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of the
Student
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Explaining C-30: Selection of the Next Principal

By STANCA IACOB
and DORIT REIN

During her numerous welcoming addresses, Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang spoke of her eagerness in working with the Stuyvesant community – the same one that has and continues to foster two of her own children. This month, however, the continuity of her enthusiasm and ultimately the future of Stuyvesant's principal will be decided as the C-30 process proceeds.

The Chancellor's Regulation C-30 governs the selection, assignment, and appointment of principals and assistant principals in the NYC Department of Education (DOE) system. Designed to ensure the equity and basis on merit of the supervisory selection process, C-30 begins with a vacancy, which is defined as a position that is newly created or that is unfilled because of the transfer, resignation, retirement, terminal leave, promotion, termination, or death of the incumbent.

Following the retirement of former Principal Stanley Teitel, the process began in Stuyvesant.

sant with the posting of the principal vacancy. The principal applications are forwarded to Network Leader and NY-CDOE Assistant Superintendent Joseph Zaza, who acts as the committee's chairperson and designates which applicants will move on to the first interviewing stage. Following this selection of the principal candidates, based on personal leadership, ability to analyze data, ability to develop a solid curriculum, ability to maintain a strong community, and management of resources, the process proceeded on Thursday, December 13 with interviews of the candidates by a Level I Committee. Such a committee is generally composed of one or two students, Student Leadership Team (SLT) members, four to seven parents, and representatives of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), and District Council (DC) 37, the largest public employee union in NYC.

Within Stuyvesant, English teacher Mark Halperin and

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Through Roz-Colored Glasses

By EMMA LOH

When you walk into the shared biology office of 729, perhaps the first things you see are the piles of paperwork that swallow most of the desk space and overflow onto the chairs. However, it's impossible to stand in this office for long without noticing the numerous letters, awards, and pictures that are taped from wall to wall. The letters from distinguished universities, newspaper clippings, photographs, and "thank you" notes are the mementos and accomplishments of biology teacher Roz Bierig that surround her as she works everyday.

Bierig always had her sights set on studying to become a physician, until she enrolled at Brooklyn College and met her husband, an inorganic research chemist. She said, "I knew I wasn't brilliant. I knew I had to study very hard. It's not like I had a photographic memory. I would have to spend many hours a night in the library, and I didn't think that it was a good way to start off a marriage." Effectively, as a newlywed fresh out of college, Bierig decided that focusing on her marriage was worth sacrificing a medical

degree. Bierig gave up medicine and soon found a new opportunity as a teaching assistant at Brooklyn College. However, Bierig decided that she wanted to spend more time with her family, and subsequently quit to become a stay-at-home mom. "It was the right thing to do and not have to pay a stranger to take care of my kids. Unfortunately, it worked out for the best that I made this decision because [later on in life] my husband was killed in an automobile accident. We had thirteen great years together," said Bierig.

After raising two children and obtaining a Masters degree in Biology from Brooklyn College, Bierig worked as a substitute teacher in the local schools around Long Island, where she lived. Soon after, she became a biology teacher at The Ramaz School on the Upper East Side. Five years later, in 1982, Bierig left Ramaz to teach at Stuyvesant, a decision influenced by her late husband, who was a Stuyvesant graduate himself. Looking back, Bierig said, "It's interesting because my husband always said, 'I don't want you to teach anywhere but in Stuyvesant.'"

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The 27th Medical Ethics Symposium Is Held

By ELENA MILIN
and RADHA SATHANAYAGAM

The topic for this year's Medical Ethics Symposium was a contentious one. "It's a very, very important and timely topic, especially for young people such as yourselves," Assistant Principal of Biology Elizabeth Fong said. The symposium, now in its 27th year, hosted by Biology teacher Roz Bierig and her Medical Ethics students, was titled "Study Drugs: Hocus Focus." It was held on Wednesday, December 12 in the Murray Kahn Theater.

The term "study drugs" refers to stimulants known as "cognitive enhancements" often prescribed by doctors to treat such conditions as attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Students without these disorders frequently misuse such drugs as study aids. Drugs such as Adderall, Ritalin, and Focalin, used to increase focus and concentration for people with ADHD, even in students without attention disorders, and allow them to complete homework or a test more efficiently, making them attractive to students who wish to succeed academically irrespective of the physical side-effects.

The Keynote Speaker, Associate Director of Bioethics Education at Mount Sinai School of Medicine Dr. Nada Gligorov discussed two questions: whether the legal prescription of such drugs to students without attention disorders is ethical, and if one cannot obtain a prescription due to legal or societal strictures, whether it is ethical for students to obtain them illegally. Dr. Gligorov argued that the legal prescription of study drugs is ethical, because Americans in particular already make use of less direct cognitive enhancements, like iodized salt (adequate levels of iodine add 10 to 15 points to one's IQ) and the ever-present test prep classes. "My interest actually is to expand the definition of what we think of as medicine," Dr. Gligorov said.

"Medicine can and should help people enhance other traits, not just traits that are associated with very basic illnesses." However, she said that illegal purchase and use of study drugs are not ethical, because their use without supervision by a physician is dangerous and because if they are not available to everyone, study drugs give the user an unfair advantage.

Dr. Iliyan Ivanov, a psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai Hospital, spoke about the areas of the brain that are affected by



Seniors act in a skit during the 27th annual Medical Ethics Symposium.

study drugs and about study drug addiction. The posterior region of the brain is home to a series of organs that control human motivation and reward, and this is where study drugs—and attention deficit disorders—usually affect us most.

Dr. Stuart Apfel of Albert Einstein College of Medicine elaborated on Dr. Ivanov's presentation with his own research, speaking more about the mental, emotional, and physical side-effects of study drugs in both the short term and the long term. He also spoke about the high potential for addiction among stimulants like study drugs, particularly Adderall, which includes amphetamine. He also noted that the drugs are most effective on brains that have a problem in the first place, and that the effects of Adderall and Ritalin on healthy brains are fairly minimal.

The last speaker, social worker Gwen Tarack spoke about the social and societal pressures kids face that lead to use and abuse of study drugs. As academic expectations of modern teens rise and as it becomes harder and harder to get into a good college, the availability of drugs like Ritalin and Adderall has skyrocketed. Tarack believes that if students refuse to use stimulants and accept such achievements as they can accomplish without their use, it will be better for their health and our society overall.

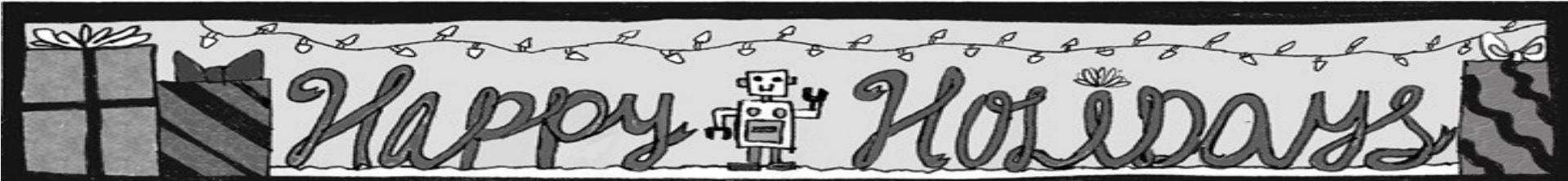
The audience was engaged throughout the lectures, taking interest. "It's wonderful to introduce this stuff early on," said Dr. Gligorov. "Often what happens with ethics is that it's tacked on after people have decided they're already going to be physicians and scientists, and I think that starting in high school, and introducing people to the ethical dimensions of science and medicine, is a really important thing."

Comic sketches performed

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Newsbeat

- Stuyvesant received an "A" on its annual progress report from the Department of Education
- Social Studies teacher George Kennedy was recognized as a 2012 Fellow of the Academy for Teachers.
- Out of more than 100 teams from around the world, including the US, China, Korea, India, the top eight-member NYC math team (which includes six Stuyvesant student) placed fourth overall in the Sixth Annual Princeton University Mathematics competition. The second-ranked NYC team (with five out of eight members from Stuyvesant), finished in the top 20 teams. Two Stuyvesant students made it to the individual final round out of 800 participants.
- The Junior Statesmen of America Club (JSA) won 21 Best Speaker Awards at the recent Fall State Conference in Boston, the highest number of all participating teams.
- Social Studies teacher Robert Sandler invited Jeffrey Yoskowitz, a writer and expert on Jewish cuisine, to his Jewish History class.
- Social Studies teacher Linda Weissman arranged a visit by noted attorney Mark Berman ('82) to her Civil Law class.
- A new SLT committee, headed by Coordinator of Technology James Lonardo, has been formed to reevaluate elective classes offered. The committee, headed by Coordinator of Technology James Lonardo and comprising of Assistant Principal Eric Grossman, Music Teacher Liliya Shamazov, and Student Union President and Vice President Adam Lieber and Tahia Islam will investigate what electives are most popular among students, and work to adjust the availability of these classes for future terms.



News

Stuyvesant's Third Annual Health Fair a Success



Students and Mrs. Zhang participated in the third annual Health Fair in the cafeteria on Friday, November 30.

By EDWARD LI

Stuyvesant's Third Annual Health Fair, spearheaded by the Stuyvesant Red Cross in conjunction with Spark Office Coordinator Angel Colon and several other clubs, including the Stuyvesant Cancer Society, GLASS, ASPIRA, and BuildOn, was held on Friday, November 30.

"The main goal of the health fair was to teach people about healthy lifestyles and to try to end a stressful school week on a positive note," junior and Stuyvesant Red Cross co-president Jiten Patel said. This year's health fair was sponsored by a number of local businesses in the area, including New York Sports Club, Whole Foods and Portobello's Pizza.

Tickets were sold on Friday

for \$5 during lunch periods and for \$6 during the event. Students were able to use their tickets to participate in activities and purchase a variety of food products. According to senior and Stuyvesant Red Cross co-president Victoria Yuan, approximately 300 people attended the Health Fair.

One of the main differences between the Health Fair this year and previous years was the amount of advertising that went into it. Several health and biology teachers offered extra credit for attending the event, which significantly increased the turnout. Members of the Stuyvesant Red Cross Club also participated in media campaigns via Facebook and e-mail. Colon went into health and biology classes to promote the event and encourage

people to contribute ideas that would improve the health fair.

The Spark Office and Stuyvesant Red Cross spent several weeks organizing the event. The event, originally scheduled for September, was repeatedly pushed around due to logistical problems. Despite the delays, the event was a hit; Colon and SPARK club members were extremely satisfied with the turnout. However, Colon believed that the event could be more successful in the future. Colon said, "In future years, I'd like for the health fair to take place annually on the last Friday of November. I want to get more people involved. I plan to get in touch with the Student Union, Arista, and the Big Sibs Organization."

Colon also was extremely satisfied with the event because of the school spirit that it fostered. Colon said, "The students at Stuyvesant make great things happen, and what they can accomplish never ceases to surprise me. This event was a great opportunity to welcome [Interim-Acting Principal] Zhang and the new staff into the community."

Booths and activities were arranged around the cafeteria, with most booths placing an emphasis on specific health issues, which varied from physical exercise to environmental health. Games like "Dance, Dance, Revolution" were used to emphasize the importance of exercise while activities like karaoke helped relieve stress.

Junior Pollob Das, who was in

charge of a booth, said, "The activities tried to reinforce health

"Next year, we'd like other performing groups to show off their talents.

We would like to expand [the event] and have even more clubs in Stuyvesant with us."

**—Andrew Xu,
Stuyvesant Red Cross co-president**

learn about health. I am definitely going to come next year."

The New York Sports Club hosted a special activity in which they demonstrated several exercises that were critical in maintaining a healthy body.

Stuyvesant-related health issues were at the forefront during the health fair. Several booths placed special emphasis on stress and time management, and a number of pamphlets and information regarding health concerns like STDs, cancer, and drugs were handed out during the event.

The Health Fair also boasted a number of specialized events, including a smoothie-making session, healthy food for sale, a raffle, and a fitness competition. The health fair also included performances by Acapella and Open Mic.

"I'm really happy with the amount of people that came this year. However, the event was a little disorganized for my taste, so that will be something we have to work on," Patel said.

The Stuyvesant Red Cross Club has even bigger plans for next year. Senior co-president Andrew Xu said, "Next year, we'd like other performing groups to show off their talents. We would like to expand [the event] and have even more clubs in Stuyvesant with us."

All proceeds from the event will be going to the Hurricane Sandy relief drive.

knowledge in a fun manner. I feel that the interactivity of the events made students more willing to

Hiring and Excessing Teachers: The Late Bird Gets Canned

By COBY GOLDBERG
and JERRY XIA

The New York City Department of Education (DOE), the largest local school system in America, provides jobs for over 80,000 teachers servicing more than 1,000,000 public school students. The procedure for determining how these teachers enter and are removed from the system, however, has received widespread criticism in recent years.

Critics say the system is a complicated bureaucracy that protects teachers' seniority and job security at the expense of quality instruction, while supporters claim it is the only way to ensure that effective teachers are hired and are protected throughout their careers as public school teachers.

The DOE website makes the case in clear terms. According to their website, "New York City's teacher recruiting and hiring process is one of the most rigorous in the country, ensuring that we have great teachers in our classrooms."

In order to receive a license to teach within the public school system, an applicant must complete a comprehensive application, consisting of a résumé and written responses, that is rated by a DOE staff member. Additionally, the applicant must pass three tests, one on general knowledge, one on teaching techniques, and one on his or her specific subject of interest. These tests supplement the required bachelor's degree in education or the subject that the applicant wishes to teach. On top of this, by the end of his or her fifth year of teaching public high school the teacher is required to

obtain at least a masters degree.

Once a teacher has received his or her license, he or she must apply to individual schools in the city. This occurs during the open-hiring period between April and August of each year. During this period, teachers currently teaching at a NYC public school, as well as newly-licensed teachers, are allowed to apply for open positions at other schools within the system.

Applicants for teaching positions at Stuyvesant must submit a copy of their most recent résumé and a cover letter to the department head. Based on the department head's evaluation, an applicant may be invited for an interview, which will also be conducted by the department head.

"I ask for them to describe some of their most successful lessons and some of the projects they have assigned. I also ask them about their approach to learning," Assistant Principal of Social Studies Jennifer Suri said.

Following the interview, the applicant will often teach a mock lesson for several students and the department head. "They want to make sure that teachers coming in, like myself, are targeting the lesson appropriately for the type of student [they're going to] see at Stuyvesant [with] a high level of academic rigor," said math teacher Brian Stern, who began working at Stuyvesant this fall.

Following these steps, a final decision is made to determine which of the applicants will be hired. In making this decision, a variety of factors is taken into account, including job experience, ability to connect students to what they are learning, and knowledge of content.

"There is no exact formula for

choosing who to hire. Sometimes you use a rubric system, but there has to be someone hired, and in the end you just make the decision," Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang said. "In some cases, you need to give opportunities to new guys. But we can't forget about the guys who have been around."

People want to make teaching and education an exact science, but it's not one. It's about people.

—United Federation of Teachers Secretary Michael Mandel

Once a teacher has a job in a school, whether or not he or she keeps that job is subject to a much more regulated, set-in-stone system. When a school faces budget cuts, it is forced to choose at least one department from which to remove teachers through a process known as "excessing." During excessing, teachers are "relieved" of their jobs at the school, but remain on the pay-

roll of the DOE, whether as part of the Absent Teacher Reserves or as a teacher at another school.

The process to determine which teacher gets excessed is dictated by a DOE policy commonly called "last in, first out." Under this system, the most recently hired teacher in a department facing budget cuts is the one who must be released. Because the policy takes nothing into account other than the length of time that a teacher has taught at a school, this system has become highly controversial.

"I really don't think it's fair," said John Taylor, who was assigned to teach former math teacher Richard Geller's classes after Geller passed away and was released the following term because of missing teaching qualifications. "In the NBA, you can pick a kid off the street, and if he is good enough he can go on to be a star. For Stuyvesant teachers, the same should be true. The public school system is not a meritocracy and, as a result, there are teachers who are washed up and shouldn't be there anymore. It just drives talent away from education."

"I'd like to think that whatever system is in place is there because it is best for my education, but I'm not sure that is true under this current one," senior Charles Li said.

However, many remain satisfied with the system. "This is just the fairest way to do it, because all the teachers in the school should be at the same basic level. If there is somebody in the school who is not doing their job, then it is my job to take care of that in other ways," Suri said.

This debate is part of a broader national political debate over

the role of public sector unions, with the Teachers' Unions taking the most heat. Proponents of change argue that greater flexibility would allow for greater quality control. In education, this translates into a shift in policy away from the current system to one based on a combination of class evaluations by Assistant Principals, job experience, and student test performance.

This system, which is currently used in a slightly modified form known as "value added" to dictate teacher salaries, has garnered much support from education reform advocates. "A new system would not only value supervisor input, but also peer input, standardized test scores, and parent and student ratings. And I would take all of these into account to make a new transparent system. But bear in mind, this would only be to compare the lowest ranking teachers," former senior Deputy Chancellor of the DOE Eric Nadelstern said in a telephone interview.

Though the implementation of this approach is possible, many, including members of the Teachers' Unions, remain doubtful that a change from the current "last in, first out" policy would provide any substantial improvements in the education system. "The ability to do what you think is right for the kids in the classroom should be left up to the teachers, because an administrator can't fully know what is going on," United Federation of Teachers Secretary Michael Mandel said in a telephone interview. "People want to make teaching and education an exact science, but it's not one. It's about people."

Daffodils Planted in Memory of 9/11



Members of the Stuyvesant Environmental Club set up signs in the flower patches along Chambers Street as part of the Daffodil Project.

By SAMUEL DAVID
and IN HAE YAP

The Stuyvesant Environmental Club, in cooperation with the citywide Daffodil

"I hope people see the work be put in and appreciate it, even if not a lot of them come up, and please step away from the garden."
—Kimberly Choi, sophomore

Project, has recently planted daffodils around the trees on the Chamber Street sidewalk. The project, one of many na-

tionwide "Living Memorials" to commemorate the September 11 attacks, involves planting daffodil flowers across New York City every fall.

Since the daffodil bulbs did not fill the planters completely, tulip and crocus bulbs, chosen to best complement the daffodils, were planted as well. All three are flowers that must be planted in the fall to bloom in the early spring.

Biology teacher and Environmental Club faculty advisor Marissa Maggio originally proposed participation in the project. She works with the Million Trees NYC project, whose goal is to plant and care for one million trees in the city. Another member of the foundation, Cheryl Blaylock, began coming to Stuyvesant to lead an Urban Forestry Training Program last year. This program teaches its participants about New York City trees, from care to identification, and how to maintain the parks and trails.

At the end of the program, trainees take an exam and receive a certificate for successful completion of the program if they pass. "It was really cool and taught kids for the future," Reda Lamniji, a sophomore who went through the training program, said.

Early this year, the training program "adopted" two of the

trees along Chambers Street between the Tribeca Bridge and Greenwich Street. Eventually,

"Since our school is really close to the 9/11 site and was affected by it, we felt obligated to participate in the Daffodil Project."
—Geyanne Lui, senior and Environmental Club President

working closely with the club, they were able to adopt the eight remaining trees along the block from Million Trees NYC.

The club did not originally intend to plant daffodils under the ten trees. Maggio initially proposed using the trees' flower beds to grow plants native to New York State and educate passersby on them. They changed plans, however,

upon learning of the Daffodil Project from Blaylock. "Since our school is really close to the 9/11 site and was affected by it, we felt obligated to participate in the Daffodil Project," senior and Stuyvesant Environmental Club president Geyanne Lui said.

"Because 9/11 had such a big impact on the people in this school," Maggio said, "using the trees in remembrance of that, in honor of that memory, was more important to us than setting up little educational stations about native species. I realized it was much more significant to do the 9/11 project."

The club worked on planting the bulbs for five hours on Saturday, November 24. Tasks included loosening the soil with rakes, planting bulbs approximately four inches below the surface, applying fertilizer to the soil, and putting up signs to caution people not to walk on the bulbs.

"They were great. I mean, we had twenty-five kids here, it was probably one of the coldest days we had in November, and we were outside for five hours," Maggio said. "They were working together. Once one group finished, they joined up to finish off the trees and one group stayed inside to make the signs."

The Environmental Club's future plans for gardening projects have yet to be determined. "Because the bulbs have to be in the ground before it frosts so that the flowers can bloom in the spring, if we did do another planting project, we'd have to do it soon before it gets too cold," Lui said. Other current club projects include raising awareness about recycling at nearby elementary school P.S. 81 and petitioning to replace styrofoam lunch trays with sugarcane compostable trays. The club also volunteered at Riverside Park and the Brooklyn Bridge Conservancy, and initiated an electronics re-

cycling drive in September.

In the meantime, the club asks Stuyvesant students

"We had twenty-five kids here, it was probably one of the coldest days we had in November, and we were outside for five hours."
—Marissa Maggio, Club Advisor

to be aware of the dirt plots around the trees on Chambers Street. "I hope people see the work we put in and appreciate it," sophomore Kimberly Choi said. "Even if not a lot of [flowers] come up, please don't step on the flowers."

Explaining C-30: Selection of the Next Principal

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Technology teacher Robert Rosen are among the faculty members on the committee. Student Union President Adam Lieber and Vice President Tahia Islam will be representing the student body in the decisions as well.

"The committee interviews applicants for the job and make a recommendation, but they don't choose who is getting the job. In case of the principal, it's the superintendent who makes the final decision," Assistant Principal of English Eric Grossman said. Given Stuyvesant's recent publicity, though, Grossman is convinced that there will be "more discussion than usual," he said.

All matters concerning applicants, interviewing, selection of candidates, and the deliberations and recommendations of the Level I Committee are of a highly confidential nature. It has been confirmed, however, that Zhang is not only among them, but is also the

"We are the crown jewel of the system. They definitely will want to be involved"
—Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm

only current Stuyvesant faculty member applying for the position. Following the interviews, the Level I Committee, as a whole, will discuss the merits of each interviewee. In these discussions, each committee member must also submit a ratings sheet for each and every candidate. These reviews and information will be sent back to the Hiring Manager, who will then consider the recommendations and determine the candidates to interview for Level II of the C-30 process.

In regards to the C-30 process, Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm said, "I would assume that given Stuyvesant's prominence and the fact that the media is always writing about us, the DOE is very interested. We are the crown jewel of the system. They definitely will want to be involved."

The 27th Medical Ethics Symposium Is Held

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by the Medical Ethics students were interspersed between the

"It's a very, very important and timely topic, especially for young people such as yourselves."
—Elizabeth Fong, AP Biology

denounced the negative effects of study drugs, but they varied widely, ranging from a rap urging students to choose other methods of improving their grades to a rendition of "Gangnam Style," the popular pop song by Korean sensation Psy where a student's brain fought off the ill effects of Adderall.

The symposium ended with a raffle awarding prizes ranging from brownies baked by Bierig to discounts from popular dining options around Stuyvesant, such as the Frites & Meats truck.

Bierig and her students considered the symposium was a success. "I've never been to a symposium, so it was really interesting to see what it was like when everything came together. I thought it went really well," senior Miranda Kalish said.

By Bierig's count, over 400 students attended. "It was probably one of the better symposia, maybe the best," Bierig said.

speakers, keeping the audience interested. All of the sketches

Features

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In the fall of 1984, Bierig took a year off from teaching in order to travel to Israel for a year with her family. While in Israel, she lived in a small, modest trailer near Jericho, where she worked as a volunteer for the Israeli army. During these few months, Bierig worked with tanks and

"I love what I do, and that's why I've stayed here for so long. The kids keep me young."
**Roz Bierig,
biology teacher**

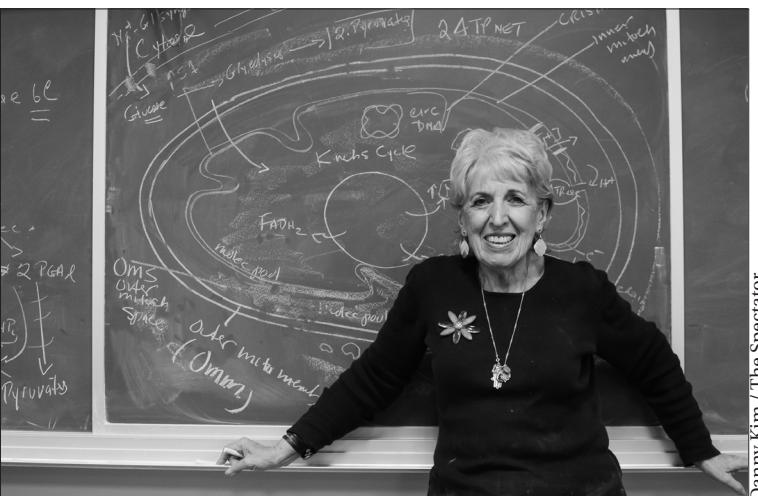
personnel carriers that would come in from the field by replacing the tank's defensive mechanism against nerve gas, a chemical weapon that could disrupt the communication of nerve impulses in the body. However, during her service, nerve gas was never used as chemical warfare, her work was never deployed, and she was never put directly into harm's way.

Today, Bierig teaches two science classes: Advanced Placement Biology and Medical Ethics, a science elective. "A special trait of Ms. Bierig is definitely her enthusiasm. I remember that she'd always be really excited about biology, regardless of the day. She wasn't just trying to fulfill a curriculum. She wanted to pass down something she loved," alumnus Vicky Gong ('12) said. While Bierig teaches two classes that are on different spectrums of workload in coursework and material, in addition to Biology Olympiad, she says that there is one idea that she stresses to all of her students. "The most important thing in my classes is to understand the concepts and ideas, rather than memorizing the facts," Bierig said. "I always try to add in humor to my teaching to make it more enjoyable for the students and for me."

Bierig created the biology elective Medical Ethics when she was hired in 1982. She said, "When I wrote the curriculum, nobody taught Medical Ethics in high school." The class was inspired by medical ethics symposiums that she attended at Mount Sinai. Medical ethics is a topic that has been increasingly taught to tackle the abundance of medical techniques used in the world today. She started the annual Medical Ethics symposium in 1985, which has covered topics such as marijuana, plastic surgery, stem cell research, and spiritual healing. When Bierig retires, the future of Medical Ethics is uncertain, as it could either be taught by

a new teacher or replaced with a different biology elective to ensure that seniors can fill their graduation requirements.

In the spring of 2013, Bierig will celebrate her thirtieth year at Stuyvesant. "I've had several offers to teach at other very good schools, some closer to my home, and I've turned them all down because it's the best



Roz Bierig teaches both AP Biology and Medical Ethics at Stuyvesant.

When I wrote the curriculum, nobody taught Medical Ethics in high school"

**—Roz Bierig,
biology teacher**

school." However, just as biology teacher Dr. John Utting will be retiring in the fall of 2013, Bierig is likely to follow suit. She explains that she made her decision because of a desire to pursue interests other than biology. Bierig said, "I have been working for my whole life since I was a kid. I need to spend time doing things other than work to enjoy myself before I don't have that option anymore."

With her departure from Stuyvesant approaching, Bierig

has been exploring other options. One of her interests is conducting a relaxation exercise called guided imagery, which she does with her Medical Ethics class every Friday. During guided imagery, a person is verbally instructed to visualize a scenario to focus the imagination. "The guided imagery is really helpful because every student is stressed from school, and it's nice to have a teacher that is willing to take the time to help students relax," senior Maple Yep said. She is considering continuing this passion by volunteering to work with the terminally ill in either one-on-one sessions or for group therapy.

After retirement, Bierig also plans to invest more time into her hobbies that are neglected during the school year. She enjoys reading historical novels, a subject in which she considered pursuing a minor during college, as well as medical or

murder mysteries. "I think that being a biologist is similar to mysteries because you're always looking for clues." Furthermore, Bierig has expressed the desire to plant flowers. She said, "I like working in the soil. Even though flowers die, I don't see that part. I only see the beauty in them." She plans to read and garden more during her retirement, but her main intention is to spend more time with her family.

The significance of teaching biology for Bierig is not merely the subject material. "When you touch lives of young people who want to go in that direction and you love that subject, the role that you play is to excite them to go on." If not known for her love of biology, Bierig is known for her loving attitude and infectious laughter that enlightens everyone around her. "I love what I do, and that's why I've stayed here for so long. The kids keep me young," said Bierig.

Health Class Babies



by the Photo Department

Danny Kim / The Spectator

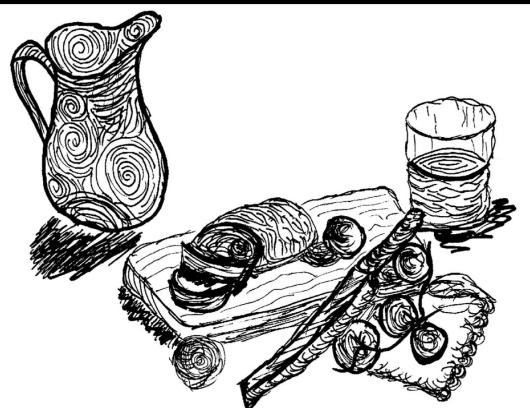
One Still Life, Twelve Styles



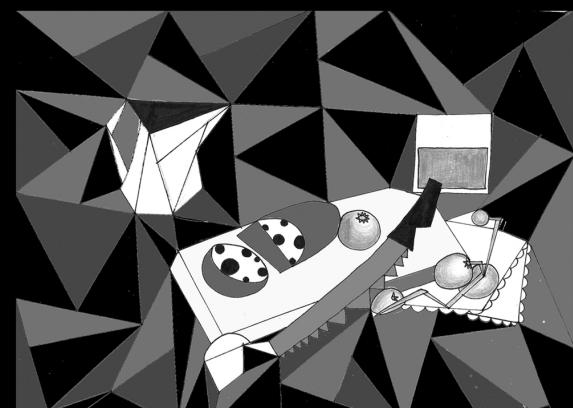
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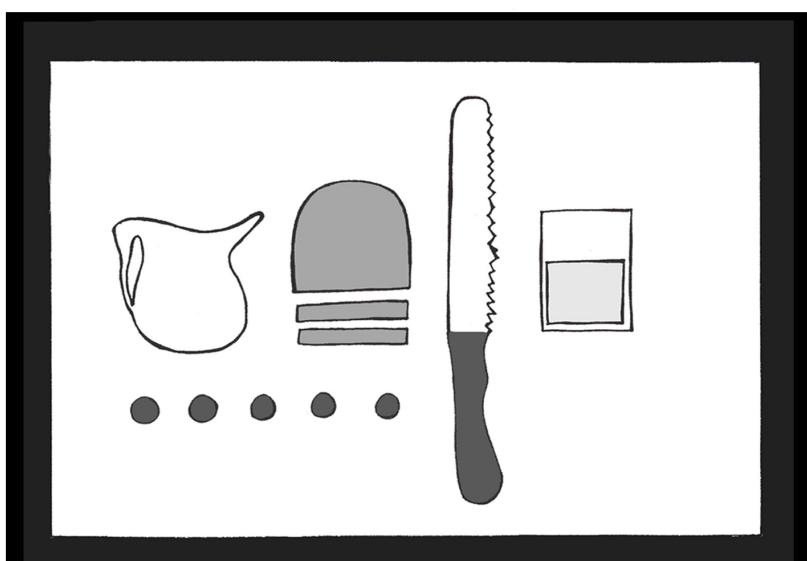
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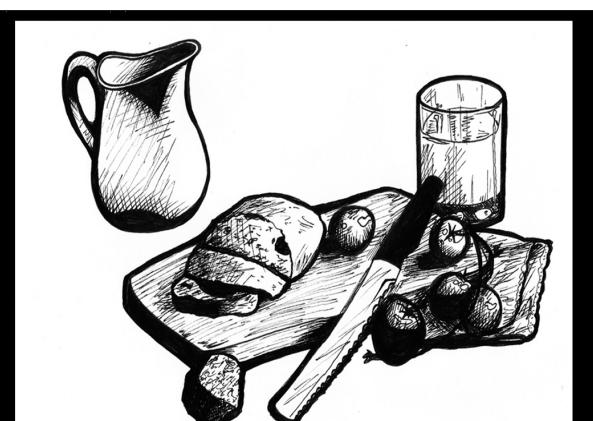
minimalism



cartoon



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abstraction

Features

By SANAM BHATIA
and MAISHA KAMAL
with additional reporting by
ROBERT HE
and TASNIM AHMED

"I haven't seen any bullying at Stuy." It's a similar perspective to that of most Stuyvesant students—dictator here by senior Aidan Causil-Baggott—but, at Stuyvesant, bullying often occurs in untraditional manners. Students will probably never see a kid with glasses stuffed into a locker by a jacket-clad jock or spitballs lobbed across a classroom at an unsuspecting head, but they are more likely than not to come across a nasty anonymous messages on a social networking site. While cyber-bullying is becoming more and more common among high school students, the common old-school name calling and jeering rarely happens at Stuyvesant. Moreover, bullying can be caused by the often overwhelming pressure the school instills in many students—the pressure builds it becomes nothing more than a rat race to gain admission to top tier colleges.

"Bullying isn't prevalent in the traditional form at school," senior Nihan Gencerliler said. "But anonymous cyber-bullying bullying does exist. For example, [on] ask.fm and Formspring."

One student explained how people sometimes get ignored when they ask for help on class Facebook pages. Though this may not be an overt form of bullying, "some people get rude too," said the student, who asked to remain anonymous. Others also snicker at their peers in class, and, while the bullying is "nothing direct, [it

is] more subtle, [and] causes the same pain."

Guidance counselor Undine Guthrie agrees, but only because cyber-bullying can be traced. "I guess I would say it's [cyber-bullying] the bigger one that we see because it can be identified because there's written documentation," she said. But she also believes bullying at Stuyvesant is far less from that of other schools. "Students aren't treated as if they're in prison; the aggression doesn't necessarily have to escalate in this type of environment," she said.

Both Guthrie and fellow guidance counselor Ronnie Parnes cite the school's numerous extracurriculars as buffers against bullying. "We also have a lot of clubs and pubs, and those are all opportunities to work on your interpersonal skills," Parnes said. "So we're a really highly involved community and I think that all leads to very positive social interactions between kids."

However, Guthrie does admit that she has a removed viewpoint from her students on the issue. "I don't want to make any generalizations because I'm not a student; I'm an adult so a lot of times the dynamics are extremely different," she said. She also admits that students have approached her about bullying before.

Furthermore, some students believe the pressure at Stuyvesant causes bullying. "The amount of stress students get at [Stuyvesant], especially those who want to get the all-important acceptance letters to [Ivies] causes many students to constantly feel they are in competition with their fellow classmates," another student said. "Though I feel that a little bit of

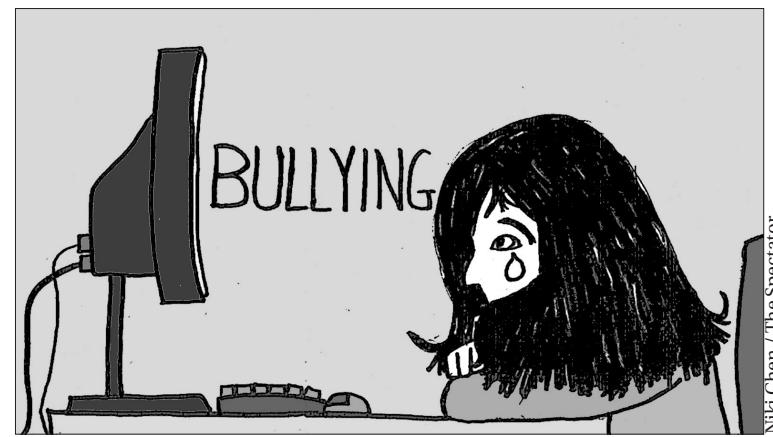
competition is critical to a healthy learning environment, the self-induced competitive feeling [causes] kids to try to reassure themselves by demeaning others, to the point where it becomes bullying."

Junior Charles Lee has a term for form of ridiculing. It's "intellectual bullying. If one person scores a 90 and the rest score a 95, you'll feel isolated," he said. He deems it a "mental" method of bullying—a student may feel that other students look down upon him or her merely due to a test score.

Run by Angel Colon, SPARK is a peer support program that addresses at-risk behaviors and provides community help. The organization usually deals with incidents of cyber-bullying; most are through social media outlets that can hide identity such as Tumblr and even Facebook, but SPARK has been able to track down these bullies regardless.

Most recently, SPARK organized Ally Week, in which members of the school community vowed to support each other and the community. Though there was a misconception that Ally Week applied primarily to gays, this was not the case. "The community has to come together to support initiatives," Colon said. In order to do this, SPARK has made one of its main goals to "provide education and awareness" and build coalitions within Stuyvesant. With the support of the administration and faculty as well, Colon believes things should come together and reduce bullying. "Part of what [we are] missing is social peace. We should be civil to one another and not fit so much into the stereotypes."

According to Colon, bullying



has a common foundation. "[Bullies] just want to be well-liked by their peers [or be] a part of the in-crowd," Colon said.

In a regular school atmosphere, statistics from the website dosomething.org say that 56 percent of students have witnessed bullying at their school. Two out of three teens are either verbally or physically harassed every year, and over half of teens have been bullied online. Recent research adds to these numbers, concluding that one in four teens are bullied, and 160,000 students miss school every day due to their fear of being bullied. On the other hand, one in five students admitted to do some sort of bullying, and 85 percent of bullying situations continue without intervention.

Statistics like these are the reason why policies such as the one implemented by the Department of Education (DOE) are enforced. The DOE's "Respect For All" school code highlights behavior deemed as bullying and lists proper reprimands for them. For example, students who bully others based on sexuality, race, appearance, or

gender commit a Level 4 out of 5 infraction. This kind of infraction is what most bullying falls under—attacks on a person's being and the basis of who they are. For this, these individuals can be referred to counseling or peer mediation systems.

The Dignity Act, passed by the New York State Education Department, took effect on July 1, 2012. It states that schools will expand the ideas of tolerance and respect to incorporate an appreciation of other races, sexual orientations, religions, etc. It also ensures that "schools will be responsible for collecting and reporting data regarding material incidents of discrimination and harassment."

Though bullying may never be fully defeated, Stuyvesant is doing its part in reducing the number of victims. Whether it is through interventions, counseling, or just ensuring that students know someone is there to listen, the Stuyvesant community will continue to aid those students in need of reassurance and an ally. As Colon said, "It shouldn't be a small component."

A Whole New World: The Incoming Sophomore Experience

By SARA KREVOY

None of us can forget our first day of high school: those initial, nervous steps across the Tribeca Bridge; the awkward hellos exchanged with fellow freshmen; and the intimidating feeling of entering our first classes. It was an overwhelming surge of anxiety and excitement. Even more daunting is undergoing that same experience when the majority of your classmates are already well-acquainted with each other. This is the experience of the incoming sophomores, who make up a small proportion of Stuyvesant High School each year. These students come from schools all over New York or even other states in order to acquire the prized Stuyvesant education.

It isn't a complicated process to transfer schools. Like all students looking for a seat in a specialized high school, prospective sophomores must take the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). Those moving to New York on short notice are allowed to take the exam during the summer. For example, senior Mauricio Moreyra remembers taking the SHSAT test in August 2010, after moving to New York from Florida. Moreyra, along with other incoming sophomores and freshmen who moved from other states, took the exam just a week before the new school year began. "It was either you're in or you're

out," he said.

The competition for obtaining a seat as an incoming sophomore, however, is much higher than that for an incoming freshman, as seats are much more limited. Changing schools is always a difficult process because of the choice between staying in a familiar environment and venturing into a new school for the second time in two years. Acceptance from a well-regarded school like Stuyvesant adds another dimension to the choice.

"It was a pretty hard decision," sophomore Moaz Khan, an ex-Bronx Science student whose older brother is a Stuyvesant alumnus, said. He admits that both his brother and mother influenced his decision to take the SHSAT again, but he says that he does not regret it. "After taking the test I realized I could still keep all my friends and go to the better school," said Khan. For others, like senior Shinnosuke Takahashi, the choice was an obvious one. "Generally, the image of Stuyvesant is much better than the reality that was Brooklyn Tech," Takahashi said.

No matter how easy the decision was, entering a new environment in which most people have already known each other for at least a year can be intimidating. "Freshman year is that year that you make all your friends, and I had a lot of friends at Bronx Science," Khan said. "So the first couple of days were kind of awkward. I didn't know anyone; plus the

classes were much harder."

For students hailing from other states, the adjustment can be even more difficult, especially when they are not admitted in time to attend Camp Stuy, where most incoming students receive a tour of the building and are introduced to fellow incoming sophomores. The most difficult part was "getting to know the area and adapting to the whole subway thing," Moreyra said. "It was tough at first, but there are so many kids at Stuy already that I could always find new friends."

Luckily, most incoming sophomores find that Stuyvesant students create a welcoming environment. "I feel like I've had a somewhat exceptional entrance," said sophomore Theo Klein, who was fortunate enough to have a good friend already at Stuy. "I've felt extremely welcomed by the community," he said.

Takahashi has similar sentiments. "Compared to Brooklyn Tech, the atmosphere was so much nicer," he said.

However, the support system does not end with peers. Just like incoming freshmen, incoming sophomores are assigned Big Sibs to their homerooms. Big Sibs are responsible for easing their little sibs into the new environment and addressing any questions or concerns they have. For incoming sophomores, whose homerooms range from five to thirteen students, Big Sibs are crucial to

making bonds in a new school. Moreyra, for example, is grateful for the help of his guidance counselor, as well as his Big Sibs, who gave him the tour he missed and showed him the basic procedures of the school. "Simple stuff like that, it actually helped a lot," Moreyra said, who has been a Big Sib for the single, sophomore homeroom for two years.

Takashi seemed to find his homeroom experience unsatisfying, as he explained the lack of bonding in his official class during Camp Stuy. When asked if he thought it would be beneficial to incorporate incoming sophomores into homerooms with the other sophomores, he said, "I guess it would be a little better; it would give us something else to relate to with other students."

Though they are supportive, the teachers and administration do not coddle incoming sophomores whatsoever. "They didn't really do anything, but I kind of like that because they don't force me to be more outgoing," Takahashi said. Khan also supports the "hands-off" policy of teachers, as he believes it is the student's responsibility to take initiative when faced with problems. Khan himself expressed that he utilizes Stuyvesant's AIS tutoring when he's having trouble in a class.

There are some, however, who are not as content with the demanding environment created by this policy. Klein wishes that

teachers would be a little more lenient, as the challenging workload can be overwhelming at first. "Switching routine takes some time getting used to," he said.

The academic environment can be even more frustrating if you are unhappy with your schedule to begin with. Moreyra remembers having to create his schedule on the first day of school and being unable to take the math class he wanted to as a result. Though not all incoming sophomores have this problem, many of them are locked out of classes because they are too full by the time their schedules are made up. Some must even retake classes if the credits do not transfer from one high school to another.

No matter what they may feel about the academics or the administration, extracurricular activities seem to be the fastest way for sophomores to adjust. Whether it's sports teams or clubs, after-school activities are a great way to meet people with similar interests. "A majority of my connections with the community was because of directing 'Grease the Musical,'" Klein said. As a Big Sib, Moreyra encourages incoming sophomores to join clubs right away. His extracurricular activities played a large role in his adjustment period and through them, he continues to make new friends to this day.

"Have fun and make lots of friends. You'll have a great time in Stuy," he said.

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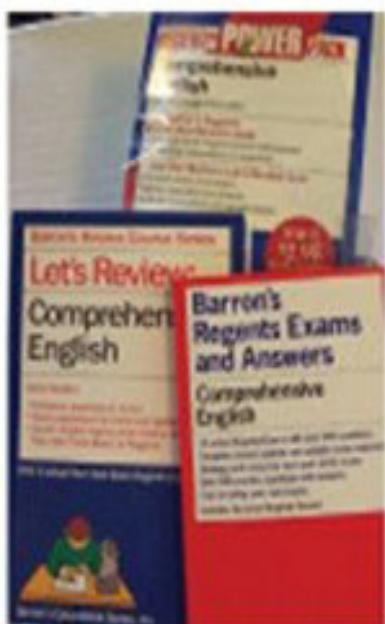
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Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Gov, Keep the Good Ones

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Please don't take away our good teachers.

As Governor and head of the new NY Education Reform Commission, you have the power to make sure that the New York public education system "puts students first," a phrase you have coined as your main priority for several months now.

We have one request: keep the good teachers. Use this new commission as an opportunity to promote lasting educational reform. Start by addressing the "last in, first out" policy, which makes tenure the sole determinant of teacher layoffs. As applied in our public school system, this policy has proven to be inherently flawed—often allowing weak teachers to keep their jobs, and getting rid of effective teachers.

When budget cuts are necessary, firing good teachers and keeping bad ones is nothing short of a crime. We admit that it is hard to define a "good teacher" in a system as heterogeneous as our own, but we need to start developing standards for measuring the effectiveness of teachers that are more indicative of performance than simply how long a teacher has been in the system.

In New York, tenure is granted to almost all teachers who have fulfilled the required three years of teaching, with 97 percent of eligible teachers being granted tenure since 2007. This term, which represents having achieved "permanent status" within the DOE, proves nothing about a teacher's capabilities, according to a 2008 study by the University of Washington's Center on Reinventing Public Education. It reports that "the first two to three years of teaching do not predict anything about post-tenure performance," because teachers don't have to earn tenure, as they do in colleges, through the publication of academic materials. Instead, it is handed to them free of effort.

So, if "having tenure" doesn't

mean a teacher has achieved any tangible measurement of success, this arbitrary standard should not outweigh merit in determining which teachers stay and which are cut.

Teacher tenure is not popular among educators, or the general public. Thomas Kirsten's 2006 study found that 91 percent of school board presidents either agreed or strongly agreed that tenure impedes the dismissal of underperforming teachers. Sixty percent also believed that tenure does not promote fair evaluations. Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett, in their groundbreaking article "Cracks in the Ivory Tower?", found that 86 percent of education professors support "making it easier to terminate unmotivated or incompetent teachers—even if they are tenured." Finally, the American public supports abolishing teacher tenure by a ratio of 5:2 according to an April 2011 study. Only teachers (the vast majority of whom are already tenured), support maintaining tenure laws—and polls show that this is only by a margin of 53 to 32 percent.

According to Public Agenda President Deborah Wadsworth, teacher tenure policies most severely harm low-income students because senior teachers prefer to work in high-income communities, where they face fewer students with behavioral issues, while younger teachers are more willing to accept the challenge of working with low-income students and students of color in order to help them succeed. Effectively, we are booting the teachers who are in highest demand. The result, she argues, is "a distribution of talent that is flawed and inequitable."

Instead of using tenure as the basis for layoffs, we should have a system that uses performance as the primary factor in determining teacher layoffs.

Proposals for such a system already exist—most of which include a combination of standard-

ized test scores, classroom observations, and degrees earned. (Let's also note that while 600 districts in the state have signed off on such a proposal, New York City has not.) It's a good start—but student evaluations, rarely taken into account, should also play a role in measuring teacher performance.

While critics of student evaluations claim that young children are not capable of assessing their own teachers, students, more so than any other observer, have an accurate portrayal of a teacher's effectiveness and behavior in the classroom. We can avoid bias with targeted questions that ask students to evaluate their teachers under very specific standards. Harvard senior lecturer Ronald Ferguson found that when asked such targeted, specific questions "students provide accurate, helpful information on their teachers' performance." In fact, Ferguson demonstrated that these surveys were even more reliable than supervisors' classroom observations.

That being said, eliminating tenure should not be an excuse for laying off older teachers simply because their salaries are more expensive for the state. In some cases, where teachers have performed equally well in their evaluations, tenure can be used as a differentiating factor. The point is hiring and maintaining quality teachers based on their merits as educators.

We don't want to attack our teachers. We understand and appreciate the role they play in preparing us for our futures. But the fact that fewer than .12 percent of New York City teachers were fired for incompetence between 2007 and 2010, that the city still refuses to implement statewide evaluation systems, and that teachers are not held accountable for performance, are damning facts the need to be addressed.

Keep your promise, Governor. Put the students first.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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of the
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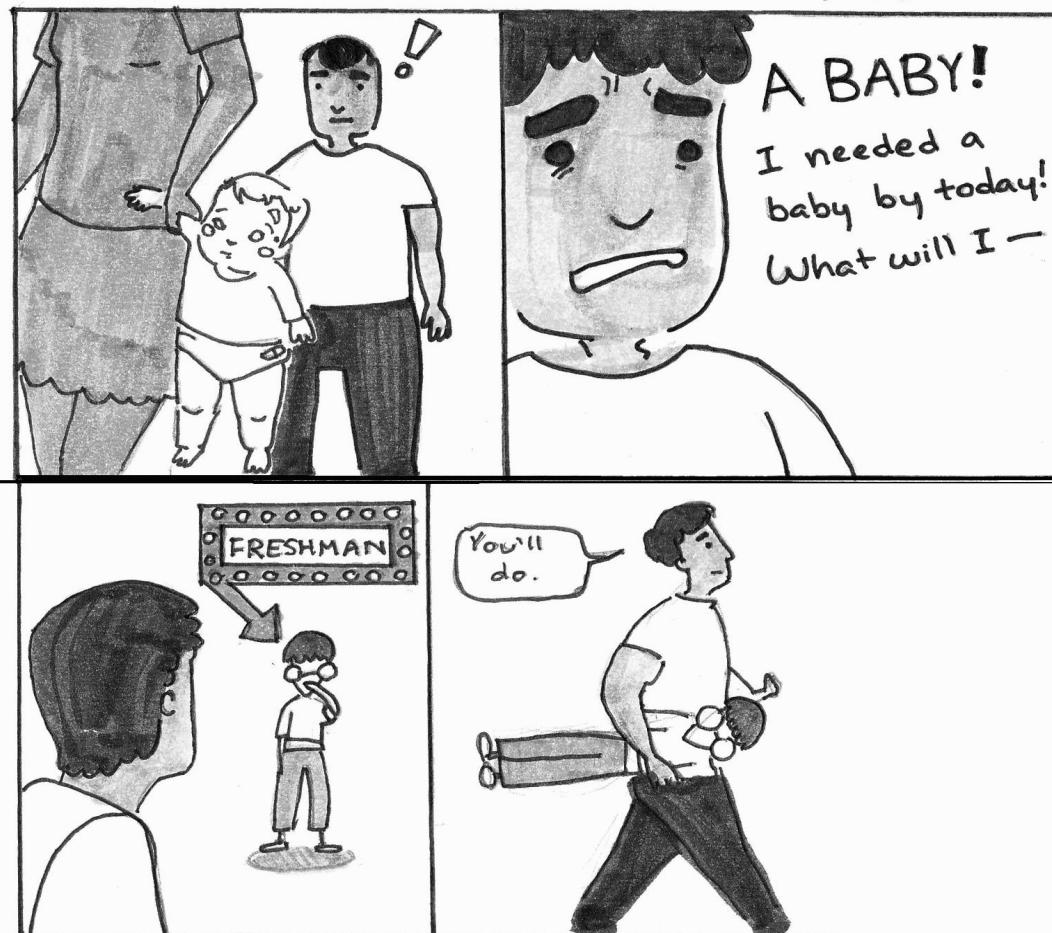
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THE BABY PROJECT PART 1: LAST MINUTE



Katherine Chi / The Spectator

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Opinions

The New Anti-Semitism

By JACK CAHN

It's 8:08 a.m. and I'm late to school. All around me, equally tardy and tired teenagers are laughing, greeting each other, heading in the same direction. As we approach Stuyvesant's corner, ready for another day of school, we see a bunch of middle-aged women prominently portraying and selling newspapers—this should be interesting.

The front page, displayed for all the thousands of Stuyvesant and BMCC students to read, says "Zionist Terror Machine Strikes Gaza Ghetto." The article is about the Socialist Workers Vanguard's calling Israel "a Zionist garrison state founded on the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland." The women glare at me as I walk by, and I remember that I'm wearing a kippah, a clear symbol of the Jewish people. "You should be ashamed," one of the activists says to me.

What do I have to be ashamed for? I'm a 16-year-old, a New York high school student. I'm not Israeli. I have nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. What have I done wrong? But it's not my political beliefs that are being questioned by the activists, nor my country of birth—it's my religion. I'm being shamed for being Jewish, for identifying with, as the article put it, the "evil, terrorist Jewish nation."

I've witnessed the growing anti-Semitism myself in America, the most tolerant country in the world. During my freshman and sophomore years of high school, some students would torment me for being Jewish, throwing around slurs such as,

"Don't sit next to him; he might take a pound of your flesh," in addition to frequent Holocaust jokes and offensive stereotypes. Countless students have thrown coins at me and other Jews, jokingly remarking, "Go pick it up; Jews love money"—and this is in New York, the city with the second highest Jewish population in the entire world. It's disgusting.

Last year I took Mr. Sandler's Jewish history elective and

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learned about the "Judensau," a traditional anti-Semitic image of Jews defiling themselves with pigs. Disgusted, I showed it to a friend of mine as I entered the cafeteria for lunch, asking if he could believe it. Not knowing that the image was anti-Semitic propaganda and instead mistaking it for a sincere depiction, she responded, "I know, the German Jews are disgusting." Just take that in for a minute.

This is the exception, not the norm. Since World War II and

the Holocaust, it has no longer been politically correct to insult the Jews. Instead, anti-Semites have begun to project their bigotry onto Israel as opposed to the Jews themselves. Let me be clear, I am not saying that all anti-Zionists are anti-Semites. Rather, anti-Zionism often is the projection of anti-Semitism.

Why does international opinion condemn Israel, but mostly ignore the flagrant human rights abuses of so many other countries, like China or the Congo? Why do we never hear about the bigotry and discrimination towards women in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and most of the Middle East? Why does Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, receive so much media attention, while the top 10 abusers of human rights in the world are ignored, thus perpetuating their abuses? It's because Israel is a Jewish State.

Let's look at a recent Anti-Defamation League (ADL) study: 45 percent of the French, 48 percent of the British, and 72 percent of the Spanish believe that Jews are primarily loyal to not their mother countries, but rather to Israel. Doesn't that say it all? After generations of living among countries in the world, these nations still see Jews as outcasts, as a separate, outside population. The fact that our loyalty is still questioned after two millennia begs the question: will anti-Semitism ever truly disappear, or will we always be viewed as the "others," seen as Jews before countrymen?

The ADL study furthers that levels of anti-Semitism are only on the rise. Since 2009, incidents of anti-Semitism have increased dramatically in Spain,

France, Hungary, Poland, and most drastically, in the United Kingdom, where the frequency has risen by 70 percent. In fact, 50 percent of the population in 10 major European nations that were polled conceded that most violence towards Jews is caused by anti-Semitism, not anti-Zionism. Today, violence towards Jews is again common—just recently we heard in the news about gangs drawing swastikas on cars in the Jewish community in Brooklyn. According to The Berkley Daily Planet and numerous other media outlets, violence against Jews is on the rise worldwide. Will the world ever learn? When will enough be enough? Even more interestingly, nearly half of the populations of Austria, Germany, Italy, and Poland believe that Jews talk too much about the Holocaust, which is surprising considering these countries were perpetrators. Much of Europe still adheres to the negative stereotypes promulgated against the Jews by Hitler and the Nazis with close to 75 percent of Hungarians, 67 percent of Spain, 29 percent of France, and 22 percent of the British believing that Jews have too much power in international financial markets, according to the ADL.

Underlying within our culture is this belief of Jews as a separate people, a separate "race" existing within countries, outsiders. A friend of mine once mentioned that until he had met me, he'd considered Jews to be different. "Not in a bad way. I just never really thought of them as Americans but as Jews." Judaism is not a race. There are French, British, Asian, African, Hispanic, and Russian Jews. We all look differently and act dif-



Sam Kim / The Spectator

ferently. Throughout history, however, Jews have been constantly demeaned, beleaguered, and expelled.

I am scared for the Jewish nation. Countless well-meaning organizations were started during the last 50-plus years to address the problem of anti-Semitism. They pride themselves on "accomplishments"—reduced anti-Semitism and increased acceptance of diversity. Based on my experiences at Stuyvesant, extra-curricular events attended by students from other schools, and my experience with the Socialist Workers Vanguard (the group distributing the offensive newspaper), I don't think they've accomplished a whole lot.

If Stuyvesant students, the brightest students in the city, are making Holocaust jokes and propagating anti-Semitism, there's a major problem with both our educational system as well as the work of the many non-profits striving to fight with bigotry.

You Aren't Dumb And You Aren't Shallow

By DANIEL TEEHAN

The title of this article is a reference to a description from a piece which expresses far more eloquently and powerfully than I ever could the point I am about to attempt to make. It was written by Special Olympian John Franklin Stephens, who has Down syndrome, as part of his open letter to political columnist Ann Coulter in response to a tweet she posted in which she called President Obama a "retard."

Now, I don't think that Ann Coulter merits this generous description (dumb and shallow), but I understand the gesture of good will on his part. In fact, it reflects a level of civility far higher than any Coulter has ever displayed. Despite my temptation however, this piece is not meant to explore the historical insensitivity of a woman who arguably justifies a reex-



Courtesy of Special Olympics Virginia
Special Olympian John Franklin Stephens spoke against Ann Coulter for her use of the R word.

amination of the First Amendment; it is instead meant to discuss the unfortunate proliferation of the unspeakably ugly word that she used in today's society and in our school community, and why it needs to stop.

Growing up in a household where both of my parents work with people with developmental disabilities, the R word was considered just as bad as any of the other four-letter vulgarities, if not worse. As a kid attending elementary and middle school, I witnessed the gradual integration of the vile term into my friends' and peers' vocabulary as a common adjective used with less and less discretion as I progressed through the grades. With few exceptions, I dutifully abstained from using it in deference to my parents' wishes, but I did not understand why until I myself began to interact intimately with this population of people. For the overwhelming majority of you who have not done so, I'll do my best to convey to you why it's one of the most devastating terms you could ever use.

For someone with no experience with people with autism, Down syndrome, or a whole other host of disabilities, to whom the label "mentally retarded" once clinically referred, it's hard to comprehend just how hurtful the word is. If you haven't spent time with someone with a developmental dis-

ability, you wouldn't necessarily know that they can be driven to tears by hearing somebody use the word even in passing. If you don't know a family member of someone with a disability, you wouldn't realize the amount of pain that they have to quietly internalize, hearing person after unaware person make casual reference to a condition which has become a huge part of their everyday life, all in an attempt to belittle someone. Using the word means nothing to you: there are countless other meaningless and inarticulate terms you can employ in your inevitable efforts to effuse indecencies, but it could mean everything to others around you.

It's hard to convey the challenges that can permeate your life if your sister or brother has an intellectual disability. Personally, I only began to recognize this through spending more time with people with disabilities and through talking to their relatives. Aside from having to deal with the constant anxiety over how this person whom you love will be

able to function in society and the strong urge to shield them from our increasingly ignorant and callous surroundings, you bear firsthand witness to the trials and the triumphs of those with much harder lives than we could ever imagine. In a separate editorial that Stephens wrote on the same topic, he ex-



Sam Kim / The Spectator

pressed that "the hardest thing about having an intellectual disability is the loneliness." The loneliness that he is referring to, that of being well aware of when "the rest of you stop and just look at us" and the terrifying feeling of being "all alone in a world that moves much faster than [we do]" is a sensation far more painful and lasting than the adolescent alienation that many of us have experienced. Insensitivity just accentuates it.

Yet despite these difficulties, which as described in his letter include "receiv[ing] bad health care, [and living] in low grade housing with very little income," John and countless others whom I have met are still able to, in John's words, "see life as a wonderful gift." This is the most crucial point. These people, our fellow hu-

mans, are so much more than the disabilities that they have had no choice but to endure since birth.

Like us, they make friends, laugh, and love, have good and bad days, develop preferences and very, very distinct personalities. This is why the R word is so crippling. When you use it, you reduce these people back to what they have worked their entire lives to overcome, and use that one condition which you don't actually understand to exemplify unintelligence. This reflects an ignorance and lack of awareness more profound than any I have ever witnessed in a person with an intellectual disability. So I put it to you, my fellow students of Stuyvesant: we all know that you aren't stupid, so would you mind not being so shallow?

Opinions

C for Critical Thinking



Philip Shin / The Spectator

By SUNNY ZHANG

Multiple-choice or essay questions?

Hold up! I know what most of you are thinking: Multiple-choice. Duh. The answer is given in the question; all you have to do is pick the right letter choice. The worst case scenario is that you'll have to guess. For essay questions, if you have no idea what the answer is, then you get no credit. Sorry.

Many have accused Stuyvesant of producing superb test takers rather than the critical thinkers the world needs. Some have questioned the legitimacy of tests altogether. But on a practical level, it cannot be denied that tests are the most efficient way to assess students in a large school such as Stuyvesant. It's not a matter of tests versus no tests, but of how tests should be changed.

The goal of tests should be to train students to think critically. Critical thinking is the process of identifying a problem, formulating a hypothesis,

coming up with a plan, gathering evidence, and drawing a reasonable conclusion. Instead of merely acquiring skills and information, a critical thinker uses what he or she already knows to analyze, interpret, and evaluate what is given. He or she develops into an insightful and open-minded student. Critical thinking is needed to make the best possible decision in any situation, from voting for the President to successfully completing a minor task. This is what tests should be emphasizing.

But Stuyvesant's multiple-choice-dominated tests aren't doing that.

More often than not, there is no need to look below the surface of multiple-choice questions (MCQs, for short). They present the question clearly and concisely. All the student needs to do is solve straight away or pull out the right information, and then pick the corresponding letter choice. This means the most efficient way to get that revered ninety-five-

plus is to simply memorize all the necessary material. In addition, many students suffer from enormous workloads and lack of time, and don't go the extra step of actually understanding when and how the material can be used in real-world situations.

To emphasize critical thinking, word problems, essays, discussions, and (in language classes) improvisational conversations should have a more prominent role than they do now. These not only do the job of MCQs in testing students on knowledge learned in class, but also require students to use it. Word problems enhance problem-solving skills. Essay-writing and discussions involve formulating and supporting an argument. Improvisational conversations put students into real-life situations and require them to think on their feet. These are all important skills.

I'm not suggesting that teachers should sweep away all traces of MCQs on their tests. Students still have to know their material to use it to think critically. But by putting more emphasis on word problems, essays, and conversations, the meaning of learning will change from "memorization" to something that is hopefully more interesting and certainly more useful. Frankly, I believe that practicing Spanish grammar and vocabulary by having daily conversations will do much more in improving language fluency than a hundred MCQs will. Questions like these will foster a deeper understanding of material and give room for students' own creativity and potential.

In class, teachers should teach critical thinking skills to enable their students to answer these types of questions. Putting information in the context of the real world will force students to look at what they've learned in a different manner. It will also add a bit more flavor to the seemingly endless flow of information. When students study for these newly designed tests, they will have to truly think about what they have learned instead of memorizing robotically. Eventually, students will be able to get into the practice of critically thinking about every aspect of their lives.

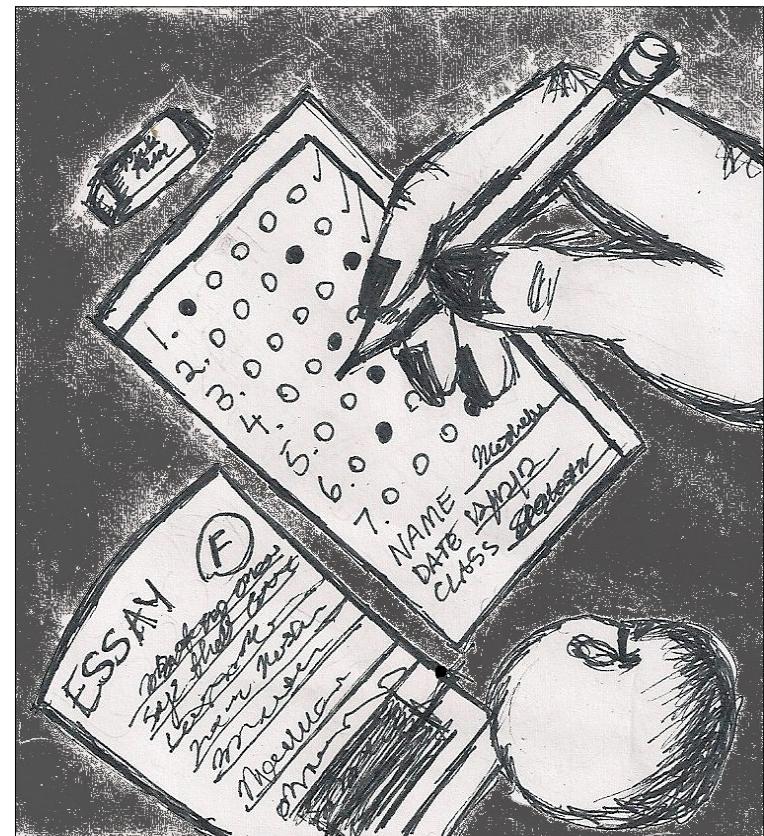
Most importantly, the information we learn now will not

stick in our brains for longer than a year. In fact, memory loss will start to kick in as early as in our late twenties. This just goes to show that memorization is the wrong thing to focus on. As for critical thinking, I'm happy to say that it can be used for as long as our brains function normally. This skill will be retained throughout our lives, and it should be continuously honed and polished.

Now let me ask again: What should we have on our tests?

- a) Multiple-choice.
- b) Fill-in-the-blank.
- c) Critical thinking.

I say C for critical thinking. It's about time we start giving it the attention it deserves.



Michelle Guo / The Spectator

Israel's Catch- 22



Philip Shin / The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

No matter what we do, we will lose. The game is rigged. How can we lose in a way that will cause us the least damage?

Rewind: It's Thursday, November 8, and Israel has assassinated senior Hamas militant Ahmed Jabari in Gaza City. Meanwhile, terrorists in Gaza have launched over 8,000 rockets into Israel since Israel's withdrawal in 2005. On November 10 and 11 alone, 100 rockets are launched into Israel—violence is escalating.

According to the Israeli Defense Forces, more than half a million Israelis have less than 60 seconds to find shelter after a rocket is launched from Gaza into Israel. In retaliation for the November attacks, Israel launches Operation Pillar of Defense, with the goal of crip-

pling terrorists in the Gaza strip by destroying their capability to launch rockets into Israel. Hamas retaliates by escalating violence on Israel, for the first time ever hitting major Israeli population centers, including Tel Aviv, Beersheba, and even Jerusalem. Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system is successful in preventing many of the rockets from landing, but it is imperfect. By November 20, Israel has fully mobilized its army and its reserves as it prepares for a ground battle. However, on November 21, Egypt's President negotiates a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel.

Fast-forward: Palestinians are dancing in the streets, celebrating their victory over Israel. Trumpeting slogans including "the resistance has triumphed," many Palestinians have decided to commemorate their "victory" with a national holiday on November 22. As Henry Kissinger famously said, "The guerrilla wins if he does not lose." Indeed, the ceasefire has empowered anti-Israel groups, who can now claim to be on the same playing field as Israel.

"There is no way to relinquish weapons [...] These weapons protected us and there is no way to stop obtaining and manufacturing them [...] Hamas believes the General Assembly is not the one to create states," said Abu Marzouk, Hamas's second-in-command.

"Occupation needs resistance, not negotiations."

Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah has declared that the group "would fire thousands of rockets into Israel in any future war and target cities in the country's heartland." He has concluded that in the recent conflict, Hamas won "a clear victory" against Israel with their rocket bombardment.

Even if IDF Chief Benny Gantz is correct in saying that Operation Pillar of Defense has accomplished its goals by temporarily ending Hamas's capability to launch rockets into Israel, it doesn't change the fact that the ceasefire has empowered Hamas and other militant groups by giving them the impression that they have succeeded. Whether this is a false impression or reality doesn't change the impact. Israel loses in the long run. Terrorist groups engage in more threatening activities and major war becomes more likely.

Yet Israel's only alternative to a ceasefire would have been a ground invasion—an action that would have led to loss of life for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Equally important for Israel, it would have created a public relations disaster similar to that of Operation Cast Lead in 2009, an event largely criticized for its high level of civilian casualties. The devastating impact to Israel's soft power, as the in-

ternational community would find an opportunity to criticize Israel, would have outweighed any national security benefits it could have reaped. Again, Israel would have lost, simply because protecting the safety of its citizens is unpopular.

Israel is stuck in a Catch-22.

We've reached a point at which Israel is faced with two choices: 1) let the terrorists kill your civilians and receive praise from the international community or 2) fight for your country and incur the wrath of the media and the international community.

This isn't an isolated scenario.

Consider the debate over Israel's security fence along the West Bank border. Though it is credited with reducing the incidence of terrorism in Israel by 90 percent, the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice have both called for Israel to remove the wall, citing it as a textbook example of "human rights abuse." Are you kidding me?

Consider Israel's bids for peace. As recently as 2001, Israel offered the Palestinians 100 percent of the West Bank, with land swaps, in return for peace. But as Yacov Lozowick astutely noted in "Right to Exist," the Palestinians are determined to win by resistance what they've been offered by negotiation. No matter what Israel does, whether it asks for peace or goes to

war, it is the "aggressor."

This is the most dangerous trend in Israeli history. Israel has never been afraid to buck popular opinion when it finds it necessary, but if the entire world begins to irrationally turn against Israel, the Jewish State is in grave danger.

If this trend continues, I will likely live to see the day that Israel ceases to exist—then Israel's blood will be on the hands of the whole world, not just of Hamas or Fatah.



Christine Lee / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

Food

Nickel and Dine: The Maoz Vegolution



Sora Kim / The Spectator

Maoz Vegetarian, 558 7th Ave.

**By ANGELA SUN
and CARMEN YEUNG**

Fast food that is healthy—an oxymoron, you say? Not at Maoz Vegetarian, an Amsterdam-based chain that offers fresh, meatless meals at food-court speed. With one of its many locations located at 558

Maoz offers the rather pricey, but worthy option of a Meal Deal.

7th Ave (Corner of 40th St) in Times Square, Maoz's signature green and white modern décor is a staple in the minds of many vegans and meat eaters alike.

Chickpea and parsley-filled falafels with hot, crispy exteriors and coarse, nutty interiors take center stage at this Dutch franchise. Maoz offers the rather pricey, but worthy option of a Meal Deal, which includes a freshly baked, soft pita pocket filled with five piping hot falafels, a dollop of hummus and eggplant, topped with salads and sauces, Belgian or

sweet potato fries as a side, and a beverage (\$9.15). As a bonus, Maoz's buffet-style bar allows its customers to fill up their pita pockets to the brim with garnishes of their choice—corn salad, vegetable salad, tabouli, salsa, and more—along with a large assortment of sauces.

Maoz's belgian fries are made on the spot and served steaming hot. There is an option of regular fries, sweet potato fries, or a generous serving of both for only \$3.25. Three different dipping sauces are offered at the self-serve bar to accompany the fries: tahini, garlic, and yogurt. Maoz's famous sweet potato fries are salty on the outside but rich enough with authentic sweet potato flavor on the inside that customers often forgo the sauces. For their regular Belgian fries, the yogurt sauce is particularly popular with customers due to its tangy, unique flavor that is hard to find elsewhere in New York City.

While space inside Maoz chains is limited, the food and customer service more than makes up for it. The self-serve bar allows you to choose your own toppings and adjust accordingly, depending on your taste. Maoz's menu is nutritious and suitable for both American vegetarians and meat-eaters without betraying the unique flavors of Middle Eastern cuisine.

By OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

The exotic spices can be smelled from the beginning of the block, and they are no red herring! Known as the best Thai food restaurant in New York City, Queens-based SriPraPhai originated as a small-scale Thai sweets shop. After a few years of good business they extended their shop into a restaurant with a garden, and even more recently have doubled their interior, but not without good reason. Long lines stretch down the block on most weekends, but as many frequent customers know, standing on line for the SriPraPhai experience is worth the wait.

The restaurant's premier appetizer is the Chicken Satay: strips of chicken dipped in sweet and spicy peanut sauce. This dish is also offered with beef or pork, rather than only chicken. Though this dish is one of the more expensive appetizers, and is priced around the same amount as most of the entrees (\$8-\$9), the chicken is grilled to tenderness, to which the sauce serves as a savory complement. If you're looking for a cheaper appetizer, the restaurant also offers steamed dumplings with chicken and shrimp, or fried chive vegetable dumplings for \$5.

One of the best entrée is the "Gai-Kua" (\$9), a dish of sautéed noodles with chicken, squid, and egg. Made with wide Thai rice noodles, the dish combines the soft noodles, tender chicken, and gummy squid with small amounts of salty egg and fresh coriander. This dish is perfect for those who are not craving something spicy, though red pepper is served on the side for those who want to add more zest to the simple classic. Even less spicy is the Noodle Soup (\$9), served with either sliced or stewed duck. The stewed duck is much more difficult to eat in comparison to its sliced counterpart, but they do not vary in their general taste and are equally sweet. The hearty servings of duck are enveloped with a hint of soy sauce, packing an interesting punch in combination with the crunchy

bean sprouts. All noodle soups are only served until 5:00 p.m., which poses as a small inconvenience for those who can't make it to the restaurant earlier on weekdays. However, SriPraPhai is open on weekends (the restaurant is closed on Wednesday), making the soup a perfect dish for a weekend lunch.

Beyond the wide scope of noodle dishes, there is a large selection of other meals available, including a separate menu for vegetarians. Non-noodle soups such as the Tom-yum shrimp hot and sour soup with mushrooms, and the Thai styled Chicken Soup with mushroom, coconut milk, and galanga (a peppery Indonesian root), are all served past 5:00 p.m. The restaurant also offers a very wide selection of meals over rice and à la carte (rice can be added for



Sri Pra Phai, 64-13 39th Avenue.

Vivian Huang / The Spectator

bamboo shoot and sea trout. With the wide variety of meals, all customers are bound to find a dish that they find mouth-watering.

The meal sizes are usually on the larger scale, but those who still have space for dessert must try the Rice and Taro Root Banana Wrapper, which consists of sweet taro root inside sticky rice, cooked in banana leaves. Though the dessert menu only shows the small assortment of ice creams (green tea, lychee, and coconut, each go for \$5), the more interesting deserts are found on the shelves and in the refrigerators next to the entrance. Here, such as multiple Thai-style simple and colorful cakes, cookies, and gelatin desserts.

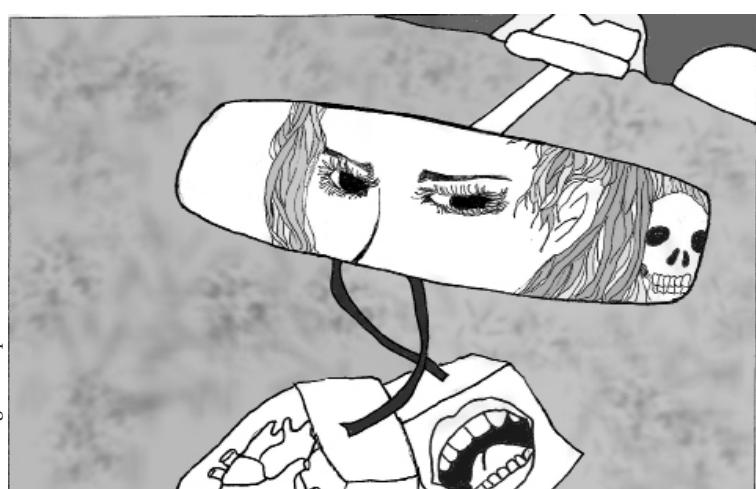
The overall atmosphere of the restaurant is very friendly, and the interior has a pleasant and contemporary design. The only downside is that SriPraPhai does not accept reservations even for larger parties, which can be a turn-off for those who would have to commute to its Queens location. Nevertheless, the delectable food is worth the ride, whether you're looking for a small bite to eat, a tasty lunch, or a large homely dinner meal for a reasonable price.

SriPraPhai is located in Woodside, next to the 7 and R train lines, and blocks away from the F and E lines, with another location in Williston Park.

Music

A New Riot Grrrl

angsty melancholy to emotional depth, and from tinny guitars



By JANE ARGODALE

In recent years, numerous piano-playing songstresses have wowed audiences with their quirky lyrics, gentle instrumentals, and pleasingly pretty voices. Recorded when she was 20 years old, Kate Nash's debut album

"Made of Bricks" was largely in this vein, featuring catchy, beat-heavy tunes with snarky lyrics that showcased Nash's vocal talents but only hinted at a style truly unique to her. With her 2010 album, "My Best Friend is You," Kate Nash moved from snark to wit, upbeat cheerfulness and

The fuzzy bassline is loud and prominent, and paired with surf guitar evokes a breezy, 'Miserlou' vibe.

and simple piano to more punchy and varied melodies.

She's still inclined towards lyrics about perfect boyfriends,

awful boyfriends, unrequited love, and social awkwardness. But since she began to identify as a feminist shortly before the release of "Best Friend," Kate Nash has infused her music with a feminist sensibility, both in its lyrical confidence and stronger sound influenced by the Riot Grrrl feminist punk movement of the '90s.

With her new "Death Proof" EP, Kate Nash has developed that sensibility, and produced some of her best work so far.

The EP's opening and titular track, "Death Proof," features detached, frequently spoken vocals reminiscent of Lana Del Rey, but more acerbic and less bland. The fuzzy bassline is loud and prominent, and, paired with surf guitar, evokes a breezy, "Miserlou" vibe.

"Fri-End?" and "I Want a Boyfriend (With a Car)" liven up the vocals, mixing the sweet singing of "Made of Bricks" with yelled

chants and screeches. Speedy punk rock guitars and snappy lyrics keep the tracks fast-paced and energetic.

Nash follows up these tracks with a cover of "All Day and All of the Night," by The Kinks, alternating between a slow chant of the verses with little backup other than drums that convey far more actual longing than the original and choruses that largely stick to the poppy style of the Kinks version.

The final song on Death Proof, "May Queen," is much slower than the rest of the EP. Kate Nash's more melodic "Made of Bricks" vocals make an appearance again, wedged in the ethereal, hypnotic drone of an organ. The song brings some variety in tempo and instrumentation to the EP, but still proves that whether Kate Nash is singing or screaming her heart out, her music will always deliver.

Laura Eng / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

Movie

A Shot At A Silver Lining

By OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

As an avid fan of Jennifer Lawrence, I was immediately drawn to the idea of her portraying a crazy widow and recovering sex-addict. However, the film, based on a novel by Matthew Quick, is much more than a quirky comedy/drama centered around the "Hunger Games" star. Already earning an astonishing amount of Oscar buzz and film festival awards, "Silver Linings Playbook" is a movie that has it all: dancing, romance, mental disorders, football, and Raisin Bran. The star-studded cast of Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, and Chris Tucker truly delivers, immersing the viewer into the protagonist's struggle to rekindle the love he lost and the life he once had.

Pat (Bradley Cooper), a bipolar ex-teacher, is released from a mental institution after eight months and returns home to his mother (Jacki Weaver) and father (Robert De Niro), a boozie with OCD who is wary about Pat's early release, and for good reason. Pat's wife still has a restraining order against him and the moment he steps onto

the property of his school, other teachers run for their lives. Despite Pat's protests that he is ready to return to his old job and wife, he has several mental breakdowns, resulting in police visits, fist fights, and plenty of tears. Unlike other movies that seem to glorify or smooth over mental issues, "Silver Linings Playbook" truthfully addresses how it is to be an adult in need of parental care and confronts the difficult task of discussing mental illness without making it seem like a cry for help.

The characters in the movie that do, in fact, have diagnosed problems, are also the ones who find comfort in each other. Pat has not fared well in his relationship with his wife (Brea Bee), who constantly pushed him to find a way to control his mood swings, but he is surprisingly comfortable around Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence), a fellow sufferer who wears all black and excessive amounts of eyeliner. The two connect immediately over dinner about what meds they've taken, and the headstrong Tiffany orders Pat to walk her home. Their bond over their mutual craziness provides for a

strong, at times rocky, central relationship.

The chemistry between Lawrence and Cooper is bona fide and not the cliché "love at first sight" relationship. It takes the entire movie to truly flesh out how these characters feel about each other, and the wait is worth it. It is Lawrence, however, who truly brings the film together. She successfully becomes the enigmatic character of Tiffany who, for the most part, refuses to let people see her as anything but cold and misunderstood. Her constant changes of mood from funny and light-hearted to deeply troubled stay true to the spontaneous air of the film.

Director David O. Russell and cinematographer Masanobu Takayanagi add to this feel with an informal style of loose handheld shots and shaky close-ups. Russell, also the screenwriter, effortlessly ties in each scattered plot point. The story of Pat's father's gambling problem is weaved smoothly into the storyline without confusing the viewer for a second, giving a sense of unity to a movie of characters with distorted views of reality.



Michele Lin / The Spectator

"Silver Linings Playbook" transcends the mold of the modern romantic comedy. It doesn't pander to the audience with cheap, one-dimensional characters, and unlike many

movies on the subject, it doesn't oversimplify the issue of mental illness. In the midst of so many dull, uncreative rom-coms, it's a much-needed breath of fresh air.

Honest Abe Gets A Makeover

miered Friday, November 16. "Lincoln" tells the story of President Abraham Lincoln, extraordinarily played by Daniel Day-Lewis, and his attempt to pass the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery near the end of the Civil War.

Normally, a film detailing the bureaucratic processes of passing federal legislation would come across as dull, however, Spielberg is able to rework this drudgery into slowly mounting tension. In fact, it is this political maneuvering that is the predominant plot driver, which allows us an inside, if somewhat dated, look into how governmental decisions were (and are) made in our country.

The political back-and-forth is not only engaging, but also provides necessary comic relief to the grim subject matter. Some of the film's most amusing sequences are the tactics employed by Lincoln's "agents," whose main task is to procure congressional votes in favor of the 13th Amendment. The three

agents' shenanigans, including blatant bribery and friendly extortion, allow us to escape from the bloody backdrop of Civil-War America. Even more amusing are the heated public and private political debates between the many key politicians in the film. One particularly vivid exchange occurs when Republican congressman Thaddeus Stevens (Tommy Lee Jones) calls George Pendleton (Peter McRobbie) a "nincompoop" during a public debate in the House Chamber.

Though the film is able to avoid monotony through its refreshing look at historical Washington politics, the film's strength is in the acting. Obviously, the two-time Academy Award-winner Daniel Day-Lewis is uniquely talented. Day-Lewis creates a Lincoln that is much more complex and subtle than the "Honest Abe" version taught to us in grade school. Day-Lewis' Lincoln is soft-spoken and tender, allowing us to catch a glimpse of the humanity behind the national icon. One

of the more touching moments comes early in the film, when Lincoln lies down on the floor next to his sleeping son Tad to kiss him on the forehead. The film's Lincoln is also exceedingly wry and willing to play the political game to his advantage. He is borderline eccentric. For example, the character tells many little parables that mean very little to anyone besides himself. In effect, Day-Lewis's Lincoln is compassionate, politically intelligent, and a little bit insane, the goal of which is to dispel our one-dimensional image of our 16th president.

Yet Day-Lewis does bring out this version of the powerful titanic version of Lincoln at the most appropriate times. In the uncertain days preceding the 13th Amendment vote, Lincoln delivers the line, "I am the President of the United States of America [...] clothed in immense power," to his cabinet showcasing the righteous might we have come to expect from Abraham Lincoln.

Not to be overshadowed by Day-Lewis are the acting talents of Tommy Lee Jones and Sally Field. Jones, as Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, is able to capture the commanding presence of a Congressional leader as well as the inner conflict he feels when he has to compromise his values to pass a bill he supports. Field as Mary Todd Lincoln embodies her fiery energy as well as the pain a mother and wife carries while trying to raise a family at the center of the nation's government.

With an amazing cast and engaging plot, "Lincoln" is a promising pick come Oscar season. However, in order for the lay-person to enjoy this film, one must give it complete attention. It is only through careful attention that the film's slow-building plot and subtly developing characters amount to any significance. But, to the patient viewer, "Lincoln" tells a great story about one of the greatest presidents in the history of our country.

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Arts and Entertainment

TV

New CW Show: Hit Or Miss

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

"That's my trust fund," Tommy Merlyn (Colin Donnell) cries out to his unappreciative father after the latter takes off his mask in the midst of a fencing sparring session. With an evil laugh, the father retorts, "...Which is comprised of my money. Excuse me, was comprised."

Yes, folks, the CW has begun running another show about the wily antics of grossly wealthy twenty-somethings and the equally questionable scandals—no doubt dealing with some mixture of billion-dollar embezzlement and inappropriate romances—of their parents, played rather humorously by forty year-old actors.

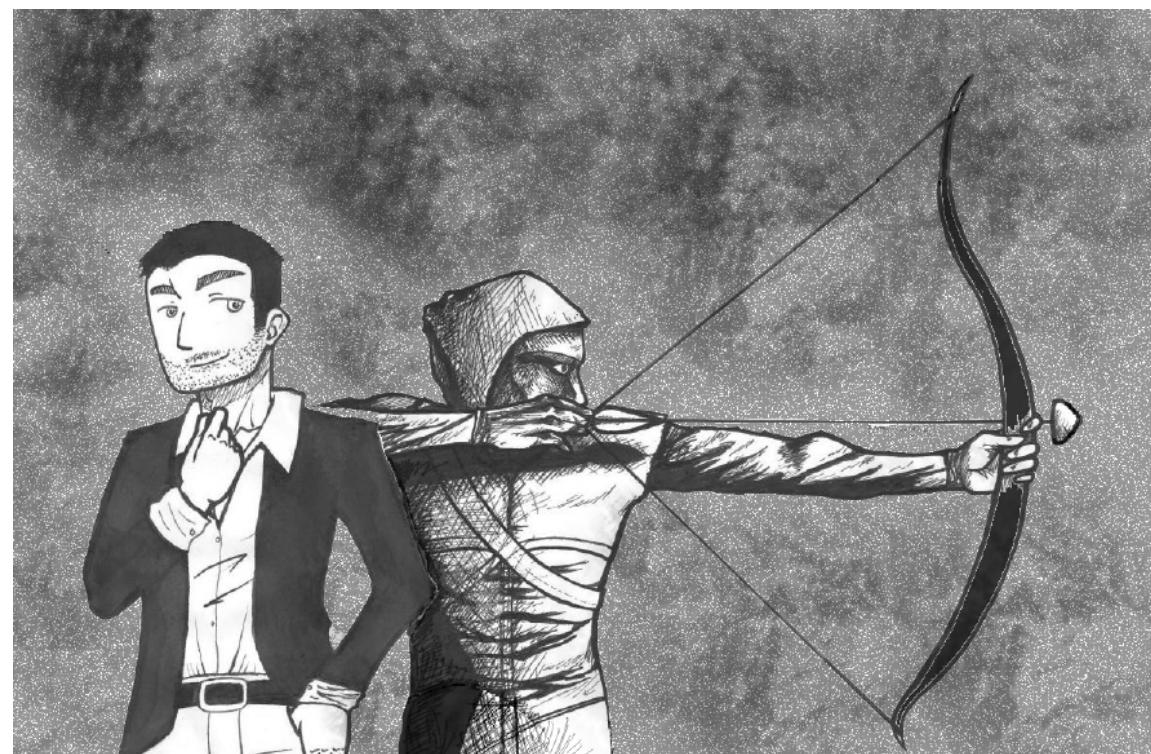
But "Arrow" has a catch. It takes the "Gossip Girl" allure of obscene wealth and smacks it together with the superhero movie cliché we know all too well: a vigilante kid with superhuman strength fights to "save the world." Like all overdone

man who, after being stranded on an island off the coast of China infamously dubbed "Purgatory," dons a black mask and green face-paint to become the "Green Arrow."

His mission is simple: to right the wrongs of his corrupt father, CEO of Queen Industries, who died in the same shipwreck that left Oliver stranded for five years in the island. With his dying breath, Oliver's father tells his son to kill the league of wealthy men that corrupt their home of Starling City.

Armed with his father's moleskin—which contains the names of the most egregiously corrupt tycoons of the city, many of whom have killed to accrue their money—Oliver returns to Starling City after being found, and begins to use his newfound prowess with the bow and arrow and superhuman strength and speed to craftily murder the men in the book one by one. Each episode of the ongoing first season brings him further on his quest; with a determined thrust of a pen, he crosses the names in the book off in black ink after each hit.

Oliver is joined by his bodyguard-turned-sidekick, John Diggle (David Ramsey). To keep his cover, Oliver maintains the role of the prodigal son, pretending to be too naïve and immature to take a job at his late father's company. He does this to deceive his concerned mother (Susanna Thompson), who of course is hiding an evil plot to kidnap her son with strange rich men in limousines at the end of each episode. To further his unassuming cover, Oliver often plays the drunken buffoon at the orgiastic raves he attends with Tommy, his best friend since childhood. And like all male best friends in the CW primetime lineup, Tommy and Oliver's friendship is perforated by a love triangle; Laurel Lance (Katie Cassidy), who Oliver dated before his disappearance, has since begun a rather complicated relationship with Tommy. Even more appropriately (and unbelievably), Laurel—who works for the district attorney—becomes fascinated with the "masked man," with whom she works on freeing an



Bonny Truong / The Spectator

innocent man convicted for murder.

While the expected drama and bewildering plot develop-

sneaks out to party with friends.

Another surprising boon of the show is the character of Tommy, who is played by the versatile Colin Donnell of the 2011 Broadway revival of "Anything Goes." In spite of being introduced as the typical spoiled best friend, Tommy's attempt to reconcile his identity as a ladies' man with his affection for Lauren makes for an engrossing side-plot.

In addition, the show features a well put-together aesthetic—with refreshing interaction between the characters, and well-built action—in spite of a clichéd plot. Scenes of elegant receptions, violent fights with swift arrow shots, suspenseful romantic tension between Tommy and Laurel, and even scenes of Oliver working out in his secret warehouse hideout by accomplishing inhuman feats create an exciting and addictive superhero drama.

Perhaps filling the void left by the end of "Smallville," Oliver is a lovable protagonist with a passion for his mission. Though his naiveté in thinking of his killing spree of the "evil" wealthy as noble is preposterous, the show only makes the same jumps of logic as every other superhero show kids have grown to love.

It is almost impossible to

not yell at the screen when Oliver digs himself deeper into a hole of hypocrisy, or when every single person in a room is

**With a
determined
thrust of a pen, he
crosses the names
in the book off
in black ink after
each hit.**

ment characteristic of teenager-paced shows is present in "Arrow," its rustic charm as an exciting and action-packed superhero show outweighs the burden of over-scripted dialogue. The relationship between Oliver and his sister Thea (Willa Holland), who calls him "Ollie," is cute and homely. He endearingly acts like a father to her, scolding her when she

**It is almost
impossible to not
yell at the screen
when Oliver digs
himself deeper
into a hole of
hypocrisy.**

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Arts and Entertainment

Movie

I Do Believe in Fairies—Or, At Least, In These Warrior Spirits



Cynthia Zhou / The Spectator

By MEG PALMER

In a world much like our own exist the men, women, and bunnies of legend such as Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny. However, these are not the fuzzy-hearted, smile-bearing characters of our own childhoods. In this world exists a sinister being, Pitch, also known as the Boogeyman (Jude Law). The Man in the Moon named four Guardians

to protect children and childhood from Pitch: Santa Claus (Alec Baldwin), the Tooth Fairy (Isla Fisher), the Easter Bunny (Hugh Jackman), and Sandman. In this film based on William Joyce's book series "The Guardians of Childhood," Pitch rises up and a fifth Guardian, Jack Frost (Chris Pine), must face his own fears to help save the very children who doubt his existence.

Director Peter Ramsey was

given a rather weak script with a predictable plot, but he managed to make some holiday

Although there were cute jokes sprinkled throughout the film, the funniest clips were of Sandman, who cannot speak but rather uses images made of golden sand to convey his thoughts.

magic out of it in "Rise of the Guardians." The simple language and jokes used throughout the movie made it easy to follow, if somewhat boring at points. However, Pine's sarcasm and Jackman's gruff anger were perfect ways to highlight the

funny moments in the film. The rough, tattooed, Russian Santa Claus was, obviously enough, a surprise, but his character slotted in so well that by the end of the film Santa might as well have always had "naughty" and "nice" tattooed on his arms. Though there were cute jokes sprinkled throughout the film, the funniest clips were of Sandman, who is nicknamed "Sandy" by the other characters. Sandy can't speak, instead using images made of golden sand to convey his thoughts. From picking up one of Santa's elves to get attention to trying to explain what it means to be a Guardian, the artists used Sandy to move the plot along as well as a source of quick comedy. The plot is, at times, slow moving but is does not feel like it is being dragged through sludge. The movie is enjoyable for children audiences, but also for teens and young adults who are looking for a movie to get them in the holiday mood.

Although geared towards children, the characters of "Rise of the Guardians" struggle with questions that appear again and again in movies meant for teens or adults. Questions of identity and faith reappear frequently. The movie offers a new heart, one filled with honesty and integrity, that has been long absent from children's movies.

With an ending reminiscent of Marc Forster's 2004 film "Finding Neverland," the movie inspires viewers to stand, clap,

The movie offers a new logic, one filled with honesty and integrity, that has been long absent from children's movies.

and shout, "I do believe in fairies, I do, I do!" With giant snowball fights, adorable yetis, an Australian Easter Bunny, and cute one-liners, "Rise of the Guardians" is a cute holiday film, and even the older siblings dragged along will be sure to be infected with its cheer.

Museum

Deconstructing the Audiovisual Experience

By SHAHRUZ GHAEMI

Exhibitions at the New Museum are typically esoteric and cerebral. The installation "Preoccupied Waveforms" by Haaron Mirza certainly invokes such thoughts in any visitor. Instead of a quiet studio space filled with the artist's work, Mirza uses both outdated and modern audiovisual technologies to disrupt the exhibition space and expose new ways of seeing it.

Mirza's piece occupies the entirety of Studio 231, which is not actually within the New Museum building at 235 Bowery. Rather, one has to walk back outside and to the building next door after purchasing a ticket. Mirza's exhibit revolves around creating a sense of confusion, and this odd arrangement is only fitting.

The sensory bombardments of "Preoccupied Waveforms" begin at the door. Most immediately noticeable are two large, elliptical bands of flashing LEDs, a red band on the floor and a green one overhead. They provide the only light in the entire studio space, apart from a regular lightbulb by the door. The red and green lights alternate in a pattern that is obviously programmed, but it takes time to register that. At first, they seem to flash too quickly to be pinned down to an observable pattern, eluding the grasp of your mind.

Two speakers installed on shoulder-height pedestals con-

stitute the audio portion of the exhibit. Each one plays one or two distinct notes repeatedly, but both speakers work in rhythm to create a rudimentary form of melody. The closest analogy would be the basic, electronic pulse of dubstep. The entire space is filled with

Mirza's exhibit revolves around creating a sense of confusion, and this odd arrangement is only fitting.

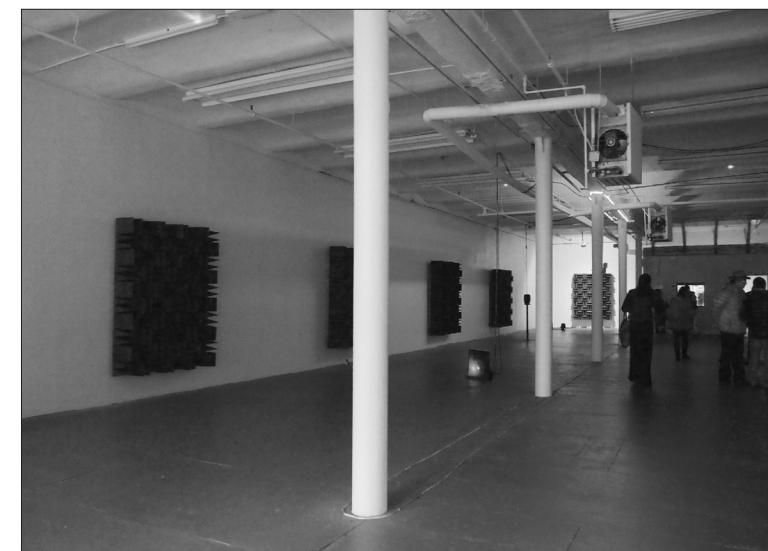
the speakers. Their rhythms differ from the pattern of the LEDs, creating another variable of disconnect between what you are hearing and what you are seeing.

A TV set that might have been seen in a 1980s living room is set on the ground in the back of the studio, hooked up to another speaker, but here only playing static. At times it

switches to a slideshow of clips that are obviously from an earlier age: pictures of records and of album covers, antiquated advertisements featuring sunbathed men and women, and pictures from postcards. The TV then plays one-note bursts of tone which contribute to a developing melody and soundscape within the studio. Another monitor set in the corner displays nothing but a few repeating lines of code. Like the TV set, a visual clip of nature or a woman's mouth interrupts the code at intervals. The monitor then plays a short recording of a woman saying something unintelligible, adding another temporary audio layer to the environment.

There is something profoundly disturbing and scary about the whole exhibit, entrancing as it is. It is as if a makeshift dance club set up in somebody's basement was abandoned halfway through a party. The incessant thumping pulse drowns out all other sounds, and the continuous assault on both sight and sound leaves touch hyper-aware. You often feel as though someone—or something—could be right next to you, and you wouldn't be able to tell.

Though it does provoke a sense of fear, the exhibit can also provoke a sense of peace; Mirza introduces confusion into the exhibit space, but also offers up a new way to experience it. The distracting nature of the audiovisual experience



Carolyn Fisher / The Spectator

belies the sheer simplicity of the exhibit. The flashing lights and the pulsing beat fill the space, though they are merely expressions of energy. One is surrounded by a vast empty space that is at same time not all that empty.

Mirza's artistic offering to the public consists of mindless electronic minutia, broken but stuck on a perverse repeat. You, the observer, have no input at all and are merely intruding on this "juste-milieu." Coined in France in the mid-1800s, "juste-milieu" referred to the popular, conservative artists who navigated the lines between extreme Romanticism, which had fallen out of fashion, and extreme Realism, which was seen as far too radical. They painted docile,

non-controversial topics such as the European countryside and middle-class families enjoying picnics or outings to the park. However, there is nothing docile about Mirza. Rather, his *juste-milieu* consists of bringing together the extremes of electronic visuals and electronic audio in order to create a new conversation between the two. That's where you'll find Mirza, at least for now, before he moves onto his next project.

"Preoccupied Waveforms" is on exhibit at the New Museum until Sunday, January 6, 2013. Tickets at the New Museum are free for high school students, with valid ID. Just remember that Studio 231 is right next door.

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Humor

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Bathroom Art: An Appreciation

By SAMUEL DAVID and MARY SAFY

Most, if not all, consider it a sight that exudes creativity and innovation. It is a glorious blend of all that is terrifying and thought provoking. It is perhaps the purest art form. It is Stuyvesant's bathroom art.

"These are extraordinary works comparable to those of Rembrandt and Michelangelo"
—Gavin Schall, senior

Bathrooms in Stuyvesant are safe havens for the artistically inclined, in a school where such students often do not have time to pursue their passion amidst extensive academic curricula. In the past, the graffiti and pornographic sketches on the bathroom walls have seldom been paid much attention. However, if one takes a closer look at these remarkable works, one will realize what an epic sub-culture they have been missing out on. "These aren't just the amateur sketches from Stuyvesant teenagers trying to rebel," senior Gavin Schall said. "These are extraordinary works of art, comparable to those of

Rembrandt and Michelangelo."

Many students have started referring to some of the bathrooms as "galleries" and often go on long "bathroom breaks" from class simply to admire the glorious artwork. Teachers are aware of this, and most are understanding of students' needs; some are even fans of the art themselves. "We work these children hard every day; everyone needs a mental break once in a while, and what better way to provide this than by taking a stroll through a soothingly pungent collection of art," mathematics teacher Debbie Goldberg said. "In the long run, parabolas won't help you as much as the elegant phallus sketches made by the talented Stuyvesant avant-garde."

The breathtaking bathroom art isn't limited to two-dimensional works. Two weeks ago, feces were found on the floor in a toilet stall in the boys' bathroom. While people first dismissed this find as "bad aim," many now recognize it as a metaphor for going against the norm, and arguably a dissertation on social progression as well. Though this form of art has its critics, it also has many fans. "It was the most moving artistic piece I've ever seen. As an aspiring artist, I can only dream of someday squeezing out a work as fragrant and shapely as this masterpiece," senior Marcus Barahal said.

Art teachers are particularly excited about the newfound popularity and respect for Stuyvesant's bathroom art. In fact, the Art Department was so touched by the new artistic movement that it has created two new electives: Bathroom Graffiti 101 and The Art of Re-

productive Organ-Drawing. "We strongly encourage all students to sign up for these classes," art teacher Leslie Bernstein said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn art forms of such high caliber. No other school would have such a program available to students—we are so privileged." Many seniors

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn art forms of such high caliber"
—Leslie Bernstein, art teacher

are thrilled about these new opportunities, finally having something to make their spring semesters worthwhile.

As part of the Spring Concert and Art Show, administrators will organize an exhibition to view the bathroom art; friends and family will be invited to see the magna opera. For now, take a stroll through one of Stuyvesant's many new displays to take your mind off your schoolwork. The artists have blessed us with the answers to all our questions through their revolutionary art. The art that graces these walls brings a whole new meaning to the term "relief."

Hunger Games To Determine New Principal

By JEREMY KARSON

It has been revealed that the next principal of Stuyvesant High School will be determined in a bloody fight to the death. There will be one candidate from each representative district in New York City, and the last one standing will be named the new principal. Interim-Acting principal Jie Zhang, from the district of Chinatown, is favored to win.

"I am greatly looking forward to the chance to cement my position as principal by slaughtering the other candidates," Zhang said. "My weapon of choice is of course my custom-made shank, which I still have from my days of teaching on Rikers Island."

However, it will certainly not be easy for Zhang, who will have to face fierce competition from around the Public School Administrators' League (PSAL). The fighting will be held in New York City's newly constructed gladiator arena, the Barclays Center.

The Department of Education (DOE) considered a standard interview process to determine the next principal, but decided that a fight to the death would be more exciting.

In addition, this would guarantee that the next principal is physically and mentally strong enough to fight off infamous Chambers Street "hugger-muggers," as well as seniors on hallucinogenic drugs. The event is being marketed as the "Principal Hunger Games."

Tickets for the duels sold out within minutes, and scalpers' tickets are being sold for exorbitant prices on Facebook "Buying and Selling" groups. In addition, the event will be televised pay-per-view on the Game Show Network. All Stuyvesant students will be given the day off from school so they can watch the proceedings.

Students and faculty members are excited to see the action. "This is the first gladiator fight I'm attending since Emperor Commodus's reign in 177 A.D.," substitute teacher Jerry Schecter said.

"The corpses will make a great banner for the 'Snapshots of Stuy' Facebook Page," senior and portrait photographer Mark Zhang said. "Then again, having a principal who is a mass murderer will really give 'getting sent to the office' a new meaning."

In order to prepare for the physical and mental demands

of the vicious fight, the principals involved have been taking weekly training courses in self-defense, crossbow wielding, and decapitation at Kweller Prep, widely considered the finest prep center in America. As for all PSAL events, hard work and consistent training is the formula for a winning effort.

"I always lift, but I've recently been going harder than ever before in my hopes to win the Hunger Games," Assistant Principal of Physical Education and Russell Crowe lookalike Larry Barth said, his body dripping in sweat and blood. "I plan to mount my victims' heads on spikes outside my office. Just a little prank to frighten the freshmen."

Until the hostilities commence, Zhang will remain the acting principal of Stuyvesant. She has pledged to cherish these last few weeks, knowing that they may be both her last weeks as principal and the last weeks of her life.

"Stuyvesant is the apex of public high school education, and I hear the Winter Concert is to die for," principal of Brooklyn Technical High School Randy Asher said. "Who wouldn't kill to work there?"

Scandal Hits Student Union

By TIMMY LEVIN

In the wake of the sex scandal involving former Director of the CIA David Petraeus, investigations have been launched in some of the most important US government agencies, including the IRS, FBI, and the Stuyvesant Student Union.

As one of the few members of the CIA not involved in a scandal of his own, Special Agent Tom Hanson led the investigation in Stuyvesant. Posing as a student for the past month, he infiltrated the school and conducted his investigation. "I had to undergo extensive facial reconstructive surgery in order to blend in as a typical Stuyvesant student," Hanson said. "Students may know me by my alias: Kevin."

Hanson revealed his shocking discovery about SU President Adam Lieber at a press conference on Tuesday, December 11. "My sources tell me that President Lieber partook in questionable activities with an unidentified female at some sort of soirée following an event of a choral nature," Hanson said. "He engaged in flirtatious behavior including, but not limited to, 'pimping,' 'macking,' and 'bagging.'"

Stuyvesant Juniors Embark On Holy Mission

By ROBERT MELAMED

The Stuyvesant College Trip, notorious for visiting the top colleges in the United States, will be a little different this year. Consisting of President Christine Xu and Vice President Jason Duong, the new junior caucus has changed both the itinerary and the rules of the trip. The juniors, who leave Stuyvesant

on the Junior Caucus website that no water bottles or brownies will be allowed on the trip and that bags will be checked before leaving. Holy water for drinking and bathing purposes will be distributed daily by Pope and Assistant Principal of Pupil Services Eleanor Archie. Students are not allowed to come into contact with any other type of water.

"Spring water and brownies are among the most dangerous and sinful foods consumable," said nun and Junior Class president Christine Xu. "I will administer a proper whipping to anyone who breaks the rules of God."

Despite the potential punishments, some juniors still intend to break the rules of the trip. "If anyone is looking to buy cookies, hit me up," junior Timothy Diep said. "I hope [Christine] whips me all night."

Other students are excited for the many fun events the Student Union has planned for them during the trip. "I can't wait till Sabbath dinner and Sunday morning services," junior Edward Zilberbrand said.

Some students have not been allowed to go due to low averages and weak connections with God. These students will attend a separate one-day field trip to the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC).

"The students going on the alternate BMCC trip also cannot bring water and brownies," said Ms. Archie. "However, this is because various drinks and baked goods will be sold right on campus."

"Spring water and brownies are among the most dangerous and sinful foods consumable,"
—Christine Xu, nun and Junior class president

on Friday, December 14, will visit St. Helens University, Jesus Christ University, Islamic American University, Yeshiva University, and every nun convent on the East Coast within three days.

The Junior Caucus and administration were very adamant when it came to the new rules for the trip. It was stated

Senior Classy Suit Up Day



By The Photo Department

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Sports

Boys' Basketball

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just two days before their matchup against Stuyvesant. "Going into the game, I knew we had to play hard, and we did," junior and co-captain Matthew Dalton said.

Senior and co-captain Ian Outhwaite won the tip to start the game for Stuyvesant, and senior Thomas Cui scored the first points of the game with a three-pointer from the corner. Washington Irving answered, quickly moving the ball up court throughout the first quarter. The Bulldogs led 12-8 until Outhwaite scored from under the basket, and Cui made another shot from beyond the arc. In fact, Cui put on a display, scoring 14 of the Rebels' first 18 points, but the Bulldogs began putting on a full court press, which slowed down Stuyvesant's offense. Though the game was tied 29-29 at the half, momentum swung in favor of the Bulldogs.

Three plays into the second half, Washington Irving took a 33-31 lead, and Stuyvesant could not keep up. The Bulldogs led by 11 after the third quarter, after steals and tight defense kept the Rebels from scoring. Stuyvesant tried to close the scoring gap when Cui nailed a three-pointer, and senior Sanam Rahman hit an "and one" free throw after being fouled on a layup. However, the Bulldogs offense managed to keep pace, and Stuyvesant fell short.

Though Fisher was far from satisfied with the end result, he stressed that he was proud of his team. "I'm never happy when we lose. I was happy with the team's effort, and the fact that we're improving, [...] but I want more from the players and I think they can do it," Fisher said.

Rebels Use Big First Half to Defeat Titans
By GAVIN SCHALL

The old saying that basketball

Rebels Search For Consistency In 4-2 Start

is a game of runs certainly held true when the Runnin' Rebels faced the Bayard Rustin Titans on Monday, December 3. But when it came to runs, the Rebels simply had more of them, and were able to bounce back from a loss in their previous game to win by a score of 64-45.

The Rebels' leading scorer so far this season, senior Thomas Cui immediately imposed his will on the Titans, scoring nine of the Rebels' first 11 points to open up an early 11-2 lead. Coach Philip Fisher said, "[Cui is] one of the best, if not the best player in the division," as the senior would "carry them [the team] at times."

Stuyvesant ended the first quarter with a 13-6 advantage. Despite Cui's two early fouls, he remained in the game. To open up the second quarter, junior point guard and co-captain Mathew Dalton drained a jumper and Cui ignited the crowd with a deep three-pointer. With the help of two free throws by senior forward Sanam Rahman and another basket by Dalton, Stuyvesant pushed the lead to 20 near the end of the second period.

However, with Cui on the bench after committing his third foul of the game, the resilient Titans pulled off a 13-3 run spanning between the second and third quarters in which they penetrated the previously stout Stuyvesant defense with ease and cut the lead to 33-27. "Their quickness gave us a lot of trouble at times," Fisher said.

Nonetheless, the Rebels responded well to pressure by breaking off a 17-8 run led by Dalton and senior center Ian Outhwaite, who had a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds, to take a commanding 50-35 lead. Three free throws after two technical fouls by the opposition helped boost Stuyvesant's run.

For the game, the Rebels shot an astounding 28-35 from the free-throw line, easily their best mark of the season. The Rebels had trouble breaking the press all game, but

over the final five minutes of the fourth quarter, they used crisp passing and the ball handling abilities of Dalton and Cui to repeatedly beat it. The press-break led to easy baskets and allowed the Rebels to cruise to the 19-point win.

Despite the Rebels' sharp outside shooting, especially from Cui, who finished with 20 points, the team has room for improvement. "We have to get boards — that's what kills us every time," Dalton said when asked what the team needed to work on. With no player on the roster over 6'3", rebounding will be a struggle all season, but if the Rebels continue to shoot the ball the way they did against the Titans, they will be in great shape.

Roar of Crowd Silences Bears in Overtime
By LEV AKABAS
and TIMOTHY DIEP

Heading into overtime in their home game against the Seward Park Campus Bears, the image of last season's playoff overtime loss was still in the heads of the Runnin' Rebels. Closing out games was an area of focus for the team going into the season, seeing as the Rebels lost three games last year by three or fewer points. "We're using that as an incentive to perform until the final buzzer and push ourselves even harder during the final quarter of games to make sure we successfully close them out," senior and co-captain Ian Outhwaite said before the season.

However, the Rebels' contest on Wednesday, December 5 certainly didn't start out as a close game. The team started off slowly and failed to follow through on multiple scoring opportunities. At the end of the first quarter, the Bears led by only seven points, but the game looked like an uneven match, as the Rebels were dominated inside the paint. "We played a decent second half, but we gave nothing in the first half," coach Philip Fisher said. "We played without a lot of emo-

tion and without a lot of smarts."

But after halftime, as the Rebels fought back, the crowd picked up, and the tables turned. Led by junior Imtiaz Hssan, who had 11 points on three buckets from beyond the three-point arc, the Rebels scored an impressive 33 points in the second half, after just 11 in the first half. The Bears could not solve the aggressive zone press defense of the Rebels, as they committed turnover after turnover. Eventually, the Rebels tied the game at 44 and sent it to overtime.

In overtime, the Rebels jumped out to a quick two-point lead on a pull-up jump shot from senior Thomas Cui. The Rebels quickly relinquished this advantage, however, when a sloppy pass was intercepted by the Bears for a wide open layup, putting Seward Park up by one point. The Rebels once again turned to Cui, who delivered by scoring a one-handed putback layup off his own miss with under a minute remaining in the game, this time putting the Rebels in the lead for good.

Despite the comeback win, the Rebels understand that there were many aspects of the game in which they performed poorly, one of which was rebounding, as the team grabbed only 19 rebounds over the course of the game. "We were able to pull out a win which we probably didn't deserve," Fisher said. "We understand that we're in a plateau by watching the film, and we have to fight our way out of it."

Rebels Blazed by Bergtraum at Home
By KEVIN MOY

Fresh off their last win in overtime, the Runnin' Rebels (3-2), were looking to extend their two-game winning streak. Instead, on Monday, December 10, they were shocked by the Murry Bergtraum Blazers (2-2) in a 39-31 loss.

"We were supposed to beat this team," senior Thomas Cui said. "We missed a lot of layups and

couldn't adjust to [the Blazers'] man-to-man pressure."

The game started with a low scoring first quarter—the Blazers had a 4-3 lead. But the Rebels offense came alive in the second, with help from seniors Ian Outhwaite (5 points, 8 rebounds) and Sanam Rahman (4 points and an assist). Cui led the team with 8 points, and the team also relied on juniors Mathew Dalton (6 points, 12 rebounds) and Imtiaz Hssan (6 points, 3 assists). At the end of the first half, the Rebels were leading 18-12.

When the teams stepped on the court for the second half, the revitalized Blazers dominated a sluggish Rebels team. The Rebels' offense was marred by turnovers off of casual passes. Missed free throws also hurt the Rebels' chances—Cui was two for seven from the charity stripe. The Blazers capitalized on these mistakes, embarrassing the Rebels by going on a 17-1 run in the fourth quarter. Blazer junior Aaron James had 11 points, 3 assists, and 5 rebounds.

"They were a lot more aggressive than us," Rahman said. "We didn't set good screens and run hard off them, and our mistakes led to their easy points."

With the win, the Blazers have placed themselves within a game of overtaking the Rebels' second place spot in the Manhattan A Southwest Division. However, Rahman is confident the team will bounce back in their next outing against East Harlem Pride. "Anytime when you lose a game cause of turnovers and outhustled, you know you gave it away," he said. "We need to outwork every team we play."

In their game against the East Harlem Pride on Wednesday, December 12, the Rebels bounced back from their loss with a 49-35 victory, improving their record to 4-2.

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Sports

Moving On Up

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easier to learn. I thought that finishing the JV season with my teammates, who would also be my teammates during my senior year, would develop me as a player," he said.

This is not a unique idea. "[Junior Varsity] is where players can actually set a foundation and learn their basic fundamental skills. That's where it all begins because the players are usually young," boys' junior varsity basketball coach Howard Barbin said. "JV is usually the first time that they're playing organized ball, and hopefully once they refine their skills, they'll be able to carry that through to varsity."

However, some athletes prefer an entirely opposite approach. They believe that joining the varsity team as early as possible is what helps in preparation, due to the increased level of competition. "I was focused on becoming a better player, and I knew that my teammates on varsity could teach me the game much bet-

ter. I found that because my opponents were so good, I was driven to play even better," senior and girls' varsity volleyball player Marta Poplawski said.

Some players also find that being surrounded by teammates with greater skills motivates them to perform to their fullest potential. "The differences between JV and varsity are the speed, athletic ability, strength, and skill level," senior and co-captain of the boys' varsity basketball team Thomas Cui said. "I found myself in the weight room more often so I could get stronger and compete at a higher level."

Generally, JV players are used to getting a lot of playing time and, therefore, more chances to shine in the spotlight. Athletes like Makhmudov value their playing time as instances where they can further refine their skills. "I do not regret waiting to move up to varsity. I learned a lot that year on JV, and the coach was great and taught me a lot," he said.

But for other players, having the status as a varsity team

member makes that JV perk a negligible opportunity cost. "Playing time didn't really matter to me," Poplawski said. "I found JV easy and boring, as the games weren't particularly advanced in skill or technique." She was willing to sacrifice playing time for a position on the varsity team and the access to more experienced players that could help her gain insight into her sport.

Once in a while, there will be an exceptional JV player that can step up to varsity at an early stage. But in general, most JV players need more experience, from both a physical and mental standpoint. They need time on the junior varsity team to be seasoned for their future roles, as well as to have a period to analyze their sport at a more comprehensive level. There is no question that the ultimate goal of JV players is to move up into varsity. The differences in opinion stem from what benefits players believe JV supplies, but most players consider it an important period of preparation.

Girls' Basketball

Phoenix Record 5 Blowout Wins, Fall Only To Seward In Fast Start

continued from page 20

ball, and took a lot of good shots," Sobota said.

In the 60-15 win, six Stuyvesant players scored at least six points, including Sobota, who finished with 16 points and 12 assists. The Phoenix exhibited "team chemistry and overall knowledge of their plays," Oates said.

"We have a really strong lineup," senior Sarah Duncan said. "Each girl is stepping up her game so that we can learn from our mistakes to become an even better team."

Phoenix Cruise in 50-Point Win over Environmental
By SAMANTHA LAU

After their 49-16 win over the High School of Fashion Industries, the Phoenix were looking to maintain their momentum against the Environmental Studies Eagles on Tuesday, December 11, before a stretch of inter-division matchups. Starting with a 25-2 first-quarter lead, they

handily put away the Eagles 67-17, improving their record to 4-1.

The Phoenix were confident coming into the game and expected a victory. "Looking at the statistics from both teams, I was expecting to pull out such a great win. The team didn't go in with any less of a mentality, and it was a game that we had to give it our all, so I'm really proud of how we pulled it off," senior Sarah Duncan said.

Height played to the Phoenix's advantage, especially on the boards, where they had 66 total rebounds, compared to the Eagles' 29.

"It is usually an advantage for the team. The height is really helpful with rebounding because we have three very tall players on our team," Duncan said. "Overall, it's who wants the ball the most and who's going to work the hardest for it."

The Phoenix were strong throughout the game, led by senior and co-captain Elektra Oates (11 points, 20 rebounds), Duncan (11 points, 14 rebounds), and sophomore Lauren Sobota

(10 points, 10 assists), who each had double-doubles. Crosscourt passing often came into play and the Phoenix were able to get behind the defense of the other team quickly.

While the game proved to be a blowout, the Phoenix hope to limit their turnovers and make cleaner and better passes as a matchup with the rival Beacon Lady Demons looms on Thursday, December 20.

"On a game like today, we shouldn't have had as many [turnovers] as we had. If you multiply that by two points or three points, that's a lot of points that we lose. I want to minimize the number of turnovers and keep pushing the ball on offense," coach Michelle Fleming said. "There's going to be a test when we play the non-league games outside our division, so we have to work hard to compete against them."

The Phoenix also eased to victory in a 54-20 win over the Bayard Rustin Titans on Friday, December 14, making them 5-1 on the season.

Wrestling

Spartans Speared By Knights



Stuyvesant Junior Yaseen Islam wrestled with Alexander Palmer in the Spartan's match against Martin Luther King Jr. High School Knights on December 6.

Maggie Wu / The Spectator

By SAMUEL FUCHS

As the Spartans' lead reached 24-0, it seemed like a great start to a new season for Stuyvesant wrestling at their season opener against the Martin Luther King Jr. High School Knights on Thursday, December 6. However, it turned out to be the opposite. The Spartans ended the night with a final score of 42, only to be beaten by three points by the Knights, whose final score was 45. Despite the fact that the Spartans had the upper hand all match, the victory was snatched away by the opposing Knights.

The match started with the 99 pound weight class and sophomore Johnson Liu taking down his opponent and winning the round with a pin. This started momentum for the Spartans, who went on to win the next three weight classes.

Freshman Neil Meepagala won with a quick pin, followed by senior and co-captain Matthew Moy. Moy began with a slight struggle but after taking down his opponent was able to complete with a pin. The Knights had to forfeit the fourth round having no one in the 120 pound weight class, giving the Spartans another six points. At that point, the Spartans led 24-0.

Sophomore Rayyan Jokhai lost in a quick match after struggling against a bigger opponent, with a quick pin for the Knights. The loss was followed by a win by senior and co-captain Paul

Ma in the 132 pound weight class.

As the heavier weight classes began their matches, the Spartans seemed to lose the momentum they had started with. Following Ma, the Spartans only won one of their next four matchups. "Their team got stronger in the heavier weights, and many of our heavier guys were sick, weak, or hadn't been to enough practices and we lost a lot of points from that," Weaver said.

Senior Santiago Torres was next to wrestle for the 170 pound weight class. The match lasted three full rounds that ended with Torres losing without being pinned. Torres's loss was followed by a victory in the hands of sophomore Cooper Weaver, who took down his opponent and managed to stay on his feet when almost brought down several times. Weaver's win was the last for the Spartans.

"It was a tough loss, but we felt good about it," Weaver said. "MLK is one of the better teams in the city and we took it down to the wire with them, which we are proud of."

The Spartans may be in luck however, due to several suspensions on the Knights, the Spartans might receive a victory for this match, though no official change in results has yet been announced.

Following this game, the Spartans lost an uneven match against Springfield Gardens, 48-24, and beat Murry Bergtraum 54-36.

So Wrong, Yet So Right

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TV audience as well as the NBA commissioner the next day.

Sportscaster Ernie Johnson pointed out in the wake of this particular controversy, "You know late in the year, that's when this happens." His comment deserves consideration — it is one thing for a coach to rest his best players as the season winds down and the team is preparing for a playoff run, but to do so in a November game that fans all over the country were looking forward to watching seems especially obnoxious.

However, in Pop's defense,

he is a head coach with 17 years of such experience under his belt, including 860 career wins, four championships, and a reputation around the league as both the best at what he does and a future Hall of Famer. At the very least, these credentials should warrant Popovich to execute his job however he sees fit. After all, a coach's first priority is to make moves that will ultimately benefit his team. There are no NBA rules that prohibit benching uninjured players, unless a team is doing so in an attempt to lose games for a better draft pick. David Stern's apology to the fans that was included

in his released statement was also questionable. As a head coach of a professional sports team, there is no way to satisfy everyone at the same time. For Gregg Popovich, the fans that he should be worried about are those of the Spurs. To say that benching his starters during the seventeenth of an 82 game season gutted Spurs die-hards is a severe exaggeration. The team has won three division titles in the last four seasons, and four championships since joining the NBA in 1976. Spurs fans are the team's main priority; Popovich's decision, arguably, is beneficial to them.

On the other hand, sup-

porters of David Stern will assert that the punitive measures the commissioner has taken against Gregg Popovich are his efforts to prevent coaches around the league from pulling the same move in the future. Pop may be starting a new trend by resting his stars and basically forfeiting a regular season game. By immediately doling out a substantial fine, Stern is demonstratively setting a precedent for the league's premier teams to always have their best players on the floor during nationally televised games. In the superstar-driven NBA, for the San Antonio Spurs, consistently one of the league's top teams,

to not be playing their starters against the reigning champs, is ridiculous.

The Popovich-Stern head-to-head that has temporarily gripped the NBA is just that: a short-lived occurrence that allows anyone who resides in the sports world, and even those who do not, to put in their two cents. Ultimately, what it comes down to is that David Stern sought to make decisions that were in the best interest of the league, the same way that Gregg Popovich did what was best for his team. There is really no true right or wrong, but then again, the fans will have to debate that.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Moving On Up

By ALISON FU

The distinction between members of a junior varsity team and those of a varsity one cannot be adequately explained with a simple good-player-versus-great-player contrast. Most high school athletes do choose to move up into the more advanced level of their sport, but only when they gain substantial in-game experience and believe that their skills are up to par with varsity standards. The main focus of the JV squad on conditioning and refining mechanics helps varsity hopefuls fulfill the implied pre-requisites to move up. Junior varsity may be seen as just a stepping-stone toward the more appealing team, but it is a particularly vital one.

Junior varsity is limited to freshmen and sophomores, while varsity is open to all high school players. This gives underclassmen the motivation to work hard to improve their all-around performances if they did not make the varsity team as freshmen, in the hopes of being moved up from JV when their coaches deem them ready.

On Stuyvesant's football team, the Peglegs, junior varsity members are automatically promoted after their sopho-

more year, but current senior and starting quarterback Alen Makhmudov sought a spot on the varsity team right after finishing his freshman season. Though he worked hard over the summer so he would be considered, the coach ultimately decided not to make the move. However, the varsity quarterback at the time consistently underperformed, and Makhmudov was asked to replace him. Surprisingly, Makhmudov declined the offer.

"At that time, my JV team was already 3-0 and we had great momentum," Makhmudov said. "I really wanted to have an undefeated season because we were striving for that ever since our 1-8 record freshman year, and it looked as if we were going to reach that goal." The perception that junior varsity is made up of less motivated athletes waiting for their chance to make it onto varsity is wrong—many players are heavily invested in their JV teams.

Another reason Makhmudov chose not to become the varsity starter as an underclassman was due to his preparation. "On JV, the pace of the game is slower and it is

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Senior Sanam Rahman goes up against a double team in the Runnin' Rebel's game against Murray Bergtraum.

Boys' Basketball

Rebels

Search For Consistency

In 4-2 Start

Stuyvesant Fails to Outrun Washington Irving
By NOAH HELLERMANN

Coach Philip Fisher called the Runnin' Rebels into a huddle in front of the bench before the game against the Washington Irving High School Bulldogs on Friday, November 30. As the team interlocked arms, hanging on each other's shoulders and waists, Fisher spun slowly, making eye contact with all of them. Known for being very loud and animated during the games, Fisher was calm as he spoke to his team. He asked the Rebels to do what they needed to do on the court, and the team broke up the huddle with a resounding cheer to start the game.

Unfortunately, the Rebels were not able to live up to Fisher's expectations, and they suffered their first loss of the season, falling 73-56 to the Bulldogs. Last year, the Bulldogs won just four games, compared to Stuyvesant's 12, but a lot has changed for both teams since then. The Bulldogs won their first game of the season by 29 points,

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Anne Duncan / The Spectator

Girls' Basketball

Phoenix Record 5 Blowout Wins, Fall Only To Seward In Fast Start



Sophie Gershon, sophomore, shoots unguarded against the Seward Park Campus Lady Bears.

Stuyvesant Lose to Seward Park in Nail-Biter
By YUSEN ZHENG

After a 73-3 season opening victory against High School of Economics and Finance, the Phoenix fell to the Seward Park Campus Lady Bears 45-43 in their second home game on Wednesday, November 28.

The Phoenix jumped to a 9-3 lead in the first quarter, but both teams fought to a standstill for the remainder of the game. Though the Phoenix matched their opponents on the board, they were plagued by turnovers and questionable fouls. Four quarters of relentless exchanges by both teams culminated in the scrappy final minutes of the game.

The first quarter began in the Phoenix's favor when Sarah Duncan drew first blood. Throughout the game, the Phoenix dominated the paint, not only in rebounds

but also in buckets. Senior Sarah Duncan had 18 points on shooting from the paint, many coming in the first quarter. Sophomore Sophie Gershon, who had 12 points, ended the quarter with a buzzer-beating three-pointer.

During the second quarter, the Phoenix began to run into foul trouble. The third quarter saw more sloppiness from the Phoenix when they turned the ball over three times consecutively. On one possession, three Phoenix forwards and centers crowded the paint, grabbing four offensive rebounds in a row, but missing four lay-ups at point-blank range. At the end of the third quarter, coach Michelle Fleming told her team, "I like your aggressiveness, but keep your composure and don't get into foul trouble."

The Phoenix were down by three going into the final eight minutes. Seniors Elektra Oates and Sarah Duncan fouled out. Down by five at the five-minute mark, the Phoenix rallied back with back-to-back baskets. But sophomore and point guard Lauren Sobota was charged with a personal foul, and later a technical for rebutting the referee. "She held her composure, and I'm really proud of her for that," Fleming said. With 17 seconds left, the Phoenix had an opportunity to tie the game with three foul shots but made only one of the three.

When asked whether the referees played a part in this loss, Fleming said, "Officiating was definitely a factor; a lot of people were in foul trouble because of poor officiating."

However, she acknowledged the team's weaknesses in the game. "Things we have to work on are definitely our turnovers

and being more confident on offense," she said.

Phoenix Notch Second Victory in Blowout
By ANNIQUE WONG

Going into their game versus the School of the Future Bulldogs on Monday, December 3, the Phoenix were coming off a two-point loss in their previous game, but were feeling confident in their ability to bounce back with a victory.

One reason for confidence was the fact that the Phoenix's lineup was considerably taller than that of the Bulldogs, and Stuyvesant certainly used this to its advantage, grabbing a total of 15 offensive rebounds in the game. "The girls' height was a plus and was used to capitalize on rebounding," coach Michelle Fleming said.

Throughout the contest, especially in the first half, the team made crosscourt passes that were effective and quick enough to create fast breaks, which gave senior Katie Mullaney and sophomore Lauren Sobota opportunities to make jump shots. By halftime, the Phoenix had already put 35 points on the board and jumped out to a commanding lead.

The theme of Stuyvesant dominance continued into the second half, as the Bulldogs began to lose energy from keeping up with the taller players of the Phoenix. Additionally, the Bulldogs had several miscommunications on defense and allowed fast-break layups to Sobota and senior and co-captain Elektra Oates. "We worked around the

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So Wrong, Yet So Right



By ALISON FU

There is no discernible line of demarcation in the ongoing coach Gregg Popovich vs. NBA Commissioner David Stern debate that separates right from wrong. Pop sent home Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, and Manu Ginobili, the Spurs' superstars and three of the biggest names in the NBA, on a commercial flight before their nationally televised Thursday night game against the Miami Heat on November 29. Danny Green, another starter, also sat out, while key players Stephen Jackson and Kawhi Leonard did not play due to injury. A team of second-string players faced the defending champions and lost by a close score of 105-100. After this transpired,

Stern released a statement that said, "I apologize to all NBA fans. This was an unacceptable decision by the San Antonio Spurs and substantial sanctions will be forthcoming." The next day, the Spurs were fined \$250,000.

This event has polarized the NBA and its fans, creating a cookie cutter controversy

perfectly designed for Skip Bayless, Stephen A. Smith, and every single loud-mouthed panel analyst in the sports world to debate. The two schools of thought are essentially "How dare [Popovich]!" and "Oh no [Stern] didn't!"

Gregg Popovich is the Bill Belichick of the NBA. Or perhaps it should be the other way around. Regardless, the head coach of the perennial Super Bowl contender New England Patriots must be kicking himself for not thinking of this strategy first. Benching his marquee players is nothing out of the ordinary for Popovich, but it rubbed many people the wrong way that he would choose a nationally televised game that many had hyped up as a potential NBA Finals preview to employ this particular tactic. Although it was the Spurs' fourth game in five days, they had played an awful Orlando Magic team on Wednesday night—it would have made more sense to bench starters then and avoid provoking a massive national

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Carolyn Kang / The Spectator