaking tour before I even knew what had happened.

The Hernandez house was short—a one-story house with a tin roof and a gated, window-filled front that was almost bucolic. With help from my family and cabdriver, I took out my luggage from the back of the cab and took my first step inside a home in which I expected to spend two uneventful, television-free, blissfully quiet weeks. But like everything else in Santa Maria de Dota, my homestay defied expectations.

I entered the living room, and, in a remarkably typical way, I saw three of my siblings sitting in front of the television, watching the Discovery Channel's show for the inquisitive:

How It's Made. In a town that had 1700 times fewer people than there are in New York, and that I had been warned might not even have running water, a family was watching a show together on a vacation-day afternoon just like I do at home. It was disconcerting, to say the least, to feel so at home so far away from home. But I just smiled and sat down as my siblings muted the T.V. I drifted into everyday life in small-town Costa Rica.

Throughout my 12-day homestay, I learned to love what seemed to be a Spanish-dubbed version of my old life, with more rice and beans. The television was always on, switching from soccer games, to soap operas, to commercial-punctuated movies—depending on who held the remote. All the movies were American, only dubbed or subtitled in Spanish. The family's obsession with soccer—and at the time, the World Cup—was akin to that of any dedicated Yankees fan. Actually, a great portion of my time in Santa Maria was not spent tilling the soil or tending to the livestock, as I had imagined time in rural Costa Rica would be spent, but sitting in front of the television or computer doing the same things I do at home, instead.

The other main portion of my homestay was spent talking to my host family as they did the chores they wouldn't allow me—or trust me—to do. The Hernandez kitchen was always in a transitory state of upheaval, constantly requiring careful cleaning and attention. And just like in Queens, the family members blasted music from the computer in the other room while they were cleaning. The only difference was found in their music choices: American goth metal and Costa Rican pop.

The fact that my homestay memories consisted mainly of television, computer and chores, gave me a lot of insight into the similarities of lifestyles between my two families. Knowing that my small, real family was almost never in the house altogether and that my adopted father and mother, Carlos and Julia, respectively, had eight children—Carlos, Marcel, Jose, Sionny, Andres, Danny, Karla and Dionisio—it wasn't a surprise that I rarely saw my adopted family all in one place.

But when they were around, my family and I spent a lot of time together having fun in very normal ways. With Jose, I played computer games that I had at home, such as Need For Speed II and Age of Empires. Jose and I both had trouble sur-

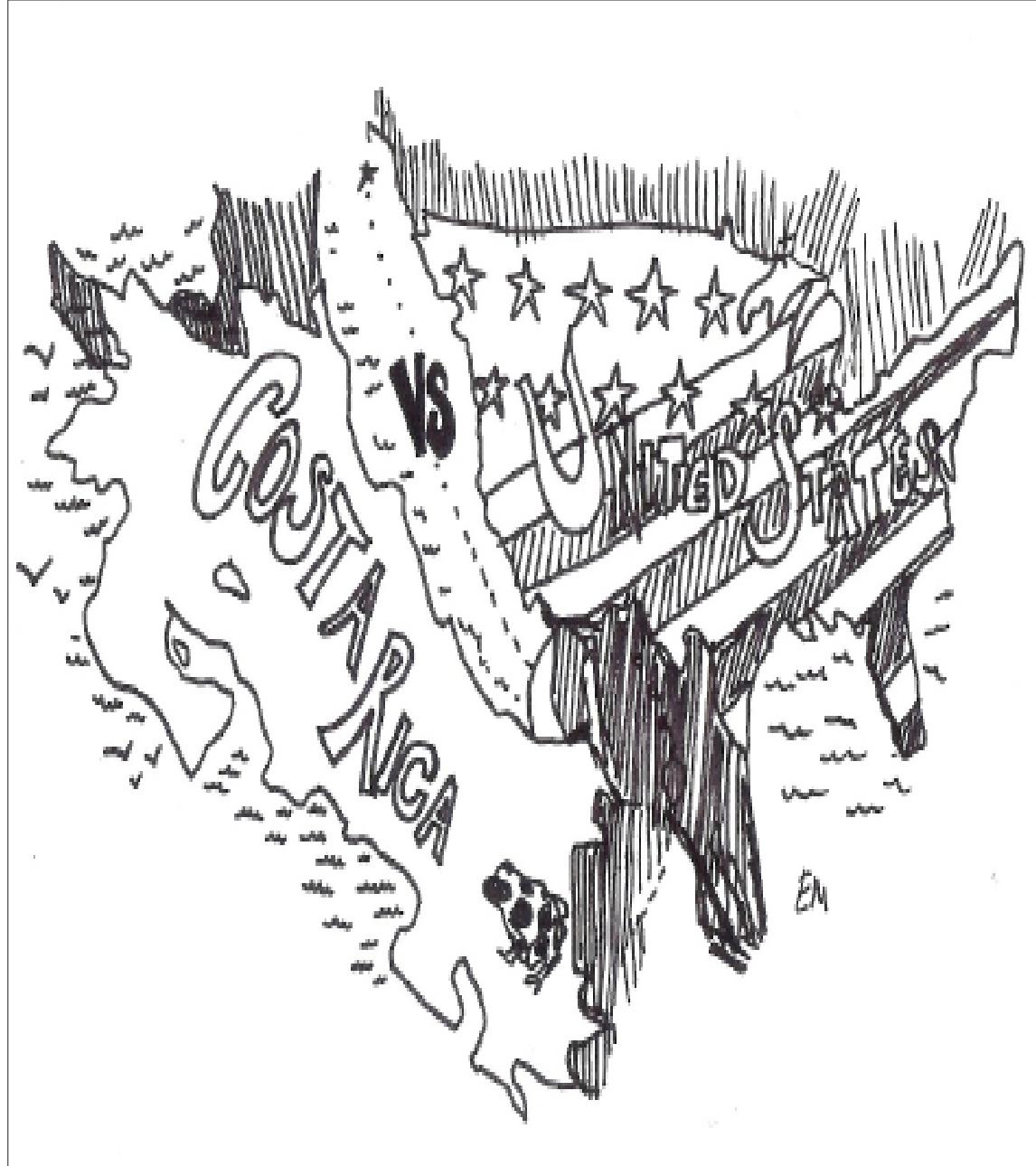
mounting the same armies and making the same turns, and it was comforting to know I had a compatriot in the most disparate reaches of my continent to share in my travails. With Karla, I walked around town, played American card games that she already knew or that I taught her and watched movies like Alice in Wonderland—in Spanish of course. With Sionny, I watched television and, like with everyone else, ate and talked a lot.

They all told me of their lives. Carlos was a hard worker, and like his older sons Andres and Danny, he used to have to

get up at four in the morning to work the coffee plantations. At this point, he had a comfor-

tment, tchotchkes and pretty pieces of family-made artwork all reconfirmed my belief that

and returned after maximizing their opportunities in the state. Bus rides to the "next big



able desk job, and though the hours weren't as long, he spent much more time away from home than in it. Andres worked in the maintenance arm of the Cooperativa Dota—the coffee farm/factory—for a hefty amount of time each day, so that he could pay alimony and child support to his month old daughter. Danny also worked each day for his 3 year-old Jose Daniel, though he wasn't paying support, because his wife had a job and the child was old enough that he could go to an expensive, though extremely helpful, pre-school. He was also looking into a more lucrative career in soldering, never putting down his metal magazine when he had a chance to study. They were away a lot, but when they were home, they were like

5000-ton boulders on the family couch. The only unstoppable force that could make those immovable objects move was the smell of a rice and bean dish, or agua dulce—a sweet, traditional Costa Rican drink—being poured.

While talking to them, I knew that my family had worked so hard for the generations that they could remember and recount, so that they could provide comfortably for their family members. There were closets full of baby toys they never used. There was also a miniature library for the kids' current education and the babies' future ones. Expectedly, most of their tomes were gathering dust, as only the dictionaries and reference books were saved from the forgotten shelves, just like similar books in my home in Queens. The under-used exercise equip-

all people around the world are basically the same and want the same things: a better life for their children, toys for them to play with and books for them to read—things to make their lives better, easier and more enjoyable.

Though the family didn't yet have a car, they rode bikes and buses and found ways to make due. Luckily, their town can be biked across in no more than an hour. Their lack of an automobile could be a matter, not of insufficient means, but of insufficient demands. Either way, the adults seemed satisfied with their life, at the moment. The mom made wood-art, carving beautiful pieces of people and animals into tidy frames and making miniature figures of creatures like dolphins. This was to keep her hands busy while she wasn't cooking for the neighbors or cooking, cleaning and watching T.V. in her own home. When I was in Costa Rica, I saw that the father was redecorating and refurbishing the home to keep busy, slaving in the yard with Danny and Andres and building walls and family bonds simultaneously.

The only one with any complaints was Jose. He felt stifled by a town where the nightlife was limited to one club called "La Cueva," which was bemoaned and mistrusted by every parent in Santa Maria de Dota. Though, to me, it just looked like a Cracker Barrel with a dance floor. Jose felt stifled by a town where he knew everyone, where there were few opportunities for growth and where most of the people with big houses had gone to New Jersey at some point in their lives

town" nearby were big events, but even there everything was closed on Sundays. And even though Costa Rica is consistently polled as one of the happiest countries in the world, from what I gleaned from Jose's very thinly veiled criticism of the pueblo, he felt a little depressed by a municipality that shut down after eight.

But in general, I realized my Costa Rican family's lives and mine are basically the same. I may have a bigger T.V., a faster computer and a family car, but those are just differences in the wealth of our respective countries and extent of our opportunities. They are not due to a lack of hard work on either side, and any difference in outlook is purely a product of our circumstances. Thankfully, I am not denied the nightlife or the opportunities that are denied to Jose.

I thought I would have trouble fitting in with Santa Maria's citizens, but after spending two weeks with them and getting to know a sizable chunk of them as I worked in their elderly care center and perused their shops, I realized they are happy, healthy and well educated. They have comparable material wealth, plus the emotional wealth brought by being forcibly close with their family and neighbors. There was a sense of community and a debt to it. And my overall impression after seeing the lives, work habits and entertainment-choices of these people, was that my life as a middle-class Queens kid was not much different than the life of a person in Costa Rica.

Arts and Entertainment

Frozen Bliss



The Big Gay Ice Cream Truck is known for its alternative ice cream toppings and flamboyant cone names.

By SHAH ALAM

Some say the best things in life are at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. While others may differ in their choice of indulgences, I chose to put my trust in the former statement. And so, with my faithful notepad in hand and a capacious appetite raging inside me, I set out on a quest to wage war against the hottest summer and find my very own piece of frozen heaven.

One of New York's most esteemed frozen treats is the ice cream sandwich. With roots in World War II, the sandwich has been through many twists and variations at the hands of frozen treat visionaries and innovators alike. One such group of humanitarians is the popular gelato chain, L'Arte del Gelato. It has strayed from the original wafer-ice cream-wafer recipe and opted for a more exotic brioche-gelato-brioche technique that sparks sheer joy. "Ever since I tried the gelato here, I've put ice cream behind me," customer Macy Starr said. "It's really a whole new experience."



L'Arte del Gelato, 33 Barrow Street.

Serendipity 3, a quaint little restaurant in the Upper East Side, has concocted what may be the world's most scrumptious oxymoron. The "Frozen Hot Chocolate" has been the boutique's trademark for several decades and still stands as the most sought after frozen treat in New York. The dish, composed of frozen chocolate topped with a mountain of whipped cream and chocolate shavings and served in an immense goblet, is guaranteed to fill anyone's appetite. "It's great, I first tried it with my parents when I was a kid, and I've been a sucker ever since," regular diner Tori Dale said.

The best part of any birthday is now available in personal portion sizes. Midtown steakhouse Quality Meats offers individual ice cream cakes served in cups. The ice cream station has a cornucopia of flavors, ranging from Pie Smash—a blueberry cake containing raspberry icing and lemon meringue ice cream—to Cherry Monkey—a banana cake with vanilla icing and pistachio-cherry ice cream. "The Pie Smash is so fruity, in the best possible way," customer Richard Lee said.



Serendipity III, 225 East 60th Street.

"I come treat myself to the cakes at least once a week." The ice cream station also caters to bigger sizes with additional flavors, like coconut macaroon.

When searching for an exceptional milkshake, it is quite hard to find one with the right texture, flavor or richness, let alone all three. However, the Lexington Candy Shop has successfully met the high expectations of New York's many milkshake enthusiasts. The luncheonette has been mixing shakes for over 70 years, and its techniques have remained roughly the same. Customers swear the vintage mixer used in the luncheonette makes the shakes that much better. With a wide range of authentic "freezes," such as the "creamsicle"—a vanilla milkshake mixed with fresh orange juice—it's no wonder that this shop brings all the boys, as well as girls, to the yard.

New York City's most unique ice cream truck may resemble a defected Mr. Softee, but one look at the rainbow cone logo and you'll recognize that the Big Gay



The milkshakes of the Lexington Candy Shop are some of the best in the city.

Ice Cream Truck is very different from the rest of the pack. While it serves original vanilla and chocolate soft-served ice cream to those afraid to take their taste buds on a venture, the Big Gay Ice Cream Truck is known for its choice of uncanny toppings such as sea salt, pumpkin butter and crushed wasabi peas. With flamboyantly named treats, like "Salty Pimp"—a vanilla cone with dulce de leche, sea salt and chocolate dip—to accompany their other variants of ice cream, owners Douglas Quint and Bryan Petroff continue to bring their cherished ice cream to the streets.

For those seeking refuge and a haven from the unpleasant bits of summer, frozen treats are arguably the best approach. Brain freeze has never tasted, or felt, so good.

Dancing in Russia: Chronicles of a Gypsy Punk Enthusiast

By JAMES KOGAN

A breakdown of a Gogol Bordello concert is as follows: a dollop of anarchy, a large handful of punk, half a cup of sweat and a strong splash of reckless fun stirred in for good measure. Together, these ingredients form a volatile concoction that releases tremendous amounts of pure, unfiltered energy. This energy is enough to get everyone within the vicinity of a half mile jumping and slam dancing to the vibes of the Gypsy-Punk spirit. Every few nights or so, front man Eugene Hütz and his jolly circus of musical troubadours transform crowds from all around the world into clammy song-and-dance parties.

A native New York City band, Gogol Bordello consists of Russo-Ukrainian-Romanian guitarist/vocalist Eugene Hütz, Russian violin-virtuoso Sergey Ryabtsev, Spanish-Latvian guitarist Oren Kaplan, Russian-Ukrainian-Jewish-Polish accordionist Yuri Lemeshev, Ecuadorian MC Pedro Erazo, Chinese backing vocalist/percussionist Elizabeth Chi-Wei Sun and Trinidad and Tobago-Ionian-Swedish drummer Oliver Francis Charles. Only in New York City can one find a band comprised of such ethnically diverse musicians. However, while the group's music certainly has eclectic influences, ranging from dub to punk, the violin and accordion melodies are steadfast reminders of the European roots of Gogol's music.

While I was vacationing in Moscow, where Gogol had been scheduled to play a show a few days before its anticipated NYC show, it seemed fitting to experience Gogol's Slavic music in a Slavic country. I found myself in an outdoor theater, among a large crowd of 19 and 20 year olds. Everyone sported a thick accent and funky hairstyle and awaited this sonic syndicate of transcontinental vagabonds.

What surprised me was the fervor with which the people in the crowd awaited the band's arrival. They all seemed to be really into it, despite the fact that Gogol's music is essentially a beefed-up offshoot of their own heritage. Some even chanted "Zhenya," which is the diminutive version of Hütz's first name. After a half hour of shouting and chanting, the crowd erupted into screams as the band members finally took the stage, one by one. Last but not least, Hütz stumbled out unshaven, draped in necklaces and sporting tight, striped purple shorts and a pair of clown shoes. With a bottle of wine in

one hand, and a gypsy guitar in the other, he commenced the musical ceremonies.

What came afterward was a rigorous, two-hour exercise in heritage. With the frenzied and festive music, the crowd quickly began to resemble a wave pool, with bodies flying up and down and heads reeling about in time with the percussive guitar strumming. Toward the center of the crowd were moshers, which are slam dancers and other adrenaline-fixated individuals. With every song, the crowd responded more and more passionately. The low basses and shrill screams of ardent fans singing back to the band echoed all around. On the dance floor, which was now soaked with beer, sweat and possibly blood, arms and legs were flying in a flurry. Some people were jumping side to side, into one another. Others were skanking, which is a ska dance that involves kicking one's legs out and swinging one's arms back and forth and side to side. A few distinguished individuals and I were dancing the Tarantella, a fast-paced Italian dance resembling a delirious and agitated hop and skip. Lastly, the truest Slavs were performing a traditional Ukrainian folk dance that involves squatting and kicking one's legs out.

One frenetic jam progressed into another, and the white-hot intensity of the band radiated into the roaring, cavorting crowd before it. A slow ballad did not diffuse the loving energy. Instead, the crowd became a choir as countless people raised up lighters, swayed them from side to side and belted out tunes in harmony. As soon as the band began another roaring folk tune, the winding dances resumed. The number of willing dancers had dwindled to a steadfast few, who were now shirtless and joined in a circle, spinning round and round with exuberant shouts of "hop"—a Ukrainian exclamation that means "jump."

To say that I had an epiphany that night would be cheesy, but never had I been among a group of people with such a welcoming vibe. As the mission charter on Gogol's Web site states, Gogol Bordello's music "provokes the audience into a neo-optimistic communal movement toward new sources of authentic energy." The sensation is a wiry, but fuzzy, high that gives you a sense of friendship with strangers who suddenly hold your sweaty hands and ritually sing and dance with you. If that isn't enough, the crazy madhouse, Gogol Bordello, has a passionate live show that cannot, and should not, be missed.



Arts and Entertainment

Treasures Uncovered

By EMMA POLLACK and JASMINE WONG

The key to surviving a day at a flea market is to enter with no expectations. If you are looking for one specific item, chances are you won't find it. The best purchases are made when you have no previous intention of buying an item. Flea markets are the antithesis of organization; everything you could ever want and every item that serves no purpose whatsoever fill the hundreds of tables and line the once bleak walls of abandoned garages. New York is home to dozens of flea markets, but with most only being held on weekends, it is impossible to explore them all. Here are only a select few of the many unique and eclectic markets scattered



Emma Pollack / The Spectator

Antiques Garage is just one of the many flea markets around the city that offers a wide range of eclectic goods, ranging from African masks to Brooklyn pickles.

At first, it looks a bit like a bunch of haphazardly placed booths with your cheap and run of the mill knickknacks but go further.

throughout the city. Check them out and uncover treasures in places you would least expect them to be hidden. The Antique Garage 112 West 25th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues)

The Vibe: Chaos. This market is by no means a reflection of today's modern sense of order and cleanliness. The musty smell of the eclectic antiques combined with the humidity of the garage may be a bit uncomfortable at first, but stick with it and embrace the throwback to every decade imaginable. Vendors take up shop in every nook and cranny of the abandoned garage. As you enter, you are enveloped by racks upon racks of brightly colored dresses hanging over tables and tables of vintage and outlandish jewelry. You may think that such a stand is only for girls and clothing. If this

is the case than you are wrong. The stall also sells vintage army metals and African masks. The goods: Dozens of never-been-open packs of old baseball cards (\$2-\$10); Plastic, cheap, costume jewelry (\$1-\$7) contrast the rare vintage designer rings and necklaces (\$35-\$150); An assortment of old cameras including accordion-styled stand-up cameras and Polaroids (\$13-\$78). Advice: Beware of knock-offs (especially when it comes to bags) and never be afraid to haggle. These are professional vendors—they know how to spot the amateur buyers. Hell's Kitchen Flea Market 406

West 39th Street between 9th and 10th The Vibe: All the way out on 10th avenue, it is tempting to bypass this flea market out of fatigue. But don't. At first, it looks a bit like a bunch of haphazardly placed booths with your cheap and run of the mill knickknacks, but go further. Soon rare, one of a kind antiques and works of art replace the mass-produced items. If you are looking for a specific item, this place is not for you. Few vendors stick to one theme. The market runs on a first come first serve basis, but there is usually more than one vendor selling similar items. If wandering is something

you love, brace yourself against the sun and look around. You might just find something at the very last stand. The goods: Designer shoes surprisingly ordered by size (\$10-\$60); vintage Italian glasses frames (\$32-\$76); license plates turned lunch boxes and bags (\$40-\$80), bomber jackets (\$14-\$28). Advice: Move quickly to avoid time under the sun. If something catches your eye, take it just in case. You can always put it back later; most vendors just want to make a sale and will not necessarily hold an item for you.

Brooklyn Flea 1 Hanson Place at Flatbush Avenue

The Vibe: Plaid-wearing hipsters have taken pride in their bustling DUMBO flea market located in an old bank. The atmosphere of the market mirrors the diversity of Brooklyn—each stand is unique in the items they sell, the ethnicity of the vendor and their intended clientele. The market, though overwhelming at first, maintains a surprisingly organized aesthetic. Stalls range from selling hand-carved wooden furniture to pickles made from treasured family recipes. To uncover the most prized goods of Brooklyn Flea, you have to devote an entire day for exploring the bank turned market.

The Goods: Rings made from old typewriter keys (\$2-\$10), wooden stools useful in the bathroom (\$60-\$140), homemade salami (\$7-\$13), screen-printed tees displaying artists' designs (\$18-\$30).

Advice: Be prepared to see some outlandish prices for unnecessary items. The best items take a lot of searching for, but are worth your time. Don't be intimidated by the vendors—try to talk them up so they lower the price.

By DIANA HOU

Embracing the scorching heat, the masses turned up on a traditional Saturday for The Village Voice's 10th annual Siren Music Festival. The indie and experimental rock performed at Siren Fest managed to draw huge, perspiring crowds to the Coney Island Boardwalk, including the entire population of Brooklyn hipsters. "The free concert gives my friends from outside of NYC an excuse to come and visit. They love the event and come

"I've seen them three times, but when they play in Brooklyn, it's just so much better cause of all their borough pride."
—Sarah Morgan Cohen-Smith ('10)

every single year," said sophomore Rajaa Elidrissi from Francis Lewis High School. For the most part, the tourists blended in with the native New Yorkers to produce one youthful, heat-defying, plaid-wearing throng, intent on enjoying a full day of high-quality sound and tireless energy.

The festival was set on two stages a few blocks apart. The Main Stage on 10th Street and the Stillwell Stage on Stillwell Avenue. It featured separate lineups with performance times that were intentionally separated so that the audience members could move from one stage to the other. The lineup was fairly impressive, and both stages featured some relatively well known names, such as Matt & Kim, Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Cymbals Eat Guitars and The Pains of Being Pure at Heart. As the main attractions were reserved for the later hours of the day (the festival began at noon), the crowds did not thicken until three p.m., when Surfer Blood took the Main stage, performing crowd favorites "Floating Vibes" and "Swim," which emphasized the influence of their sunny South Florida origins. The crowd, sporting free Village Voice fans and earplugs, bobbed to the smooth, surf-reminiscent tunes, while lead singer J.P. Pitts charmed the crowd with his youthful demeanor and quirky dance moves.

Ponytail then took the Stillwell Stage, but sounded rather like "video game music with screaming," Sarah Morgan Cohen-Smith ('10) said. "They'd be an alright band if they just fired their singer." The scene was still fairly mellow, with some people just arriving and others enjoying the Coney Island amusement park. At Stillwell, Harlem, the three-person garage rock band took the stage. The raucous crowd there took the subsiding heat as their cue to lash out in a frenzy, as the band mirrored the crowd's energy and provoked some intense moshing—the first of the day.

People left Harlem much



sweatier and thirstier than they were before, gratefully picking up some free drinks as they headed back to Main Stage. The streets were crawling with sponsors endorsing their products with freebies and giveaways, which included T-shirts, frisbees and odd candies. The audience at Main Stage had grown considerably, so it took some squeezing and scheming to push through the holes in the crowd and reach the tightly jammed near the front. By this time, Ted Leo was wrapping up, and the main attraction of the night was preparing to get on stage—the band that earned the fondest welcome and the densest crowd—Matt & Kim.

Originating in Williamsburg, this lively and incredibly endearing keyboard-and-drums duo greeted the crowd with such love and excitement that they were cheering their hearts out even before they began to play. From the very first song, Matt & Kim sent their tireless energy coursing through the crowd, creating a tantalizing mosh pit. They played many crowd favorites, such as "Good Ol' Fashion Nightmare" and "Lessons Learned," allowing for much hand-waving and singing along. The most charming qualities of the dynamic duo were their perpetual smiling and ability to enjoy every moment. Their energy and enthusiasm was

so high that Kim broke her drum pedal halfway through the performance. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that they were in their hometown. "I've seen them three times, but when they play in Brooklyn, it's just so much better cause of all their borough pride," Cohen-Smith said.

Matt & Kim was the perfect end to this year's Siren Fest, reminding the audience how good it is to be alive and listen to free music on Brooklyn's Coney Island. To wash off a day's worth of grime and sweat, many audience members followed Matt & Kim into the Atlantic Ocean's Coney Island.

Sports

Boys' Cross Country

Hitmen Strive For States In Cross Country Season

By PHILIP GODZIN

Stuyvesant boys' cross country team, newly named Greyclucks, fell just short of qualifying for the State Championships last cross country season, placing fifth in cities when only the top four seeds were invited. Yet, despite the significant loss of seven graduating seniors who combined to post seven top-five finishes, for this upcoming season, the team is confident that it won't meet the same fate again.

"Team chemistry [last season] was lacking. There also wasn't as much dedication throughout the team, but we're making it a mission this year to change that," junior Yorkbell Jaramillo said. "With the new dedicated runners we have and a new attitude, we can definitely make up for those losses."

This fresh attitude was displayed by the large turnout of about 20 runners at cross country camp this August. Many members of both the boys and girls cross country teams attended Camp Pontiac in Upstate New York, running and spending time together to improve the team chemistry.

Included in the group of seven graduating seniors is Daniel Hyman-Cohen, a true leader of the team in his four years at Stuyvesant. Hyman-Cohen began his dominance in cross country in his first year, placing second as a freshman in the varsity city championships, third as a sophomore and second as a junior. Though he was plagued by illness his senior year and was not able to run as many races, Hyman-Cohen still finished second in the City Championships once again.

Although tough to overcome, the loss of Hyman-Cohen seems conquerable. "We always try to rebuild," said coach Mark Mendes. "If everybody stays healthy,

we should be in the running for the city championship."

"Hopefully, I'll be able to have both the success he had and also provide the leadership he did," junior Konrad Surkont said.

In cross country, a team is comprised of seven runners who score points equal to the positions of the best five finishes. For instance, a first place finish provides one point, a third place finish provides three points, and so on. Additionally, the remaining

"If everybody stays healthy, we should be in the running for the city championship."
—Mark Mendes, coach

two runners have a chance to add a point onto the opposing team's score if they manage to beat the fifth best time on the opposing team. This is crucial when the lowest score total wins.

Thus far, the Greyclucks look set in their all-important first five spots, led by Surkont, who will be taking Daniel's spot. Following Surkont is senior and captain Billy Barnes, one of the top distance runners in the city and a solid runner in the two-spot. Barnes placed fourth in the freshman city championship and third in the borough championship as a junior. Rounding out the top five

are juniors Mark Schramm, Jaramillo and senior Andy Chen. The final two spots should be decided after the runners return from their summer camp.

The great competition in the city, as always, will be a tough challenge for the Greyclucks to overcome in their attempt to return to the State Championships. Standing in their way are perennial powerhouses and qualifiers for last season's State Championships: Brooklyn Technical High School, Curtis High School, McKee Staten Island Tech and Bronx Science, along with Francis Lewis and Midwood. Brooklyn Tech, last year's city champion, also lost its top four runners, but returned its fifth finisher and a sophomore who placed second in the junior varsity city championship last year. Curtis graduated its top three runners, as well, including the outright city champion, Jason Stapelton.

"Bronx Science has been the school talked about almost exclusively when it comes to competition," Chen said. "They have a very strong team as well and only lost two seniors."

Because the powerhouse teams did lose a significant portion of their rosters to graduation, no team looks to be considerably stronger than any other. Most of the top 40 in the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) last year graduated, so the field is actually wide open," Barnes said.

It seems, though, that most PSAL teams do not feature the same depth as Stuyvesant's teams do. With at least five runners who were successful as underclassmen, the Greyclucks returns a talented and knowledgeable team, despite its tough losses to graduation. "We've gained experience from last year, and we hope to reach the ultimate goal, which is winning the City Championships," Surkont said.

The Foreign Exchange

continued from page 16

olds and was amazed at their skill, ball control and knowledge of the game. It was apparent that these ten year olds could give most high school teams in the states a competitive match. But if these same kids were to come to America and watch a little league baseball team play, wouldn't they too be shocked at how talented the little leaguers are? So what causes this discrepancy? It could only

soccer, play it from an extremely young age and continue to play it on club and travel teams. In America, young kids might play soccer in a local league (even I had my own short soccer stint), but interest seems to taper off for the less talented players. Because most kids in America do not see the type of competitive soccer Europeans do, they tend to be more interested in exclusively American sports, such as football and baseball.

So really, all it takes to make a sport nationally recognized is to expose it to the youth of the nation. Obviously, this is no small task. It takes people like Byrnes, who are passionate and want to see others share their love for a sport, to make it happen. Maybe in 10 or 20 years, Byrnes's small clinic for elementary school students will have turned into Swiss little league and travel teams, encouraging the development of more professional baseball leagues in Switzerland and an even wider fan base. Maybe the young boy who watched my brother and me in our game of catch was inspired to go out and buy a baseball glove. For now, the Swiss baseball lovers will have to wait, just as Americans had to wait for years, in agony, for a successful world cup berth. After all, some things will always remain foreign.

The only way to make baseball a Swiss sport was to start from the bottom, by building a solid foundation of young players.

be what Byrnes had mentioned. In Europe, kids come out of the womb with a soccer ball in their hands. They grow up watching

Boys' Soccer

Stuyvesant FC Opens Season Against Defending Champions MLK



Christina Bogdan/The Spectator

Senior Tobi Idowu prepares to kick the ball as the Stuyvesant FC practices for its upcoming season.

continued from page 16

don't think you can win, you've lost before you've even begun."

Stuyvesant will yet again take a strong and determined attitude into one of the strongest soccer divisions in the Public School Athletic League (PSAL). The Manhattan A Division is home to PSAL powerhouses Martin Luther King Jr. High School (MLK) and Beacon High School.

"We play some of the top teams in the city, and maybe the country, so we have a challenging season ahead of us," Fuksman said. MLK is currently ranked 34th in the country, according to ESPN.com. Last season, Stuyvesant FC was 0-2 against MLK and did not score a goal.

Stuyvesant FC will play MLK twice this year, including the first game of the season on Tuesday, September 7. "I love challenges," O'Connor said. "I think I speak for the team when I say that. Nothing gets us fired up more than someone saying we

cannot do something."

Stuyvesant FC's other difficult games include two games against Julia Richmond Educational Center—which managed to tie with Stuyvesant in two of its three matches last year, with Stuyvesant winning the third—and two games against rival, Beacon High School.

Stuyvesant FC will also play two more regular season games than it did in previous years, due to the addition of two teams to the division—Bard High School and Manhattan Center for Science and Math.

These teams moved up from the Manhattan B Division after very successful seasons last year and are set to make the Manhattan A Division even stronger. Bard High School went 11-0 and Manhattan Center for Science and Math went 12-0.

"When the seniors graduated last year, we lost a lot, both in talent and in character," O'Connor said. "I think everybody realizes that and, because of that, everybody is more willing to work together this year."

Football

Peglegs Hope to Learn From Past Mistakes

continued from page 16

season, in preparation for the new season. From participating in basic drills to power lifting in the weight room, they realize that they will have to put in as much effort as possible in order to be successful. "We've been coming out three to four times a week in the offseason, when it's 90 degrees outside," Li said. "We've been doing sprints; 30, 40 and 50 yard sprints. We've been doing the t-cone drills. We've been doing suicides [running exercises]. The team is hopeful that these exercises off the field will translate into success on the field.

One of the areas that the team has confidence in is the running game. This year's offensive line is well-equipped, in terms of weight and strength. This, in combination with a tandem of skilled running backs, including senior and captain Mike Bucauto and senior Vlad Deshkovich, can allow the Peglegs to effectively run the ball. On the defensive end, the team is looking forward to having a group of quick cornerbacks and safeties.

To fill some of the holes that last year's graduating class left, several of the junior varsity players will be moving up. Though

"We don't have much room for error because we do not have much depth."
—Bing Wang, senior

Whether as a starter or a bench player, the junior varsity players are eager to be on the varsity team. "I look forward to doing my part and helping out the team. Starters aren't the only

people that contribute a lot to the team," junior Ian Chan said.

One variable that is being thrown into this season is the shakeup in the division. Last year, the Cup Division consisted of 14 teams fighting for four playoff spots. This year, however, it has been trimmed to 11 teams, with the same four playoff spots. (There were previously 12 teams, but after A. Philip Randolph High School's varsity football team was dropped in early August, 10 of the 11 teams in the division, including the Peglegs, were given an automatic win.) Although this may seem like an advantage for the team, it remains wary. "We don't know if our schedule is harder or easier," Li said. "What we're going to look at is how well we practice, and how well we perform during games."

The 2010, the Peglegs realized that they needed some kind of change in order to be successful this year. And so far, there seems to have been a significant change in attitude. It is "a type of attitude our team has been missing for the past couple of years, when we had these disappointing seasons," Wang said. Perhaps this newfound approach to the game will lead to the Peglegs' first winning season since 2008.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Football

Peglegs Hope to Learn From Past Mistakes

By MAHTAB ALAM

Coming off their second consecutive disappointing season, with devastating injuries and heartbreaking losses, the boys of Stuyvesant's varsity football team, the Peglegs, are looking to redeem themselves this year. The failures of the past two seasons were humbling experiences. However, this year, the team members realize that a successful season is not going to come to them easily.

"We have a very strong starting lineup," senior, strong safety and fullback Bing Wang said. "We don't have much room for error because we do not have much depth, and we really can't afford any mistakes to lose us any games this season, if we want to make the playoffs."

Coach Mark Strasser also felt that, this year, his team looks promising. "We have great senior leadership coupled with talented juniors," Strasser said. "That is a recipe for success."

The Peglegs compiled a record of 2-8 last year, ending the season on a six-game losing streak. According to senior captain, offensive guard and defensive tackle Ming Li, one of the most prominent problems last year was the overconfidence of the team. Similarly, this plagued the team two years ago, when after starting the season with a promising 2-0 record, the Peglegs faltered and only won one of the next nine games. "We thought we had what it takes to make it

all the way to the playoffs, and that was one of the biggest mistakes we made," said Li, referring to last season. The Peglegs want to be confident of their abilities this year, but at the same time, they realize that there are areas in which they can improve.

"Football is a game of inches," Strasser said. "We have a

"We thought we had what it takes to make it all the way to the playoffs. And that was one of the biggest mistakes we made."

—Ming Li, senior

new mentality this year to take us a few more inches."

This new mentality has inspired several of the Peglegs to work rigorously during the off-

continued on page 15

Boys' Soccer

Stuyvesant FC Opens Season Against Defending Champions MLK

By CHARLIE GINGOLD

There is no doubt that this summer's World Cup considerably boosted this nation's interest in soccer. However, most Americans have probably not watched a single match since Spain defeated the Netherlands in the championship game, or even since the United States lost to Ghana in the Round of 16.

But if you think soccer ended for the next four years, you are wrong. Stuyvesant FC, the boys' soccer team, starts its season this fall and hopes to build on its recent success.

Last year, Stuyvesant FC made it to the quarterfinals of the Division-A playoffs before getting knocked out by Francis Lewis High School for the third time in the last four years. The team was led by eight seniors and a deep junior class.

Stuyvesant FC lost strong defenseman Paul Traut ('10), goalkeeper Alex Sandler ('10) and midfielder Andres Fernandez ('10)—all of whom were critical to last year's success.

"After losing so many starting seniors, this is a rebuilding year, and my expectations are to make the playoffs and then take one game at a time," second year head coach Feliks Fuksman said.

With the playoffs on its mind,

and after losing four-year starter Sandler and back-up Andrew Cook ('10), Stuyvesant FC still has to figure out how to fill the ever so important goalkeeper position.

"We have [sophomore] Maxwell Berkow, [freshman] Andrew Puopolo and [sophomore]

"Nothing gets us fired up more than someone saying we cannot do something."

—Colin O'Connor, senior

Nicholas Miller working hard to fill this key position," Fuksman said.

The team this year will be led by a trio of captains: seniors Daniel Beer, Colin O'Connor and Arik Raviv. "I expect to go all the way," O'Connor said. "If you

continued on page 15

Girls' Soccer

With Young Talent and a Fresh Start, Mimbas Look to Improve

able to provide all the transitions that were needed to go from defense to offense. Greenberg was a forward, as well as a defender when she was needed in the left-back position, and Bowie was the team's leading scorer last season.

Preseason began on August 22nd, and the regular season began on September 7th with a home game against Beacon High School, which won the division last season with a perfect 12-0 record. Although Coach Suzanne Lendzian did not assign the team any specific summer workouts, sophomore Kelsey Bernal, who had 24 shots on goal last season and scored two goals, said, "Coach did encourage us to run in order to prepare for the upcoming season. Some of us attended soccer camps and ran weekly or even daily."

The Mimbas still have a lot of room for improvement. "As a team, it is always important to work together. Communication is key," senior Anastasia Gazgalis said. "Gaining so many new players last season made it difficult for us to work together in the beginning, but this season is going to be different since we have all been playing together for a while."

Besides camaraderie, the Mimbas know they need to be in perfect condition in order to compete in their difficult division. "Endurance and stamina is something Coach Lendzian always gets to," senior Xiao Gao said. "It's important, along with

all the other technical things in soccer. Hopefully, we'll be able to make decisions quicker and be able to read plays better."

Though there are things the Mimbas need to work on to be contenders, including coping with the loss of invaluable seniors, the players believe that they will be able to overcome these obstacles. "We have very good players that joined the team last year, including sophomores Alicia Vargas Morawetz, Kelsey Bernal and Ellie Abrams, so we can be hopeful of this season," Gazgalis said.

"Last season, because of the season switch [from spring to fall], our team wasn't prepared to recruit as many players as we could have. That is something we have been working on—advertising," Bernal said. "It seems like we're going to be gaining a couple of very talented players—some who have several years of experience playing on a club team, and others who have determination written all over them. It's a new family every year."

All eyes will be on the Mimbas as they attempt to utilize both veterans and newly found talent to improve their record and reach the playoffs. "Because we're expecting 12 veterans, there [is] going to be a number of slots for prospective teammates on the roster," Bernal said. "We're aiming at least to get back into playoffs. When we get there, we'll figure out which path we should take next."



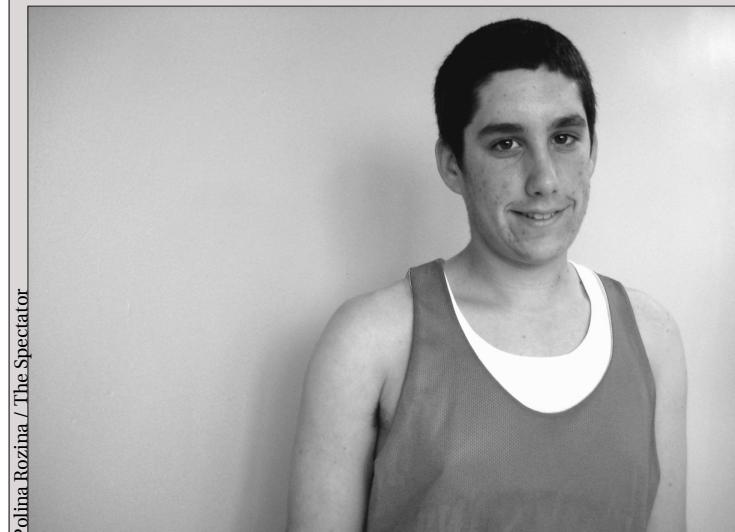
The Stuyvesant Mimbas hold tryouts at the beginning of the season.

By OLIVIA CHU

Last year, Stuyvesant's girls' varsity soccer team, the Mimbas, had to battle injuries and an abrupt season change. Finishing the season with a disappointing 4-7-1 record, the team did not make the playoffs for the first time in three years. However, it is soccer season again, and the Mimbas look to start fresh and improve upon last season's misfortunes.

However, this will not be an easy task because the team lost four starters: alumni Alexandra Greenberg ('10), Devika Gurung ('10), Rebecca Elliot ('10) and Ashleigh Bowie ('10). Gurung was a sweeper, leaving the team a difficult position to fill. Elliot was a central midfielder who was

The Foreign Exchange



By SCOTT CHIUSANO

Two young Swiss boys looked up from their juggling, mesmerized by the tiny white ball zipping back and forth, and whispered something to each other. One of them dropped his soccer ball and stood right next to me, eyes wide and curious. I showed him the ball, and he reached out his hand to take it. He rolled it in his palm, feeling the texture and wondering what could possibly be done with this undersized, oddly shaped ball. Then, he threw it back to me, winced at the uncomfortable motion, giggled and went back to playing soccer, the only sport he knew.

It's hard to say whether the boy went home and told all his neighborhood friends about what he had just witnessed, or just completely forgot about the event, because in Switzerland,

baseball is a foreign sport. If you see someone in Switzerland wearing a Yankee hat, it's only because it represents New York. The one exception is the professional Swiss baseball league, which is the only league of its kind in the country. But most of the Swiss players discovered baseball in the States, and the best players are usually Americans who are paid to come over. With only one league, it's no wonder there is a lack of emphasis on baseball, a shortage of fans at games and little respect for the players who are, technically, professionals. So what prevents baseball from being recognized in Switzerland?

My brother stayed with the Byrnes family when he played on the league. Chris Byrnes, my brother's teammate on the league, moved with his family to Switzerland 11 years ago. He played Division 1 college base-

ball in America and didn't want to give it up when he came to Europe. Besides playing on his own, Byrnes has devoted much of his time to trying to make baseball better known to the Swiss. He feels the reason there is such a lack of interest in the game is that it isn't being taught at a young age. In America, even kids with little interest in sports have been exposed to baseball through playing T-ball or wiffle ball during their childhood. In Switzerland, however, there are no little league or travel teams for young players. In fact, one has to be 18 to play in the A division of the Swiss league. Because of this, Byrnes created

In Switzerland, baseball is a foreign sport.

a clinic for elementary school children, in order to teach them about baseball at a young age, in the hopes that they'll become interested and pursue the sport later in life. He feels the only way to make baseball a Swiss sport is to start from the bottom, with a solid foundation of young players.

This is not to say that the Swiss are amateurs when it comes to grooming young athletes. I watched a soccer game between two teams of ten year

continued on page 15