



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

*"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"*

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Newsbeat

- Stuyvesant's Speech and Debate team placed within the top five of every category in the 2013 New York State Championship, held at Champlain High School on the weekend of Saturday, April 13.
- Stuyvesant's Envirothon Team placed first in Manhattan and second in all of New York City, behind Staten Island Technical High School, in the New York City competition held on Friday, April 12.
- The Greater New York Math Fair accepted sixteen Stuyvesant sophomore research papers into the final round. This is the highest total in the city.
- A team of four Stuyvesant students won the New York State EconChallenge Online Competition by demonstrating mastery of economic and current events. The team progressed to the National Semifinals.
- Arts Connection awarded two of Art teacher Amy Cappell's students a prestigious one-year exhibition of student artwork and \$100 gift cards.
- The New York Social Studies Supervisors' Association honored Assistant Principal of Social Studies Jennifer Suri with the Mark Willner Supervisory Award.
- Two regional finalists and 10 honorable mentions from Stuyvesant for the 2013 Toshiba ExploraVision Competition were recognized in an official awards ceremony in Principal Jie Zhang's office on Tuesday, April 9. Toshiba America Foundation representative Thomas Anderson distributed the awards.

By ALEXANDRINA
DANILOV
and JAMIE WU

As spring arrives in New York City, Stuyvesant seniors are among the first to enjoy the nicer weather in a more accessible fashion. Due to a new policy first introduced on Wednesday, March 20, seniors are now allowed to leave the school building during free periods.

Principal Jie Zhang conceived this policy following a petition submitted by The Stuyvesant Spectator in February. The petition requested outdoor privileges during free periods on the grounds that these privileges would decrease stress, increase student happiness, and reduce overcrowding within the school. The petition was very popular among students, collecting over 1,000 signatures within 36 hours of its release.

"This is not the end-all issue, it's not the issue of our times," said senior and former Editor-in-Chief of The Spectator Adam Schorin, who was chiefly responsible for the petition. "But it's a small thing that I think will

make students a lot happier."

Overpopulation has been a growing problem at Stuyvesant, as each year the number of admitted students continues to rise. Previously, students often congregated on the first, second, or fifth floors or the library during free periods, creating noise and disrupting classes. These issues more recently led to restrictions in these areas, as addressed in two e-mails sent to the student body on Thursday, February 7 and Thursday, March 7. The messages informed students of the administration's decisions to prevent students from using the area outside of the fifth-floor student cafeteria during free periods, and to restrict entry into the library either after the first 15 minutes of each period or until the 150-person maximum capacity has been reached.

To address this issue, Zhang discussed the proposal with various students (including the Student Union), the Parents' Association, and the School Leadership Team. After she announced her decision to the teachers, the policy went into



Taking advantage of the new policy first introduced on Wednesday, March 20, a senior scans out during his free period

Phillip Shin / The Spectator

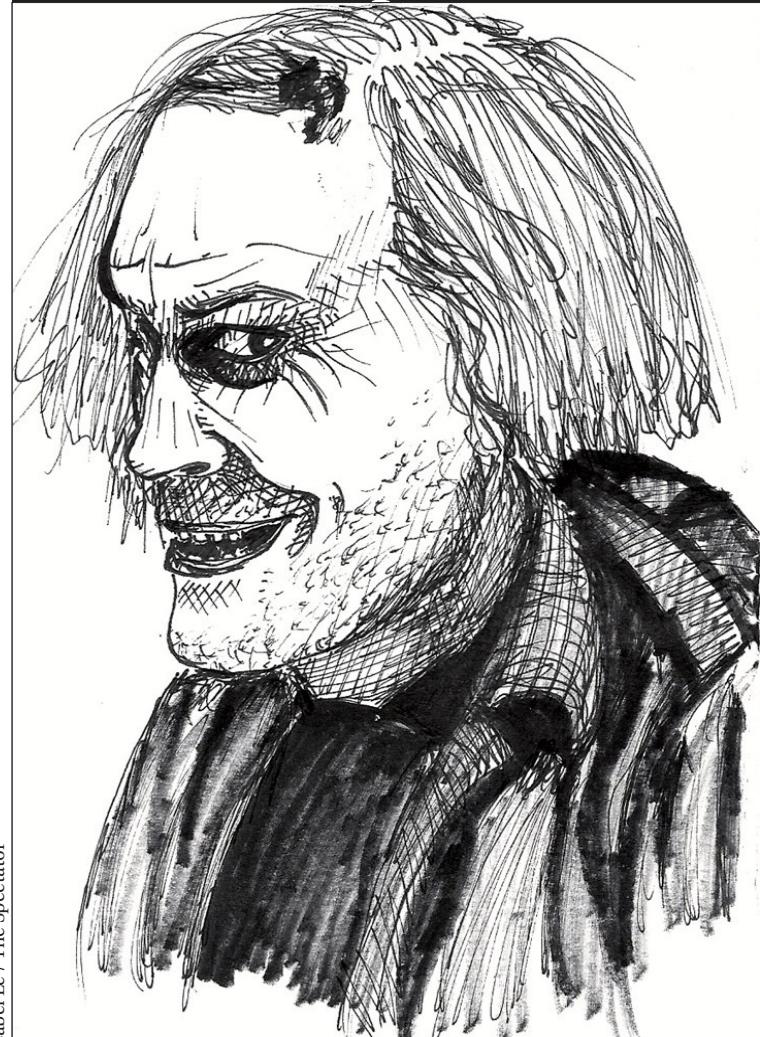
effect. First, parent consent was required for students wishing to take advantage of this privilege. Upon acceptance of the consent form available on the Stuyvesant website, the administration e-mailed students to confirm their out-for-free privileges. Seniors were allowed outside after spring break, as early as Tuesday, April 9. Reactions among the senior class were positive. "It's definitely quite rewarding. The

gesture is also appreciated; the fact that the administration's willing to try reinstating these freedoms only encourages the student body to be reciprocally responsible as to maintain them," senior James Kogan said. "Plus, everyone appreciates being out in the nice weather."

The technology involved is an extension of the scan-out system used during lunch pe-

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I Can't Explain That For You, Dave



By JOSHUA BOGATIN

Blather on all you want about what rosebud really represents or how "Avatar" is a giant metaphor for American imperialism, but sometimes a good movie is just a good movie. We can spend all day trying to figure out what that top

is doing at the end of Inception, and in this internet-filled age of over-information, where the answer to every question seems just a button click away, we often do. But in the end, what difference will that make? Whether or not it's all in Dorothy's mind doesn't change what we saw or experienced in the film, nor will it ever.

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Opinions

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Why Stuy?

Stuyvesant's appeal extends beyond just academic prestige and rigor. Students reflect back on why they chose to attend Stuyvesant.



Article on page 4.

Features

Drop Out Like It's Hot

With every choice comes a consequence. Features offers a glimpse of our school the consequences of its environment through the eyes of Stuyvesant dropouts.

Behind the Drop: Stuyvesant on Top Public High School Rankings

By REBECCA CHANG
and SCOTT MA

TheBestSchools, a popular blog that ranks schools of different categories, released a list of what they deemed to be the top 50 public schools in the country on Sunday, March 31. The Bronx High School of Science, one of New York City's nine Specialized High Schools, placed first on this list. However, Stuyvesant, which has consistently ranked above Bronx Science in other nationwide rankings like that of U.S. News & World Report, was nowhere to be found on TheBestSchools's list.

The methodology for the list took into consideration a multitude of variables: SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement (AP) examination scores were taken into account alongside the mean students' GPA and the number of courses offered at each school. However, according to Dr. James Barham, the editor of the blog, different schools in different geographic areas were held to somewhat equivocal standards.

"In cases where many academically outstanding schools are grouped together geographically, as is the case in the greater NYC area, some difficult choices had to be made," Barham said in an e-mail in-

terview. "Not everyone who is deserving can be on a list such as this one, especially when multiple criteria are involved."

The blog has not been the only website to rate Stuyvesant with an unexpectedly low rating. U.S. News and World Report, a well-known magazine that has ranked high schools and colleges nationwide for over a decade, has been steadily marking Stuyvesant's decline in ranking. In 2008, U.S. News and World Report named Stuyvesant as the 15th best public high school in the country. A year later, we were ranked 31st. As of 2012, we have fallen to 58th. Other previously high-ranked schools, such as Thomas Jefferson High School located in Arlington, VA, continue to top the list.

The methodology used by U.S. News and World Reports involves a three-step evaluation; each step needs to be fulfilled before the next one is considered. For example, proficiency of the student's English and math scores and whether or not these scores are above state averages are considered first. If the school's scores are satisfactory, the results of the school's least-advantaged students are considered and com-

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News

Seniors Permitted Outside During Frees

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This is a privilege and students need to behave to earn it."
-Jie Zhang, principal

riods. On student programs and ID cards, lunch periods are marked by a Z code, which allows students to permissionably swipe out of the building. Seniors' free periods now function as additional lunch periods and are encoded in a similar fashion.

When the policy initially went into effect, some confusion arose between the scanners and students. At first, the monitors were not aware of the new policy and turned down some students attempting to leave. The misunderstandings and lack of communication was quickly worked out, and no further problems ensued.

Zhang's initiative with the seniors is a test trial for its

implementation for the entire student body. "This is a privilege and students need to behave to earn it," Zhang said.

Nonetheless, students are generally appreciative of the benefits this policy brings. "It helps decrease congestion in the building," senior Nusra Jahan said. "Also, often I need to go outside in order to run errands, usually to get supplies for a certain club meeting, and having the extra time really helps."

"This is not the end-all issue, it's not the issue of our times. But it's a small thing that I think will make students a lot happier."
-Adam Schorin, senior

Seven Stuyvesant Students Named Finalists for the New York City Science and Engineering Fair

By EDWARD LI
and ANTHONY CHAN

Seven Stuyvesant students were named finalists in the New York City Science and Engineering Fair (NYCSEF). The finalists were Waqarul Islam and Youbin Kim, Amanpreet Kandola, Denis Li, Aminah Sallam, Jason Tu, and Amy You. All seven have qualified to compete in the 2013 International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which will take place at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona from Sunday, May 12 to Friday, May 17.

NYCSEF is the city's largest high school research competition. Each year, hundreds of students from all five boroughs present their research projects to expert judges, competing for a variety of prizes and advancement to ISEF. According to its official website, "NYCSEF represents an active opportunity for student self-learning in a field of their own interest, a promise of adding to the greater scientific understanding, and a chance for recognition, awards and an accomplishment that will distinguish a college application."

Juniors Waqarul Islam and Youbin Kim submitted their twenty-two page paper, titled "Developing Soft Micro-stencil (SMS) Lithography for the Fabrication of Electrodes on Nanomaterials," to NYCSEF as a pair. They began their project at Columbia University in the summer of 2012, when they studied the advantages of soft micro-stencil lithography over hard micro-stencil lithography. Islam and Kim found that soft micro-stencil lithography uses flexible polymers that function well on curved surfaces and minimizes the distance between circuits.

According to their official website on SMS Lithography, Islam's and Kim's findings encourage the use of soft micro-

stencil lithography to effectively fabricate nanoscale devices on many inorganic and organic single-crystal materials sensitive to conventional lithography, revolutionizing supercomputers and photovoltaic cells. "I always knew that I wanted to go into the sciences, and my involvement in the project has done nothing but solidify that ambition," Kim said.

Senior Aminah Sallam's project, titled "Identifying Pathways that Govern Heart Development in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome," focused on 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome, which exhibits a significant variability in phenotype. At the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, by combining bioinformatics with the use of the zebrafish model organism to understand how the gene TBX1 governs heart development, Sallam attempted to uncover the cause of this phenotype variability.

Sallam successfully identified genetic pathways of TBX1 in heart development as well as the genes that serve as genetic variants of the disorder. Sallam states that the overall goal of her project is to improve genetic counseling and predicting how severely impacted heart development will be by the disorder. "My experience [at NYCSEF] was excellent," Sallam said. "My fellow lab-mates and mentor were incredibly helpful, and I hope to continue working on my project until I go off to college."

Senior Amy You's project, titled "Memory Enhancement and Disruption Through Narration with the use of Visual Icons in 3-D Maze Simulations," tested the effect of different types of narratives on human memory retention. Teenage and adult volunteers read a type of narrative and navigate through You's 3-D maze simulations, which contained visual icons that were either related or unrelated

to the narratives. She manipulated the order in which the visual icons appeared to see if she could enhance or disrupt memory recall while the volunteers were going through the mazes.

Through her experiment, You observed that narratives with plots could enhance memory when the visual icons appeared in sequential order; however, the same narratives disrupted memory when they compiled lists of temporally related information. Instead of working at a lab, You was mentored by biology teacher Dr. Jonathan Gastel. "I think the best part of NYCSEF was going with everyone I've worked with for the past three years. We all worked extremely hard on our projects, and I was really excited to see my friends and classmates present in the same room. It made the time spent toiling over the projects definitely worth the effort," You said.

Senior Amanpreet Kandola's project, titled "InSPECT: Identifying Memor-Encoding Neurons through Spectral Analysis," analyzed neurons responsible for encoding memory tasks using a new image analysis software (InSPECT, imaging neurons through Spectral Analysis) that Kandola developed. At Downtown Medical Center of the State University of New York, an experimental group of mice trained to learn a spatial task and a control group of untrained mice were used to gather data on PARP-1, an enzyme that regulates gene expression.

Kandola hopes to expand the software's use to the identification of abnormal molecular activity in cells. "The project certainly increased my interest in both neuroscience and computer science. I wasn't doing [this project] for the competition," Kandola said. "I was doing it to see what doing research was like."

In Memory of Toni Teitel



Courtesy of Lauren Teitel

By THE SPECTATOR

Toni Teitel, who was the wife of former principal Stanley Teitel and dedicated much of her life to education and helping others, passed away on Wednesday, April 3. She was 63.

The wake was held on Thursday, April 4 and Friday, April 5 at Higgins Funeral Home. The funeral mass was then held at Saint Augustine's Church on Saturday, April 6.

A Brooklyn native, Mrs. Teitel devoted her career to education within New York City. After attending graduate school at Brooklyn College, where she first met her husband, Mrs. Teitel went on to Martin Luther King High School for 20 years. While she taught at Martin Luther King, Mrs. Teitel was a familiar face at Stuyvesant during SING!, the Winter Concert, and graduation, attending such events every year during Teitel's tenure as Stuyvesant High School's principal. Beyond her love for literature, creativity, and education, Mrs. Teitel

enjoyed travelling around the world with Mr. Teitel to locations such as Egypt, South Korea, Ireland, and Italy.

Lauren Teitel, Mrs. Teitel's daughter, describes her mother as the "first person to lend a hand to a neighbor, a friend, or a stranger. My mother was the center of our family and she will be missed more than words can describe. My family is so thankful and appreciative of the support and love we have been given since this tragedy."

Mrs. Teitel's memory will live on through her husband, her children (Lauren Teitel, 31, and Jason Teitel, 33), and a scholarship to be initiated at the High School of Art and Design for high school students who plan to pursue English, literature, or journalism in college.

The Spectator wishes to express our deepest sympathies and condolences to Mr. Teitel and his family. We wish them the best during this time of sorrow and beyond.

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Behind the Drop: Stuyvesant on Top Public High School Rankings

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pared to statewide results of those in the same group. Finally, the third criterion that is used and that ultimately determines the ranking is a "college readiness index." The index, a number out of 100, is derived from two other values. The first is the percentage of seniors who took an AP course, which contributes 25 percent to the index; the other 75 percent is derived from the percentage of seniors who passed at least one AP exam.

Jay Mathews, a reporter for The Washington Post, has been reporting on schools for 30 years and states that U.S. News' policy is unreliable. Instead, he uses an index equal to the total number of AP tests administered in a school divided by the number of

graduating seniors. His rationale is that "even if [students] struggle in the course, they're going to be learning something," he said. "Measuring schools by test scores is measuring schools by family income," Matthews added. "That didn't strike me as a really good measure of a school, and I was looking for something that actually measured the efforts of the teachers and the administration of the school."

Other reactions to U.S. News's rankings have been varied, and many call its system flawed. Because they largely depend on the number of AP exams administered, it does not show other aspects of a school, such as notable alumni, contest winners, availability of resources, and student diversity. "The only measures used are about the AP exam enrollment," Principal

Jie Zhang said. "It is not about what we offer in a school, it is about the total AP exams taken."

In addition, there are budgetary and scheduling reasons restricting the number of AP classes a student is able to take. "The reality is that like a lot of other public schools, for budget reasons and budgetary restrictions, we cannot offer as many AP classes to all the students that want to take them as private schools can," parent coordinator Harvey Blumm said.

It's "extremely erroneous to say that just because someone didn't sign up for an AP exam, they're less capable or just because a school has fewer exam takers, they're less college ready," senior Nancy Ko said. "I would like to point out that Stuyvesant had the only Intel finalist in New York City and that we've had the

greatest number of semifinalists for Intel and a great number of Scholastic competition winners on the national level more so than many other schools."

Another factor not frequently taken into account by many high school rankings list is school population. Many of the schools that were at the top of these lists all shared a common trait of being small schools with lower student-teacher ratios, especially in contrast with Stuyvesant, creating a large disparity between the schools. "Definitely anyone who knows anything about education will always say that a smaller school environment and a more intimate relation between staff and students will always produce on a consistent basis, better academic results," social studies teacher Anthony Valentin said.

"Something like the per-

centages of students that take AP classes is a very narrow factor and certainly doesn't capture the entire graph of what makes a high school good," said Blumm. "It is kind of an artificial formula that has very little relationship to reality."

Many students are further concerned that, as their school experience seems to be quantified as a mere number on a list, the more intangible and qualitative aspects of high school are neglected in ranking systems. "It's most important to have a good school environment—whether or not everyone feels happy or feels safe in the school, and whether or not teachers inspire their students to learn. Why aren't these crucial aspects factored into rankings?" sophomore Aaron Loo said.

Prestigious Scholastic Awards Given to Eight Student Writers, Poets, and Artists



Sam Kim / The Spectator

Senior Adam Schorin received the American Visions and Voices Award as well as a gold medal from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Seven other Stuyvesant students also received gold and silver medals.

By NOAH ROSENBERG

Despite Stuyvesant's reputation as a school for math and the sciences, eight students recently won awards in the arts and humanities as part of the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. The recipients included seniors Adam Schorin, Nadra Rahman, and Saru Nanda, juniors Jane Argodale, Lindsay Bu, Shannon Daniels, and Alexa Suarez, and sophomore Lucy Wainger.

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, which began in 1923, are given to talented student writers and artists throughout the nation. Applicants submit work in one of 28 categories, including short stories, poetry, and memoirs. Regional panelists review the submissions and award gold keys to the top 7-10 percent of applicants. A national panel then evaluates all gold key entries and awards gold and silver medals to the best pieces.

Of the Stuyvesant nominees, Schorin, Argodale, Bu, Wainger, Daniels, and Rahman won gold medals. Silver medals were awarded to Nanda and Suarez, as well as to Wainger, who had submitted multiple poems.

Stuyvesant's winners submitted pieces that varied across categories. Argodale, for example, wrote a piece titled "Mom's Perfect Kitchen" about her relationship with her mother. "It's about the way we express love and conflict in complicated ways, because our relationship is fraught with conflict," she said.

Beyond simple recognition, the awards gave students a means to share their work with a broader community. "It's nice to [...] have people read my piece on a national level," Argodale said. "This is really

the first time I've shared my own work outside of school."

"In the past I had written mostly for myself, [...] but it's incredibly exciting to know that my story is being read by others and can resonate with them as well," Bu said. Her piece, "Eden," is also a personal essay. It captures Bu's experience during her mother's cancer scare, and the way in which she coped with the prospect of losing family members.

Adam Schorin, in addition to earning a gold medal, was also the recipient of the highly prestigious American Visions and Voices award, which is given to the single best work from each region as deemed by a special panel.

Schorin received the award for his short story "The Shortest Short Story in the History of Short Stories of All Time Ever," which, despite the name, is several pages in length. The story chronicles the experiences of a fictitious college student volunteering at a center for special-needs children. The protagonist takes an interest in one of the children, who develops affections for people and hopes for his life that are crushed because of his disabilities.

The story partially reflects Schorin's own volunteer experiences as an ARISTA tutor for P.S. 721, a special education program housed inside Stuyvesant's building. "I wasn't very good at it, but the experience was a big one," Schorin said. The experience inspired him to write the story.

The gold and silver medals and the American Visions and Voices awards will be presented in an awards ceremony at Carnegie Hall on Friday, May 31.

Ex Vivo Surgeon Speaks at Stuyvesant

By JULIA MENDELSON and RADHA SATHANAYAGAM

World-renowned surgeon Dr. Tomoaki Kato gave a presentation on ex vivo resection and auto-transplantation at Stuyvesant on Monday, April 8. Ex vivo transplantation is a special surgery during which five or more organs are removed from a patient with a large abdominal tumor. The tumor is then excised, and the organs are re-implanted into the patient. Dr. Kato performed the first auto-transplantation of six organs, and focused his lecture on that procedure.

Dr. Kato, who currently works at New York-Presbyterian Hospital Columbia University Medical Center, is one of the few surgeons in the world who are willing to perform this extremely risky procedure. Kato attended the University of Tokyo and the Osaka University Medical Center in Japan. In 1995, Kato began practicing in America at the University of Miami in Florida. He began to work at New York-Presbyterian Hospital Columbia University Medical Center in 2008. Currently, he is Chief of the Division of Abdominal Organ Transplantation, a Professor of Surgery at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the Surgical Director of Liver and Gastrointestinal Transplantation at New York-Presbyterian.

"He said he worked for 23 hours without food, sleep, or bathroom breaks. I can't even imagine that."

—Erik Wong, junior

The presentation began with a television commercial starring the six-year-old patient on whom he performed the first six-organ transplantation. Dr. Kato continued by describing the 24-hour procedure, which involved cutting out the organs, putting them into preservation solution, removing the tumor, and re-implanting the organs. He also mentioned that two of the organs—the stomach and pancreas—were so damaged by the tumor that they had to be replaced.

The majority of Dr. Kato's lecture consisted of CT scan and MRI images of six patients

"The age range of his patients surprised me. I think that goes to show how determined he is. He wouldn't let anything, not even age, get in his way," she said.

Dr. Kato concluded his presentation with an abridged video of one surgery. The audience was able to see how the removed organs were preserved and were able to get a sense of how large the tumors can be. "The tumor was gigantic. It was almost bigger than all the organs combined," Wong said. Though several students were disturbed by the video's content, most felt that it fortified the presentation.

"The video was definitely the most direct way to drive his point home," Lu said.

After the surgery video, Dr. Kato led a question-and-answer session. He received many questions from students and teachers alike, ranging from the logistics of his work schedule to the biological procedures involved in reattaching the organs. "Dr. Kato's comprehensive answers showed me that simple ideas can really come together in amazing ways," Lu said.

Dr. Kato has performed auto-transplantation in several different scenarios. Patients have ranged in age from six to 73 years. The various organs that he has transplanted include the stomach, liver, spleen, intestines, pancreas, and others. Though he was named one of New York maga-

that he operated on. From these pictures, he pointed out the remarkable size of the tumors and explained why it would be impossible for them to be taken out in vivo. In these cases, the tumors were often tangled with other organs, such as the intestines, and the patient would not survive if these organs were to suffer such damage. In an interview with The New York Times, Dr. Kato described his attitudes towards performing the ex vivo surgeries: "If you don't do it, the patient will have no chance to live," he said.

Many students were impressed by Dr. Kato's determination and creativity. "He said that he worked for 23 hours without food, sleep, or bathroom breaks," junior Erik Wong said. "I can't even imagine that."

Senior Ally Lu concurred.

"If you don't do it, the patient will have no chance to live." —
Dr. Tomoaki Kato, surgeon

zine's "Best Doctors" (2009), Dr. Kato does not take all the credit for his work. "It's a team effort," he said. "One person could not possibly do it alone."

Features

Drop Out Like it's Hot



Judy Mai / The Spectator

By MAISHA KAMAL

If you had the option to leave Stuyvesant, would you?

"I'd never leave Stuyvesant," sophomore Peter Yang said. "I have a lot of expectations placed on me, and I feel as if I would gather disappointment if I gave up. I've considered it though, and I'm sure my classmates have too. It seems natural in a school like ours." Most students, like Yang, have mulled over this question at least once. Especially in Stuyvesant's competitive atmosphere, even if an escape route is made available, that alternative is often completely disregarded.

In other cases, the rare cases, the consequences don't matter nearly as much as personal happiness. Though Stuyvesant isn't known for its transfer stu-

dents, the handful of students who choose to take the departure flight is very much a reflection of the Stuyvesant environment—a busy airport marked by alienation and frustration. For some, this flight is the opportunity to thrive once again; for others, it's a last-minute, last-resort decision.

"I transferred out of Stuyvesant because the amount of stress I got was unbearable," former student Chae Yun said. Yun, who is now a sophomore, left Stuyvesant at the start of the current school year. "The commute between school and home was too much to handle every day. As time passed, I felt a negative difference in my attitude due to overworking. I couldn't handle sleeping late at night every day and I certainly couldn't handle the constant pressure I felt while attending [the school]."

Yun, who now attends Benjamin N. Cardozo High School, views Stuyvesant not very differently than other students, let alone transfers, do. Stuyvesant students often complain about how little time they have in comparison with middle school, in addition to an increased workload they're unaccustomed to. "I wasn't really sure about what I was doing in classes, and I didn't like seeing myself so challenged by the class material all the time," Yun said.

Although most transfers wouldn't call their Stuyvesant experiences some of their worst, one anonymous student came close, describing Stuyvesant as a school with a "stifling dark side. Looking back, I remember the premonitions," she said. "I lived in a very stressful environment, bouncing between a home that consisted of extremely high expectations and a school with an unappreciative work environment. My disposition towards depression was only the cherry on top." The anonymous student now attends boarding school, remarking that it "allowed [her] to have a support system [she] could not have had in the city." Her memories of Stuyvesant are not fond. "Once I attended Stuyvesant, it all went downhill. I remember how left out I felt the first day. There seemed to be a huge swarm of [kids] all piling into the bridge, rather than seeing the crosswalk that remained empty beneath them. I felt left out the whole time. Cliques formed, and I felt like the girl with the lowest grades."

For others, the experience does not come as close, but Maria Mo, who is currently a junior at Townsend Harris High School, described the school as transforming in her eyes from "[her] dream high school ever since God knows when" into the place she "hated so much [she] just wanted to get out of there as soon as possible," Mo said.

"I had such a tunnel vision

that nothing could dissuade me from going [to Stuy]," Mo said. "I thought I'd be surrounded by people who were motivated as me, who were as knowledge-hungry as me, and enjoyed learning just because that's what they thrived on." Mo soon learned that these were not the conditions at Stuyvesant and yearned to detach herself from the rigid Stuyvesant lifestyle. "High school is supposed to be such a huge part of my life, but I didn't want to remember it as four years spent in hell, toiling and pulling all-nighters to get the grades while sacrificing my happiness," she said.

Leaving Stuyvesant means disconnecting with friends, yet Mo was surprised to have many sympathizers. "I applied for a transfer after the deadline so I didn't tell a lot of people I was transferring until the last day of school. But when I shared my disdain for the school, I was surprised a lot of people agreed on the aversion, yet they still stayed," Mo said. "Some comrades wished me well and were happy that I was going to a school I would enjoy. Others would jokingly call me a traitor but I always know there's some hint of truth in it. But I thought that's only because they didn't want to be left to face the next three years of [Stuyvesant] and the heavy burden that comes with it alone."

Mo does not regret her year at Stuyvesant. "Even though I don't regret leaving at all, I'm still grateful for the taste of reality and experiences it gave me. I'm grateful to meet all the people I've met, for the teachers I had and the friends I made, but now I'm expanding my horizons."

Former student Wes Schierenbeck, who wrote for The Spectator two years prior, dropped out of high school altogether during his senior year. Schierenbeck said his years at Stuyvesant were something he "wouldn't trade for the world," despite his exit. "Stuyvesant challenged me in-

tellectually and surrounded me with people who raised the level of discourse and set a higher standard for what is learning and intelligence," Wes said. "However, at the high levels of administration, I felt at many times that I wasn't treated fairly, because they weren't accustomed to dealing with students who don't do well on their own. I ended up just being routinely punished, moved in to the delinquency homeroom and treated like an outcast and a bad person just because I was a subpar student."

There are multiple theories as to why students choose to leave Stuyvesant. As mentioned previously, the tough curriculum and the absence of leisure time are deemed the main suspects. "I think that there are two [kinds of] reasons [for dropping out]: voluntary and involuntary. The parents and the school suggest it, especially with kids who are not progressing favorably academically. It always comes up to if they feel that this is the right setting for them," guidance counselor John Mui said. "It's just adolescence. Things happen at this age where it's not very easy to manage at the same time. When you're 14 or 15 years old, you have a hard time figuring out how to deal with all those things that come up. Distractions. Temptations."

Many people believe attending Stuyvesant is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but sometimes their lack of prosperity in its cut-throat environment causes them to rethink their options. Some believe that transferring out is analogous to knowingly discarding a prized jewel, while others believe that these conditions are too crushing not to reconsider. As the aforementioned anonymous student said, "Stuyvesant is the perfect place for someone with a really developed and hard shell. But sometimes, one has not aged enough mentally to build a durable exterior. We are only human."

Apptastic

By ALVIN WEI

Every day, more than one million Android devices are activated in more than 190 countries. Every month, the owners of these Android devices collectively download more than 1.5 million apps created on the sweet, versatile Android platform known as Jelly Bean. Rather than merely consume these mobile delicacies, however, some choose to be the chefs behind them, and among that crowd is junior Waqarul Islam.

From his first exposure to the coding that works behind a computer screen, Islam has been programming. "As a child, I was intrigued by the way computers worked, and it is likely that this curiosity is what later developed into my love for programming," Islam said. Because his parents have no previous experience with computer programming, Islam developed his programming ability through self-study and practice.

Early on, Islam did freelance work on various sites, particularly web development jobs for odesk.com. It was not until 2009, when he was 12, that his love for coding started to pay off. During that year, Islam worked on web development, accustoming himself to the basics of programming. This experience was also beneficial in that he started working with Java (the primary language for Android development). "The Android Mobile Application Market was released that year and I used this opportu-

nity to begin developing Android apps after reading inspirational stories about developers who became rich selling iPhone apps," Islam said.

However, Islam's parents found it impossible for a 12-year-old to perform well in school while coding applications that were often developed by teams of programmers (most of whom had years of professional experience), so he took some time off from programming. When the Android Mobile Application Market was rebranded as the Google Play Market and underwent revisions in 2012, Islam realized that Android Apps could be profitable. "With millions of mobile shoppers on the site, the Google Play Market quickly became home to several millionaire app developers. This realization was what motivated my interests in app development," Islam explained.

Since then, Islam has already worked on several apps and plans to develop many more. "At the moment I sell several networking utility apps, a document editing app, and various communication apps such as call recording and blocking. My next major step in app development is to enter iOS development, which I am concurrently learning with my Android work," Islam said.

While working on his apps, Islam has been contacted by companies such as Peek & Co., where he will work as an Android Intern this summer. Moreover, Islam has

received countless advertising and partnership opportunities with companies around the world, notably box.com (an online file sharing website), that are interested in advertising his work through their platforms.

Islam loves to develop apps, but the largest hindrance is the amount of time he has to dedicate to programming. Islam, besides a programmer, is also a Web Editor of The Spectator and a founding Editor-in-Chief of Stuyvesant Magazine. In addition, he was a semi-finalist in the 2012 Siemens Competition, regional finalist in the 2013 Toshiba ExploraVision Competition, and a finalist in the 2013 New York City Science and Engineering Fair. He also works as a web developer for many of Stuyvesant's organizations, including ARISTA and the Student Union. App development, however, proves to be adaptable to his schedule. "The beauty of app development is that it isn't like any other job: I chose my own hours and have an extremely flexible schedule. I tend to spend around five hours a week on it to offer customer service to my application buyers and to also fix any bugs or errors in my published apps," Islam said.

App development has played a monumental role in Islam's life, affecting him in more ways than one. Aside from the basic monetary gain from selling apps (all of his apps are paid, the highest being \$20 per user), Islam is proud of doing something he loves. "I



Philip Shin / The Spectator

find pride as a developer in the fact that my apps are consistently on Google's Top Grossing and New Paid Apps lists and all have reviews of nearly five stars," Islam said.

Islam's current app development background will surely aid in financing his educational and programming interests for the future. At the present moment, Islam is interested in setting up a programming company based on outsourcing work. Through all these

endeavors, Islam hopes to employ his programming ability to further the progress of society. "My goal as a programmer is to aid the lives of others in the most efficient ways possible. App development allows me to do just that," Islam said. "Knowing that I have affected the lives of the thousands of users who have bought my app to date allows me to understand the potential an individual person has to promote positive change in society."

Features

Unity Within Diversity



Laura Eng / The Spectator

By HUWON KIM

Fifty years ago, religious freedom—something we all take for granted—was protected. With “School District of Abington Township v. Schempp” (1963), a U.S. Supreme Court case ruling that a state law requiring daily Bible readings in public schools is unconstitutional, a different facet of diversity can be brought into the Stuyvesant community and communities nationwide, one that adds to the cultures and theologies jutting out of the mix. Nevertheless, among this amalgam and diversity rests unity and community, especially cultivated within Stuyvesant by two religious clubs.

StuyMSA

After starting the meeting with the words “Asalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh,”

which means “Peace Be Upon You and Allah’s Mercy and Blessings,” senior and president of Stuyvesant’s Muslim Students Association (StuyMSA) Niyaz Arif ran through the weekly announcements. The meeting focused on the Muslim InterScholastic Tournament (MIST), a three-day tournament that was held during the weekend of Friday, April 5, in which Noor Al-Stuy, Stuyvesant’s representative team, competed in many of the forty different mini-competitions ranging from debate to short film to sports.

Arif reminded his fellow members of practice dates, registration, and working on their respective assignments. All throughout, the casual atmosphere never faltered, with interjections raising laughter from everyone. Announcements ended with a club cheer, a chanting of “Noor Al-Stuy” that grew progressively louder and more unified—encouragement and unity that

propelled them to the national-level MIST.

“In every meeting, we discuss a particular topic pertaining to Islam and/or the Muslim community at large. Meetings are discussion-based, centered around topics, often for discussion, sometimes for didactic purposes,” Arif said. Topics from past discussions include “Faith in Islam,” “Current Events,” and “The Muslim Family.”

Beyond MIST, the core of this particular meeting was a discussion on “The Legacy of Black Muslims,” led by three members of the club. As the three members shared their knowledge of six renowned black Muslims in history, the audience did not hesitate to add to the discussion. If you were to pop into the classroom out of curiosity, you would see a focused, serious, and entirely student-run class discussion.

Arif came across the club during his sophomore year through a friend’s invitation. “I wanted to learn more about my Deen [religion in Arabic], the wisdoms it contains, and in retrospect learn more about myself in the process,” he said. He became an active member and quickly grew to appreciate the club, but he also noticed “the bonds between our members were firm, but not consistent” as attendance at meetings rose and fell throughout a school year, Arif said. He additionally noted that meetings were entirely didactic, leaving members without a way to implement what was taught into their lifestyle or mindset.

To remedy these concerns, Arif has focused on creating interactive, discussion-based meetings as president. Each meeting relies heavily on the contributions of the club members, whether they come up with a meeting outline, guide the club through the meeting, or contribute their opinions

during discussions. He mentions, however, that the club “is still striving to continue [the effort] of dispelling misconceptions surrounding Islam.”

When asked to describe StuyMSA’s community, Arif responded, “We all share the same faith. I wanted to be someone who was there for his brothers and sisters in faith, as a mentor, brother, and friend. MSA creates a support system for everyone in our club and community. I felt that is what is most important about this club, and something special to hold onto.”

Christian Seekers

As both new and old faces trickled in the classroom, conversation bubbles floated as members talked about school, about the last meeting, and about their everyday lives. The chatter stopped when a member pulled out a guitar and signaled the beginning of worship. The sound of singing reverberated in the quiet hallway outside. When the music ceased, the entire club prayed collectively.

“From there [the meeting] goes in many directions,” junior and a leader of Stuyvesant’s Seekers Christian Fellowship Arina Bykadorova said in an e-mail interview. Members may decide to have an icebreaker with a game, a Bible study, or just pray for each other. The club also holds occasional competitions with themes like Bible Jeopardy or Best Bible Character Reenactment.

Aside from meetings, the Seekers also come together to prepare for Jesus Day, a day in June during which the club raises awareness about Jesus in the Stuyvesant community. Members come up with skits, rehearse songs, and practice recounting testimonies. “It’s really directed towards everybody in the school,

to let them know about Jesus and celebrate Him with us,” Bykadorova explained.

As with StuyMSA, the bond between members is often stressed. “When we meet, we take at least five minutes from the meeting to share how our weeks were and any prayer requests or struggles we might be going through,” sophomore and Seeker Sharon Cho said.

Cho referred to the Christian Seekers as “a group I can always count on. We all have our academic studies and such, but religion is such a whole different level,” she said.

Bykadorova expressed her belief in the value of the club’s supportive and comforting qualities. “Seekers is a base, a foundation and a place that students can go back to in their busy and hectic school life. It provides a solid, Christian group that is there to support and to welcome anyone who might be searching,” she said.

At the end of the StuyMSA meeting, Arif pulled out a camera to take multiple group photos of all the members present. I offered to take the pictures, and the entire club exuded a comfortable air with every interaction. It felt like they were right at home, to the point that they made me feel the same way.

As leaders of two religious communities at Stuyvesant, Arif and Bykadorova place great importance on providing a supportive environment that helps members to explore their identities through religion. It’s not just religion members find at StuyMSA and the Christian Seekers, though. “As a leader, I still strive to give the members that same opportunity and feel they belong to a group that not only values spirituality, but also brotherhood and inclusiveness,” Arif said. “It isn’t just a club, it’s a family.”

Quantifying Intelligence

**By ARINA BYKADOROVA
and SCOTT MA**

Blindfold me. Tie my hands behind my back. Hang me upside down from a tree and I’ll still be able to recite, more surely than I can recite the Pledge of Allegiance: “Please use only a number two pencil. Fill in the bubbles with heavy, black marks. If you need to erase an answer, be sure to do so completely. No cell phones, headphones, pagers, or other electronic devices may be used during this exam.”

Stuyvesant begins with a test and ends with a test. Testing for admission, created to separate the “smart” and the “not-as-smart” students, has become the go-to method for schools worldwide. For this reason, both the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) were created to measure students’ aptitude and reasoning skills. Though it is not advertised as an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) exam, the SAT was developed from the Army Alpha, a modified IQ for recruits in World War I. The College Board presents the SAT as an evaluation of reading, writing, and math skills that are “important for success in college and throughout your life” and a predictor of future grades.

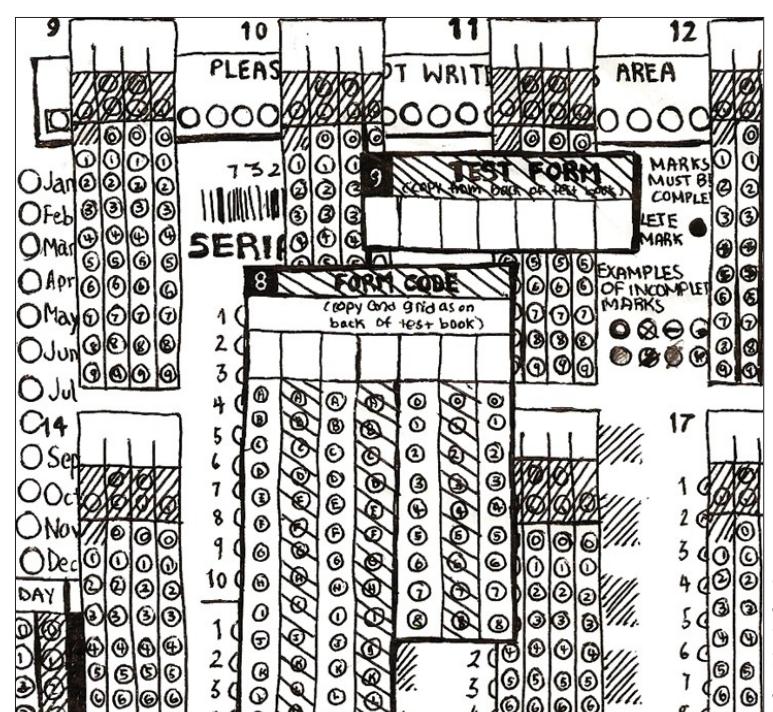
Other opponents of the SAT have an issue with the test itself. “The SAT is a scam,” founder of the Princeton Review Jon Katzman said in an interview with PBS. “It never measured anything. And it continues to measure nothing.” Katzman believes that in order to score a 2400, the maximum possible grade on the SAT, a student needs not intelligence but test-taking skills.

Regardless of what critics may believe, past statistics regarding the SAT show that there is indeed a significant disparity between

the scores of different groups of students. According to a 2009 report by the College Board, students of black or African American ancestry scored on average 347 points lower than students of Asian descent on the SAT. In addition, students from families with an annual income greater than \$200,000 have a mean SAT score 381 points higher than those from families with incomes of \$20,000 or less. If Conan were alive today, he would most likely be distressed at the state of the exam he fathered.

These score gaps are nothing new for members of the College Board. Over time, the SAT has been altered many times with the goal of diminishing this gap. The mathematics section was removed twice, and the test experienced many fluctuations in difficulty. The most recent change, which occurred in 2005, removed analogies from the exam and added a written essay portion to the exam. Though changes to the exam have gradually decreased the score disparity, the 2009 statistics are evidence that they were far from enough.

Other approaches to “fixing” the SAT involve changing not the exam itself, but rather how the results are taken into account by colleges. From 1980-1994, the College Board secretly implemented a Strivers Score Study, in which students who scored 200 or more points above the mean for their income, race, or gender would be given a boost in the college application process. An-



other example is the Educational Opportunity Program and the Higher Education Opportunity Program, which help students with low income and low Critical Reading SAT scores in New York State get a boost in the college application process.

Though the exam is impossible to fully “fix,” in the future the SAT will most likely continue to exist as a popular method of measuring college readiness for students. “As a school culture, they’re sort of a necessary evil. You’re talking about something that’s standardized,” college counselor Patricia Cleary said.

“The level of achievement in schools differ. An English class in Townsend Harris, or Brooklyn Tech, or Midwood are going to be different.”

As opinions and changes in society pile up on the current educational system, the decisions involved are weighty. Is it worth changing the SAT again? Do we have to get rid of it altogether? What common measure is acceptable to compare students from all over the nation? Looking into history and carefully observing the current state of affairs is all that can give us perspective.

Helen Lin / The Spectator

Features

From Behind the Canvas



Clockwise from left: Zara Leventhal, Phoebe Young, Tracy Liu, Laura Wang, Nicole Tan, and Tiffany Tsai offer a glimpse into their work as part of a community of visual artists at Stuyvesant.

**By ARIELLA KAHAN
and EMMA LOH**

If “a picture is worth a thousand words,” then it’s no wonder why so many Stuyvesant students have hidden artistic talents—they let the pictures speak for themselves. We all have friends who are more right-brained than others, but they make up a community that is faceless, with some of them unaware of others that share the same skills and interests. More importantly, the general Stuyvesant community is also unaware of this subset. Meet a few classmates who would totally kick your butt in Pictionary.

Nicole Tan, junior

Having grown up with a mother and sister both in art-related careers, Tan’s life has always included some art, but she only began taking art seriously upon hearing that she had artistic potential. “I didn’t get serious about art until seventh grade. I just thought, ‘OK, if people think I am good at art I should try harder and maybe I can do better,’” Tan said.

Upon arrival at Stuyvesant, Tan was surprised with the lack of students interested in art. “I found it really difficult to find people who are into art when I first came here, because a lot of them are very secretive about their art, like ‘I’m not going to show you anything, I don’t draw, you don’t know about me.’ It was not until the Club Pub Fair that I ran into the Mangaka club and I joined it and there were a lot of artists,” said Tan, who is also currently

the president of Mangaka club. The Mangaka club is a place where aspiring manga and graphic novel artists can share their ideas and get occasional art tutorials. Accordingly, the members of Tan’s club enjoy drawing people, both in manga and realistically.

Tan enjoys art, not only because she likes to draw, but also because it is a means of expression. “I find drawing as a way to tell stories, and my sketchbook is my own personal diary that nobody can interpret except myself,” she said.

Laura Wang, sophomore

Tan’s fellow member of the Mangaka club is sophomore Laura Wang, whose preferred choices of media include painting, watercolors, and digital art. She has been drawing for nine years, and was introduced to digital art in sixth grade. Even though she has no professional training in digital art, her DeviantArt page immediately displays her skill: every piece in Wang’s gallery, anime or manga, original or fanart, captures your attention and entices a closer look, all attracting over 200 followers. Wang, who has been a member on DeviantArt for two years, can spend anywhere from a day to a month on a single piece.

While the workload of being a full-time student takes time away from her artistic pursuits, occasionally it is the art that actually takes precedence. Wang said, “I go home and I know that I have a bunch of homework, but I’ll spend thirty minutes painting...or three hours.”

Wang’s work has received notable exposure, from landing small private commissions and magazine filler space to releasing a storybook illustration. Wang aspires to study fine arts in college and hopes to become a freelance artist in the future. “It’s a main part of my life; it’s pretty much the only thing I do,” she said.

Tiffany Tsai, junior

Tsai became interested in art at an early age and continues to pursue this hobby. “What first exposed me to art is the art classes offered at my elementary school, where the art teacher spent a lot of time in developing interesting art projects,” Tsai said. “I was fortunate enough to be able to take art through my three years in Marie Curie, and by the time I got to Stuyvesant, I was sufficiently intrigued by art to explore it outside of the classroom setting.” Following this interest, she began taking pottery classes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and attending art discussion forums and art-making workshops.

At Stuyvesant, Tsai has yet to take an art elective, but has instead formed a club called the Stuyvesant Excelsior Art Meet (STEAM). The purpose of this club is to “bring together the artists community in a friendly peer environment conducive to learning and constantly improving our ability to draw, paint, and think creatively as artists,” Tsai said. Through the creation of this club, she “learned about a different—but equally important—side of the school,” she said. In STEAM,

artists observe, draw, and critique each other’s artwork while learning about artistic techniques and the cultural effects on influential artists.

Phoebe Young, senior

Young began creating art when she was young because she was encouraged by her parents to draw, sculpt, and paint. From the beginning, art has had a placid aspect to it. “When I was younger I was very hyper and difficult to control and art was one of the few things that really calmed me down, that remains true to this day,” Young said. She enjoys art because of its permanence, and because of the qualities of art that can only be seen in art. “There’s an aspect to art that isn’t spoken; we don’t quite realize how the colors and details of things can affect our perception of an object and we can’t always articulate how we’re affected by those details,” Young said. Accordingly, Young’s favorite type of art is detailed art; her favorite artists include Chuck Close, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, and El Greco.

Tracy Liu, senior

Liu’s drawing career began when she started doodling on her bedroom wall, and she continued this hobby throughout her childhood. She became passionate about it in middle school. “It wasn’t until middle school when I discovered DeviantArt, an online art gallery, that I really started looking,” Liu said. “It was Disney and Dreamworks animations that really

caught my interest.” Liu loves art because of its beauty and versatility. “We’re human, and our biggest traits as humans is creativity,” Liu said. “Being able to think and design and create in ways that other people might not, it’s kind of like a visual fingerprint of our mindsets, showcasing how unique and special everyone is.”

Liu loves illustrating, which she defines as visual storytelling. “It’s a whole mishmash of different art styles whose purpose is to communicate something to the viewer whether it is an idea or a story or a concept,” Liu said. Among many, Liu’s favorite artists are James Gurney, writer and artist of the Dino-topia series and illustrators Jon Foster, Dan Dos Santos, and Phobs from DeviantArt.

Zara Leventhal, junior

A glance at one of Leventhal’s self-portraits inconspicuously appears to be just another pensive “selfie,” but a closer inspection reveals that “photograph” is actually one of her digital paintings. Comments spanning scrolls and scrolls below the artwork express similar reactions, advice, and compliments that all validate her talent.

Leventhal is no stranger to the public eye for her works, which include animation, pixel art, web design, drawing, and painting. Her online gallery on DeviantArt boasts more than 800 followers and 30,000 page views, while her Facebook fan page opens up yet another audience of 200 to her artistic activities. From this online platform, Leventhal has been able to take custom commissions, pitch manufacturing ideas, and interact with the art community on a global scale.

Leventhal’s 777 pieces on DeviantArt range from a multitude of different medias. However, her favorite media is digital art, with which Leventhal has almost a decade of experience with and which comprises the majority of her pieces in her online gallery. Today, Leventhal has almost a decade of experience with digital art, and even longer with traditional art mediums, such as pencil drawings. She said, “I think that most people draw when they’re babies — I just continued.”

A unique aspect to her art is that Leventhal has made her hobby into a business, by selling her own journal skins, company logos, tattoos and merchandise. She aims to have for her future career to fuse a love of art and academics, with her dream job being an animator.

Around the World in Nine Days

**By ALEXIA BACIGALUPI
and SANAM BHATIA**

For most, vacation conjures up images of white, sandy beaches and bobbing palm trees. But this spring break, biology teacher and faculty advisor of the Stuyvesant Environmental Club Marissa Maggio organized a trip for students to experience new levels of vacationing, traveling, and volunteering. The students, along with the other faculty members: chemistry teacher Dr. Steven O’Malley, Coordinator of Student Affairs Lisa Weinwurm, and physics teacher Rebecca Gorla, travelled to Ecuador and engaged both culturally and naturally in a different country and different hemisphere.

Education was an essential part of the trip. “We were able to learn about the culture and ecosystem of Ecuador,” sophomore Justin Weltz said. As the students toured the dry Andean Forest, they learned about the different types of soil and various medicinal uses of local plants. They even helped plant seedling trees to aid reforestation. In addition, the students visited a wildlife rescue center and had the oppor-

tunity to observe native rainforest animals, such as crocodiles, scarlet macaws, monkeys, and ocelots.

The group also visited an Amazonian school, at which each member was assigned a student from the school to bond with. Sophomore Sunny Zhang explained that projects like this helped to “break down the grade barrier” and bring the group together. The students also did community service such as fixing the goalposts for football fields and building a jungle gym.

Sophomore Anise Rau said that what made the trip unique was that the group did more than “just take tours. We were involved [and] learned about Ecuadorian lives through hands-on work,” she said. Their direct involvement not only allowed for charity work, but also facilitated their education of the world.

With the trip also came a variety of new experiences, aside from the volunteer work, that added to their education. They swam in hot springs and canoed down a river. Students learned the art of poncho weaving and participated in local dances. In addition, even as they rode in buses from location to lo-

cation, they were able to observe the scenery, from pine trees to volcanoes to mountains. Food was also a large part of the experience. Every day, the group got a taste of authentic Ecuadorian food, which ranged from desserts that were mainly sweet breads to interesting kinds of meat, like guinea pig.

“It definitely left me wanting to do more traveling, especially in South America,” Gorla said.

Many of the trip’s participants would love to travel again on a similar trip, perhaps even attending next year’s trip to Machu Picchu in Peru. However, despite their desire to pursue travels elsewhere, the students are still helping those they met in Ecuador. After meeting students in an Ecuadorian school, the Stuyvesant group believed that the students’ education would not be complete without the appropriate supplies. As a result, Rau and junior Kahmun Lo, with the help of everyone who attended the trip, organized the Ecuador School Supply Drive for Stuyvesant, an initiative to collect school supplies, sports equipment, books, clothes, and monetary donations for the children back in Ecuador.



Their work demonstrates how even a period of time as short as nine days can change one’s perspective on the world. Part of that influence came from within the group itself. As the students worked, explored, and endured bus rides together, they got to know each other better. “By spending a

week together, we formed really close bonds, and in a sense became a family,” Rau said.

For more information on the service trip to Ecuador, visit their blog at <http://www.stuyservicetrip.blogspot.com/>.

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Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Though Not in a Green Envelope

While taking the New York City Department of Education's school student survey earlier this April, the Spectator Editorial Board could not help but notice how largely ineffective the ordeal was. The generic questions and five choice responses cannot serve as accurate indicators of the Stuyvesant environment. We've come up with our own list of questions and responses that, even though lacking the signature green envelope, we feel better explore certain aspects of Stuyvesant life and culture.

Please indicate your views in regards to the following statements...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1. Teaching to test is a common practice in my classes...
2. My curriculum is focused and teaches me relevant skills that will aid me outside of the classroom...
3. Teachers are ready and willing to give me feedback on my work...
4. Teachers know what students have on their plate and vice versa...
5. My teachers adapt well to teaching varying student academic abilities in the same classroom...
6. Acts of bullying are common within my school or my school community...
7. Most students at my school treat adults with respect...
8. Student athletes are respected within my school community...
9. Peers are genuinely happy for my achievements...
10. Students and the student union have a voice that can be heard...
11. At my school, there are clear consequences for breaking the rules...

Behind the Survey: Our Responses

1. While Stuyvesant harbors many teachers who are more than capable of leading engaging discussions and teaching outside-of-the-box, many—if not all—of the departments are trapped in a teach-to-test policy. Advanced Placement (AP) classes are geared toward the AP exam in May. But even in many standard classes, the day a new unit is introduced is the same day that the unit's test date is determined. Of course, tests are necessary; they act as vital indicators of how much a student understands. But a teach-to-test practice only ends up harming us; it emphasizes acing the test over learning the material, thus forcing classes to be structured around a rigid format that, instead of encouraging creativity and exploration, fosters a “know it or fail” mentality in students.

2. Though the standard Stuyvesant curriculum exposes us to many courses that other high schoolers haven't even the privilege to take, Stuyvesant's strict graduation requirements end up restricting us from certain desired classes – and forcing us to take others that we will most likely not even encounter after high school. Furthermore, the fact that we must take certain co-requisites to take classes like AP Biology (offered in many high schools to freshmen) is somewhat ri-

diculous. Yes, our curriculum is varied – but taking an introductory class to drafting does not necessarily make us more well-

When we take our first steps into our classrooms at the beginning of freshman year it appears that every teacher is intent on reminding us that we aren't smart.

rounded people. If Stuyvesant were to loosen up its graduation requirements, students would be able to fit more of the classes geared toward their actual interests. Isn't that what learning is about? Pursuing fields that pique your interest? Is that too much to ask for?

3. Teachers at Stuyvesant expect students to excel in their classes, which, in part, requires completing various forms of written work: daily homework assignments, tests, and essays or projects. Since our daily workload often exceeds the time it would take to complete each assignment to the best of our ability, students tend to put more effort into assignments their teacher are sure to check or collect. Even if an assignment is collected, it may be returned with nothing more than a grade and little explanation of what justified it. If a project is handed in toward the end of the spring term, it isn't rare for it to go unreturned before school is out for the summer, and if we're lucky, we find it in a pile in homeroom on the first day of the following school year. As for tests, written portions are generally returned with comments only if mistakes were made, and multiple choice tests very rarely involve any feedback. Some of our teachers have hardly ever offered to spend a period going through the test – a disheartening fact considering how tests become numbers factoring into your GPA and not microcosms of the learning experience. Reviewing tests should be emphasized as much as the test itself is.

4. When we take our first step into our classrooms at the

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



*“The Pulse
of the
Student
Body”*

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The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of past issues.

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A Note to Our Readers:

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

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

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

FOR THE RECORD

- The photographer of the photo for “Islam and Kim Named Regional Finalists in Toshiba ExploraVision” is Alicia Chen.
- Mandy Wong's Arts and Entertainment review titled “A Story of Morbidity and Mortality in Room 311” was not printed. The proper corrections have been made online.

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

beginning of freshman year, it appears that every teacher is intent on reminding us that we aren't that smart: we just work hard and fill in bubbles. If we are capable of scoring in the top two percent, then we can do anything that they demand. Many teachers expect their students to finish whatever work they have assigned and rarely ever stop to ask if it is too much. And is it too much? Yes it is. It is nearly impossible to make every class our top priority, and get involved in the extracurricular activities we enjoy, and prepare for college, and get enough sleep to perpetuate the cycle. The constant pressure Stuyvesant students receive from their teachers feeds into an unhealthy culture where students take on more responsibilities than they can handle. We are expected to go robotically and excel through our ten-period schedules, even if we burn out in the end. We have reached the point where such expectations are absurd; yet, they have already been so deeply ingrained in the Stuyvesant mindset that such struggles are a mere joke. But when at one in the morning we are sitting in front of a math problem, or a textbook, or a half-written essay due the next day, when we are trying to keep our eyes open even as the rest of our family is in deep sleep and are trying not wake them up as we print out the aforementioned semi-completed essay, it's difficult to see the humor in it all.

Perhaps we aren't seeing the whole story. After all, teachers must have responsibilities of their own. And as a school community, it's time that we started to recognize that there is life outside of these walls.

5. It's become a trite remark in the educational field to say that everyone learns differently – but it's true. Due to

the competitive atmosphere at Stuyvesant, students look for anything that will give them an advantage in the classroom, either through test prep or extra study. However, the students who cannot take extra classes or tutoring but still have difficulty understanding the subject matter freeze in the spotlight of the better prepared. We can see that the teachers are put in a difficult situation: if they move too slow, the more advanced students are not challenged enough, and if they teach too fast, the rest of the class is left trailing behind. But the disparities are due to their rigid structures of teaching that do not account for different students. While this is true in all of the departments, the language department is what first comes to mind. Even though some of the more advanced native speakers begin in higher level classes, there are still many who start in the beginner classes with those who do not know anything. Because the more advanced students already know the confusing concepts that the rest of us fail to grasp, the teachers believe that the whole class understands. Then they move on, and to avoid the risk of disrupting the class, the others stay silent and try to learn the concept later. With the exception of after-school tutoring, this system of treating all of the students the same simply does not work; we are not all the same.

6. The traditional signs of bullying, such as physically harming someone or stealing someone's lunch money, are absent, or at least uncommon at Stuyvesant. The type of bullying most common at Stuy is cyberbullying. Students send hate messages anonymously through websites like Formspring and ask.fm. Other extreme examples of bullying include the "Burn Book," a tumblr created last year

where students could anonymously insult other students, and the "Social Tree," a diagram created to group students by social cliques, something straight out of "Mean Girls." Though Stuyvesant is spared from the traditional acts of bullying, it is plagued with a version that is perhaps even more dangerous.

7. Most Stuyvesant students are both well-behaved and understand that blatantly show-

Though we may care genuinely for the well-being of our companions, behind every congratulations is envy that questions one's own self-worth.

ing disrespect toward teachers and school officials disrupts the learning of their peers and worsens the school's environment. However, students' attitudes toward faculty are becoming increasingly negative as students become more disgruntled with the flaws of many of their teachers and the restrictive policies that the adults in the school must administer. Students are

more than likely to gossip or "trash talk" about certain teachers they aren't keen on, and have visibly shown frustration toward an adult over an administrative rule, such as the now altered "1, 2, or 5" rule, plenty of times. Though the relationship between Stuyvesant students and adults isn't idyllic, it is still comparatively healthier than those of other schools.

8. If a Speech and Debate team member tells a teacher about missing class for a national level tournament, the teacher will probably smile and wish the student good luck. If a student-athlete tells a teacher about missing class for a big game, the teacher will probably mumble something about getting the notes from a classmate. At Stuyvesant, the large student-athlete population garners little respect from teachers and non-athletes alike. Participating in a sport is often trivialized, whereas academics and intellectual extra-curriculars are championed. Apart from the occasional, largely-ignored morning announcement, student-athletes are rarely acknowledged in the school community; their accomplishments are often dismissed, and the difficulties they face in balancing sports and school is almost entirely overlooked.

9. When students get their exam grades back, there is usually an air of anxiety mixed with excitement. Most students look around in desperation to see where their exams lie in the grade spectrum. They create an internal list in their heads of names whose scores are below or above theirs. Once sufficient data is collected, students either smile at the thought of their superior grades, or cringe because they are doing comparatively poorly. In this competitive environment, students are not

happy for other's achievements. None of us wants to be at the sidelines...though we may care genuinely for the well-being of our companions, behind every congratulations is envy that questions one's own self worth.

10. Despite our school's attempt at creating a comprehensive Student Union, the students involved in this program fail to accomplish their goals despite any amount of drive or focus they may bring to the table of student government. Why is that? Simply stated, the administration has final say in the students' decisions; given our highly conservative administration, any form of change seems unlikely if not impossible. But moreover, the Stuyvesant Student Union is trapped in a consistent cycle of beginning the school year with enthusiasm and Student Union presence, only to peter out until May when new students promise to bring us a new, functioning SU.

11. The administration vacillates when responding to rules being broken. Walk in to school breaking the dress code one day and you'll get reprimanded; walk in a week later dressed the same way and what have we here? Furthermore, the administration has not acted in a concrete way in regards to reprimanding cell phone usage. Cell phones are confiscated seemingly at random, and the limits of confiscation are ambiguous. Students may also lose their lunch privileges for extended periods of time for committing seemingly petty acts, such as eating in hallways. How much power does the administration have to punish students? What are the consequences for breaking the rules? It is entirely unclear.

Opinions

The Novartis Case: When Copycats Rightly Win



By RISHAM DHILLON

Nobody likes copycats. Not me, not you, and certainly not pharmaceutical companies like Novartis—especially considering how such companies stand much to lose financially from the actions of generic drug makers, or the pharmaceutical copycats.

Unfortunately for Novartis, though, the Indian Supreme Court has refused to provide the company with immunity from its Indian copycats. This decision, reached on Monday, April 1, puts an end to Novartis's seven-year-long effort to establish itself as the sole seller of its leukemia-fighting drug, Glivec®.

(imatinib mesylate). In effect, it confirms to India's generic drug industry that the industry has the full support of the Indian government.

It looks like Novartis is going to have to put up with its copycats.

However, in a press release published hours after the decision, Novartis claimed that the decision was unjust and that the court failed to recognize Novartis's intellectual property rights over the Glivec® drug formula. Furthermore, Novartis felt that generic drug makers were impeding its right to be the sole seller of Glivec®.

But Novartis is wrong. The decision is not unjust, and the

pharmaceutical copycats are not impeding. In fact, this time, we have a reason to love copycats: they make health care more accessible.

Yes, Novartis is right in some aspects. It did spend lots of money and time on the drug. It did work hard. And it did come up with Glivec®.

But the Indian Supreme Court denied the patent for another reason: the court opposes evergreening, the practice of tweaking a drug whose patent is about to expire in an attempt to extend its protection under patent laws. For the Indian Supreme Court, Novartis seemed to practice evergreening, as it failed to prove that Glivec® has "enhanced or superior efficiency" over earlier versions of the drug.

Not only does the decision leave India's generic drug makers free to produce cheaper editions of Glivec®-like drugs, but more importantly, it allows a larger amount of the population to afford the drug. While Glivec® costs around \$2,600 a month, generic versions sell at 7% of that price—about \$175 a month. And for a country with a large percentage of its 1.2 billion population making less than \$1.25 a month, generic versions are far more affordable options.

In fact, 300,000 patients in India today use generic forms of Glivec®, with only 16,000 able to afford the brand-name version.

Furthermore, in its 112-page ruling, the Indian Supreme Court wrote: "The Court was also reminded that an error of judgment by it will put life-saving drugs beyond the reach of the multitude of ailing humanity not only in this country but in many developing and underdeveloped countries dependent on generic drugs from India."

The statistics speak for themselves. Allowing Novartis a patent over Glivec® would undoubtedly cause huge financial barriers for much of the population dependent on the drug.

Novartis continues to argue that the issue is more of obtaining intellectual credit than it is of obtaining financial profit.

But, while the claim seems noble, I'm highly skeptical of it. Novartis points out in the same press release that it currently provides its drug free of charge to more than 16,000 people in India—95% of the people who request their services—through certain undisclosed "donation" programs. And it states that the remaining 5% are subsidized or pay only "generous copayments." But, if such is the case,

then Novartis's argument falls flat on itself. If it is already providing the drug free of charge to more than 95% of its Indian customers, then obtaining a patent will not draw in significant amounts of money and will not be conducive to continuing their research.

Though Novartis contends that the decision fails to grant the intellectual rights and recognition that the company believes it deserves, attention for its product does not even come close to the benefits of refusing to patent the new drug. And if Novartis is so keen and noble as to provide 95% of its Indian customers the drug for free, then it really shouldn't have a problem with the selling of its drug's generic counterparts to patients in need, should it now?

In the end, the Novartis case is not just an example of monopolization prevention on the Indian Supreme Court's part, but also an example of making health care available to hundreds of thousands of financially challenged patients both inside and outside of India.

So as much as I might hate copycats, in this battle, I'm glad that the pharmaceutical copycats—and not the evergreening giant, Novartis—was victorious.

Opinions

A Teacher's Take: Why Senioritis Must Be Treated

By DAVID MANDLER, Ph.D.
Stuyvesant English Dept.

While I have taught students on various levels from high school freshmen to college seniors for fifteen years, this is only my second year of teaching high school seniors. Last year, some of my fellow teachers informed me of a terrible and regularly recurring illness that decimates Stuyvesant seniors in their second term, called senioritis. Yet, my colleagues' message hardly prepared me to meet its unsavory effects in person, much less find the most efficacious cure for it. I must confess that, for me, the most disheartening cases have not been those of students who have done poorly throughout their years at Stuyvesant and then decide to cut class or simply not submit their assignments as seniors. In a way, while truly saddening and somewhat infuriating, that kind of behavior is the natural blossoming of a flower that has been eaten up by the worm of unpreparedness, indifference, or conscious rebellion. Rather, I find that the most discomforting cases are those of students who, for three and a half years, appeared to have internalized the study skills necessary to do well and, in fact, have done well in school by the measure of tests and essays, only to discard the mask of studiousness as soon as their college acceptance letters arrive.

Why does this happen? Could it be because the overwhelming majority of my seniors, 68 out of 82, thought before they became seniors that they would have to do very little work as

second-term seniors, and so decide to do what they (often erroneously) think is the bare minimum required to pass the class? Or do so-called solid students stop regularly reading, doing homework, and participating in discussions because 64 out of 74 of my seniors agree that most second-term seniors think that teachers who want second-term seniors to do as much as they did before are unfair? Thus, it's the teacher's fault if a second-term senior is on the brink of failing the class as a result of poor (or no) work—and so, the teacher should be responsible for saving the student from losing that prestigious scholarship or spot in an Ivy League school?

Be it as it may, Houston, we have a problem! And as summer roars into our lives (I deliberately omit spring because it has clearly been downsized), the conditions for the spread of senioritis are increasingly prevalent. A fatalistic solution would be to accept that senioritis is inevitable (even understandable) and give a 65 to anyone who breathes the air of our classrooms as many times as school policy dictates. Another, equally poor, solution would be to give no homework whatsoever in senior year and do in class the limited range of things one can do without out-of-classroom preparation. The list of unacceptable solutions of this type is too long for me to enumerate.

Then, what could be the solution?

I understand that seniors who have just been accepted into college may feel it is time to relax. In fact, 70 out of 82 respondents on the survey have said that they feel this way. "It is a privilege

of seniors that should be a right," one senior wrote. I say I understand why students, after three and a half years in the pressure-cooker and grade-driven environment of Stuyvesant High School, would feel it appropriate to relax in the second term of senior year, because there is nothing wrong with relaxing. The school calendar allows for that. Yet, there is something fundamentally wrong when students who in as few as 140 days will be college freshmen think that they have reached their potentials as scholars in the various fields that comprise their course loads as seniors and, therefore, can drastically pull away from studying.

By senior year, such extrinsic motivations as praise, good grades, college acceptances, and the bribe of a trip to Cancun (or the corner grocery store), while perhaps necessary, should not be sufficient. Nor should the threat of failure, however defined, be the only force keeping students motivated to engage in the daily tasks necessary to do well in class. Rather, students should be given opportunities to recognize the value of not only the tedious mechanics necessary to master fundamental study skills, but, more importantly, the genuine intellectual pleasure to be found in the transformative educational experiences the school (should) offer. Yes, one almost certain way to cure senioritis is to let seniors know that they are expected to continue doing the preparatory work necessary to expand their potential as scholars. And we—here, I mean teachers—should occasionally remind and demonstrate to our students in



Courtesy of David Mandler

our special ways that the educational journey they are taking at Stuyvesant is actually a very pleasurable intellectual activity and—besides providing a term's worth of preparation for the mostly self-, textbook-, and lecture-driven environments of outstanding colleges/universities—is intrinsically valuable.

Seniors—and future seniors! Instead of obsessing over being role models to your younger siblings just because your parents told you so, take a deep breath sometimes and allow for your innate curiosity about how and why the world works once again take possession of you, and, in the journey to find out the answers and ask new questions, discover how you connect to it all.

Inevitably, you will then become a true role model as you develop a self-driven motivation to learn as much as you possibly can from the texts, problems, music, art, and equations assigned to you before high school is forever over.

From the Parents' PerSPECTive: A Report Card for Stuy



Courtesy of Meg and Seth Akabas

By MEG and SETH AKABAS

Outside of Stuyvesant, people harbor all sorts of illusions about the school. The misconceptions we hear on a regular basis (and maybe some are just sour grapes) are disconcerting. Many think it's a refuge for nerds who have no other interests beyond math and science. People ask us about the school's supposed cutthroat environment. And, many have told us that they've heard that "the students are just numbers, and the teachers don't know anyone's name."

We feel, as parents of four children who have all attended Stuy, that we can shed some light on the school's actual strengths and weaknesses and that an appropriate forum would be in the form of grades — just as Stuy students are assessed for their performance. So, here it is:

Student Body: The school's greatest strength, we say, is its students — their talent, drive, maturity, and interest in learning that unites such a high percentage of the Stuy community and binds them all to the experience together — no matter how many other students one knows personally. And, despite the school's reputation for being a

fiercely competitive place, we see students cooperating and supporting each other even while they strive to do their personal best, as was the case when our oldest son was overlooked in the naming of captains for the tennis team his senior year and the two picked students stepped up to the coach, unprompted, and insisted that he be made a co-captain as well. Looking back on what our kids got from Stuyvesant (and looking ahead to what we hope our youngest, a sophomore, will also gain), we see the full benefit of having been part of this Stuyvesant community.

Grade: "Excellent"

Preparing its Students for College and Beyond: No one can deny that the Stuyvesant experience more than readies its students to succeed in the world. It seems to us that our kids have had an easier time in many respects than many non-Stuy students in college and other endeavors, and we credit the challenge provided them at Stuy with that. As the song says: "If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere..."

Grade: "Excellent"

Teaching: Our kids have had many stellar and life-changing teachers at Stuyvesant (including the late Mr. Geller). Our experience is that the faculty is tremendously dedicated and truly enjoys their work. As with any school or even university, there is bound to be some unevenness in quality, but for the most part we have been impressed. And, we have found that not only do teachers know our kids names, but also understand the content and quality of their work. Our complaint is that the ratio of testing time imparted by many teachers just seems too high. In addition, we think the school would benefit from having a system in place for students to submit teacher evaluations.

Grade: "Excellent/Satisfactory"

Course Offerings and Requirements: Stuy offers opportunities like no other school. The dazzling variety

high-level courses in such varied subjects as statistics, organic chemistry, civil and criminal law, and poetry, as well as the number of foreign languages offered are one of the school's greatest strengths. Our bone to pick is with the requirements, which we feel could use re-evaluating. Students could more readily take advantage of the appealing electives if some mandatory courses became optional. Why should students who are not planning on pursuing a career in science need to take a fourth year of science, for example? Many students would still choose to do so, but those who would rather explore other subjects at a higher level would not be limited by core requirements. Do students participating in a team sport really need to be using one of their precious class periods taking physical education? And, the tech requirements need a fresh look to see whether more of students' time should be spent on computer science and less on other tech subjects.

Grade: Courses - "Excellent"

Requirements: "Needs Improvement"

Workload: We get that the school's rigor requires great discipline and commitment. But, the pedagogy in most subjects is unnecessarily overly reliant on hours and hours of homework. We've heard a teacher — indeed more than one — justify his/her load by arguing that a student should be able to finish it in only forty-five minutes a night. Okay, but multiply that by seven courses and a student might have more than five hours of homework on top of their extracurricular activities! It is no wonder so many students are sleep deprived, and that is not something that we, as parents, can condone.

Grade: "Needs Improvement"

Diversity: There is no way around it — that Stuyvesant's student body does not have even close to a fair representation of minority students is truly a shame. We know that the school would be a richer place with a better cross

section of the New York City population represented and that there certainly are plenty of minority students who would be good candidates for Stuyvesant if they were prepared well. But, therein lies the problem. Many (including the NAACP) have claimed that the SHSAT is unfair to minority students. The problem however isn't with the test (which we agree isn't the only judge of someone's intelligence, but it certainly is a good indicator of whether a student is prepared for Stuyvesant's rigor and tests); the problem is that minority students generally are not receiving quality education from the start. They don't have the advantage of being in an excellent learning environment in the preschool years and therefore are already behind what they potentially could be achieving and what others are achieving even in elementary school. Changing the test or giving them test prep courses can't make-up for that. The solution is to offer better programs for these potential Stuy students right out of the gate when they are two, three, and four years old. High quality preschool and elementary school programs are needed to keep them from playing a no win game of catch-up later on. According to "Zero to Three National Center for Infants Toddlers and Families": "Positive early experiences establish a strong foundation upon which all later learning and healthy development is built... infants and toddlers who lack quality early learning experiences can fall quickly behind." The \$7 billion over 10 years for "The President's Plan for Early Education for All Americans" in Obama's just-released proposed 2014 budget finally acknowledges the substantial investment needed for early learning.

Grade: "Unsatisfactory" (but not the fault of Stuyvesant or the admission test).

...Not a bad report card overall. Yes, we think that Stuyvesant is one of the finest schools in the country. With improvements in a few areas it could be unequivocally *the finest*.

Opinions

Confessions of a 90.1



By HENRY ROSENBLUM

With absolute apathy on his face, my math teacher looks around the classroom and mutters, "I graded your tests." And the crowd goes wild. Tests matter far too much in this school. They decide what's on your transcript, your transcript decides which college you get into, and that college decides how your life will unfold. I'm a freshman at Stuyvesant, and this insane pressure struck me the moment I entered the doors. I came from an environment that was less competitive and number-intensive, so the transition was more than an annoyance. Not only do students talk about grades all the time, but teachers, guidance counselors, and other administrators also put grades first and foremost. And they wonder why we're stressed.

But at this moment—in this highly tense math class—my peers can't contain themselves. Their expressions as the teacher passes out the tests resemble that of someone waiting to see if his tumor is benign. Some students sigh with relief, others do a brief victory dance, and most collapse in shame. One receives a 92, and a single tear rolls down his face. Seriously? I know this school is competitive, but dude, come on.

My test back has an 85 on it. That's okay. Not good enough to brag, but not bad enough for a verbal whipping

when I get home. The girl sitting next to me looks over at my paper and sends a small frown toward me with the words "I'm so sorry."

And I'm stunned. I don't know what to say, so I tell her it's okay, but now I look like a victim.

As I walk through the room, I see a flurry of numbers, all with big red 9s at the beginning, most of the students complaining about their amazing grades. It makes me feel strange to be satisfied with an 85. Stuyvesant students like to say that they aren't the stereotype portrayed in the news, but the media gets the grade factor on the nose. We are obsessed with grades. The report card day can be Christmas or the Last Judgment, depending on who you are or how much you care. Somehow, my 85 is perceived as a bad grade.

That's what I am now: an 85. An 85.4, to be exact. I don't really care about math, so that shouldn't matter to me since I'm getting decent grades in subjects I actually like, but the school wants the full package: someone capable of anything and everything. To Stuyvesant, I'm the sum of my parts, also known as student #2260 with an overall average of 90.1. Personal expression is dead to the school and test grades are what matter, because to the school, that's who you are. Guidance counselors try to break up the number game by stressing the importance of extracurriculars, but they're just expanding the game. The more extracurriculars you have, the more badges you can put on the Boy Scout vest that is your high school career.

Even past your senior year, you remain a number to the administration. 1224 were accepted into Johns Hopkins, 4592 into Harvard. Then the principal can display the admissions to show everyone that 1465 students with 97.2 averages got into the colleges of their choice. This, in my opinion, is the most disgusting part of the institution that is

Stuyvesant: the theft of personality that is perpetrated by none other than the administration itself.

The school finds many ways to contribute to this mentality. College counselors tell smart, hardworking students with 94 averages that they probably won't get into the colleges they want; most teachers consider an 88 a disappointing, if not outright bad, grade; and the administration expects nothing less than a 100 on each Regents exam. All of these factors come together to create an environment that causes nothing but brutal competition and stress, the main contributors to the infamous cheating that plagues the school.

Thankfully, my parents are grateful for my overall average of 90.1. But it's hard for me to feel good about my grades when pretty much everyone else has higher ones.

One lunch period, I proudly shared the 94 I worked incredibly hard for in English, only to have my friends dismiss the grade as "meh" and describe how they received 96s with astonishingly minimal amounts of effort. According to the administration, they're better English students than I am. If they were to ask my English teacher, they might realize that I'm very committed to the subject and worked hard to earn my grade, but the undying number game prevents things like effort from coming into play.

But there are moments when I think that maybe there's more to this school, and I see it in the people. I can walk up to pretty much any Stuyvesant student and break the ice with something about having too much homework or the math department being terrible. That kind of perpetual connection between the students is incredible, and it's something you can't find anywhere else. Gathering some of the smartest kids in the city together contributes to an intelligent, witty environment. Many students are

brilliant, even when you look past academic prowess.

There's a reason why there is an astonishingly low level of bullying in Stuyvesant. It's a welcoming environment where literally anyone can fit in. Even if you're not used to making friends, there are at least a couple of people in the same situation as you. Students from other schools complain about not finding anyone like them, but that's nearly impossible at Stuyvesant. It's just a very friendly school.

Stuyvesant is a rigid, strict, and almost pointless institution run by grades. But if you manage to look beyond the academics, you'll find a wonderful school filled with equally wonderful people. No one I know hates his or her school more than Stuyvesant students hate Stuyvesant, yet for some reason no other students are as happy. The true heart of Stuyvesant doesn't lie in its GPAs or stunning number of Intel finalists, but rather in the people who populate its hallways. As a 90.1, I can confidently say that I don't like Stuyvesant, but I'm happy that I'm here.



Raquel Brau-Diaz / The Spectator

Students Do the Grading



By SUNNY ZHANG

There's nothing more frustrating than not having the power to change something you know is wrong. How about sitting in a classroom, bored, frustrated, feeling like you're wasting your time, but still not being able to tell the teacher that what he or she is doing just isn't working?

Teacher evaluations are currently in the spotlight, as are other forms of evaluation, such as the use of standardized test scores and the last-in-first-out policy. Surprisingly, one important factor has been left out: the role students play in the assessment of their own teachers. At Stuyvesant, gossip and personal opinions of teachers flow freely in the hallways and online. But aside from the surveys given out by a few individual teachers, students have few opportunities to directly give feedback to their teachers. Seeing as students spend more time than anyone else in the classroom, it makes sense that we should play a role in evaluating all aspects of our learning environment, especially our teachers.

Colleges and universities have been implementing student evaluation systems for decades. Usually surveys are administered online and the results are used to varying degrees in administrative and personnel decisions. Stuyvesant students are easily capable of assessing their teachers the same way.

We have attended school for over eight years, and we sit in the classroom for up to seven hours a day. Though some people argue that students are unqualified to evaluate teachers, school principals who visit the class for only five minutes cannot possibly experience what it's really like to be there every day. These brief, inconsistent observations not only fail to provide true instructional feedback on how teachers can improve, they also have a high susceptibility to bias (Shannon, 1991). In fact, no matter how strong or weak the instruction is, almost every teacher is evaluated as "Satisfactory." Students, however, often list out specific problems they experience. Students are in the best position to evaluate such matters as a teacher's clarity and organization, the difficulty and value of the class, and the fairness of tests and workload. We are certainly able to discern between teaching methods that are helpful and others that need improving.

The problem of student bias and unfair evaluations is also an unfounded concern. Students understand that there is much more to a good teacher than funny jokes and high grades. True, a few undeservedly negative evaluations cannot be entirely avoided, but several odd comments will not affect the overall results. A 2006 study (Heckert, Latier, Ringwald-Burton, and Drazen) shows that, contrary to popular belief, stricter teachers who give more course work do not necessarily receive lower ratings. More demanding instructors actually receive higher evaluations, and teachers are not able to "buy" better ratings with bribes of higher grades. On a similar note, funny or "enthusiastic" teachers do not necessarily earn high grades either. While an entertaining teacher may be noted highly in humor and class atmosphere, ratings of competence will

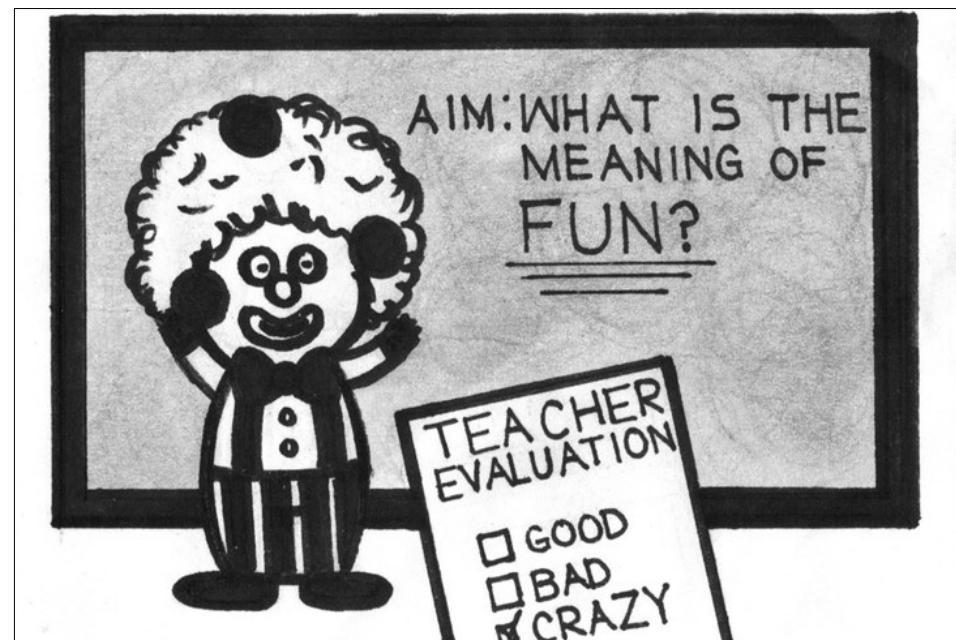
not be affected.

Anonymous evaluations will be a rare opportunity for feedback and communication between students and teachers. I find that some teachers are simply unaware of the quality of their various lessons, and students don't get the opportunity to suggest changes. Surveys after each term will allow students to voice their opinions about their learning experiences and to highlight certain aspects of the class that the teacher might not have given much thought to. Instead of kicking out the bad teachers—which is a complicated process anyway, due to policies protecting teacher rights—student evaluations give all teachers a chance to improve themselves.

Many people point out that some teachers will simply ignore the suggestions, but think about it this way: as students we all hate taking tests, but we don't shrink from it or ignore our

results, because we understand how much we can learn from these "evaluations." A few dismissive teachers should not be the cause of abandoning a system that is beneficial to everyone else. Evaluation is a part of any workplace, and hearing students' opinions—something frequently overlooked in a big school—should be a valuable asset to any teacher. A 1980 study shows that teachers who receive feedback had higher end-of-semester ratings than those who were not evaluated (Cohen). Evaluations clearly play a role in teachers learning more about themselves and developing their careers.

Evaluation should be two-way: since students are constantly being graded by teachers, teachers should be evaluated by their students as well. Like it or not, we will always be your worst and best critics. Give a voice to these opinions, and you just might realize that there's a lot to learn from your students too.



Wei Dan Yang / The Spectator

Opinions

Why Stuyvesant?

By JULIA CHA

As I stood amidst the crowds of potential incoming freshman during last month's Open House, I saw approximately 1,000 photocopies of the look of confusion, excitement, and indecisiveness I had when I walked across the bridge, acceptance letter crisp in my hand. Stuyvesant lures freshman for all the same (and rather mundane) reasons: a renowned education, seemingly endless opportunities, parental pressure, and, of course, bragging rights. Or so I thought. In interviewing a few of my fellow Stuyvesant students, I was surprised to learn that for some, neither the education nor the pressure nor the prestige attracted them to Stuyvesant. Rather, it was often some other unusual factor that sparked their interest.

Stanley Teitel

Daniel Goynatsky, sophomore

Stanley Teitel. That man can make an impression on you. First of all, his speaking was incredible. His raspy voice was captivating and contrary to my reactions to speakers at other open houses; I listened to everything he said. He was an interesting and firm, yet extremely approachable man. He was one of the main reasons why I decided to come to Stuyvesant; he made an otherwise unexciting building something to look forward to on a daily basis. After I learned that I had been accepted to Stuyvesant, my decision had yet to be made. But after the second Open House, I knew I would go to Stuyvesant because of how Teitel talked about us, how he idealized us, and really made us feel like the cream of the crop. I am relatively modest, but Teitel put me in a "heck-yeah!" mood, and I felt that joining Stuyvesant would make me part of the best school in the state, where I would succeed and have a worry-free future.

Homeschooled to Ten-Floor School

Brain Ge, junior

The most significant influence on my decision to come to Stuyvesant was the size of the school. Homeschooled from sixth through eighth grades, I was desperately deprived of a real school community. Though the Open House may have made the size of the school seem daunting to other wide-eyed kids, I saw opportunities to thrive in the giant community that I've grown to know and love. Being amidst the crowds of people led around by students through the entire school, with club representatives shouting at us the whole way, was such a great change from my bleary routine. Personally, it was my own lack of a school society that really made me fall in love with the overwhelming and chaotic Stuyvesant culture at first glance.

Accidental

Crystal Chen, junior

Coming to Stuyvesant was kind of accidental. My parents intended to send me to math prep the summer before 8th grade, but what they thought was math prep was actually SHSAT prep. None of us had any idea what that was back then. Nevertheless, I ended up taking the SHSAT without thinking about it much. I had never heard of any of the specialized high schools before. But when I ended up getting in, my dad convinced me to go to Stuyvesant because I excel more in math and science, subjects that Stuyvesant clearly has a richer background in when compared to Horace Mann. I also knew a few other kids from Horace Mann who were also going to Stuyvesant, so I thought: why not?

Humans of Stuyvesant: How a Facebook Group Influenced My Decision

Mandy Zhao, incoming freshman

As an indecisive eighth grader thrust into the high school selection process, I was only interested in one thing: making new friends and fitting in. I was also very nervous about whether I was capable enough to make it past the infamous workload of high school. Then, I happened to stumble on a webpage on Facebook while doing some research on schools. Titled "Humans of Stuyvesant," most of its posts were pictures with captions, and I was curious enough to go and take a look. What I saw really changed my perspective of Stuyvesant. Before I saw the webpage, I always thought Stuyvesant was something so far away from me, something I could never reach. I felt disconnected to the thought of becoming a Stuyvesant student. The more quirky pictures I saw, the more I felt at home. This is where I want to be, I thought. I want to be with my fellow nerds and geeks, and I want to grow with them until I discover who I am. I believed that being somewhere where I felt at home would eliminate any fear of not fitting in, and a collection of photos of the humans of Stuyvesant did just that – convince me that I, too, was a human of Stuyvesant.

Something Different

Eric Zhang, junior

People always ask me why I came to Stuyvesant from Hunter, and I am never really too sure how to answer. Trying to remember what went on through my head, I can honestly say that it was one of the toughest choices I have ever made.

The most important things I considered were environment and people. I loved Hunter and I wouldn't have wanted to spend seventh and eighth grade anywhere else in the world, but being in a small school gets boring. After two years, I could probably name single person in my grade. I guess the main thing for me was that I wanted to try something different. At Stuyvesant, the school is so big that I meet new people not even just every single year, but every single semester. There are also so many wonderfully tight-knit communities, such as sports teams, volunteer organizations, or small clubs, that compensate for the seemingly alienating size and make Stuyvesant a good fit.

So even though I was aware that Hunter life was more loosely regulated than Stuyvesant life, my desire to immerse myself in an enormously varied community trumped all else.



What If?

Anonymous

My best friend Noah was sure from the second he received the acceptance letter that he would go to Stuyvesant High School. He could have chosen to stay at our school (a K through 12th grade private institution), but he had already attended the same school and had classes with the same people for 11 years. Any number of things might have contributed to his decision to leave, but the core of the matter was that Noah had cabin fever.

My reasons for leaving our school were less clear. I was comfortable there: I had friends that I'd gone to school with since kindergarten, I knew many of the teachers well, the academics at our school were (and are) strong, and its reputation with high-ranked colleges was phenomenal. I was in my element and I was in a familiar environment.

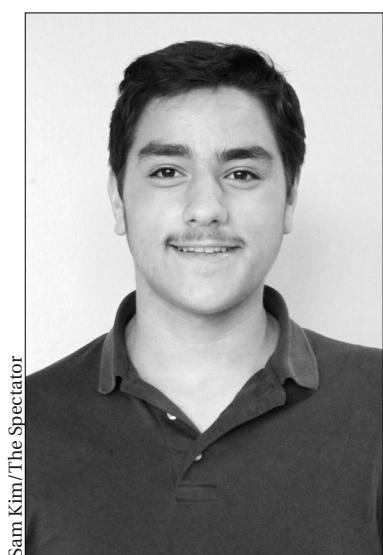
Maybe Noah's case of cabin fever was contagious, but I never burned with the desire to escape. My revelation came almost too late. I was sitting in the orthodontist's office waiting to get my braces tightened, after having told my middle school director (on the last possible day) that I'd chosen to stay for high school. I made this decision based on all of the reasons that I was comfortable at my school, but abruptly, one thought shattered my verdict.

"What if I like Stuyvesant?" inquired the thought. "What if I regret staying?" It persisted and, catching hold, it bombarded me with thousands of questions. "What if Noah likes it, and I don't go, and I regret my decision even more? What if I get into a better college from Stuyvesant? What if make more friends? What if I find my calling? What if I have just passed up on the best opportunity of my life? What if? What if? What if?" The questions seeped through my brain all at once as both a collective poison and elixir. Now, convinced that I had made a horrible mistake by choosing to stay, I rushed back to the school and told my surprised middle school director that I had changed my mind.

It's now three years later, almost to the day, and I find myself explaining to my 13-year-old sister why she should choose to come to Stuyvesant, even though I seem stressed out and sleep deprived a lot of the time; even though "I had no social life," to quote her, in freshman year; even though one of my best friends, Noah, left Stuyvesant and went back to our old school after only one month. "Because I've found my place here and I'm satisfied now. You can do the same..." Now I pause for a second, and tell her "...and because you can't live with 'what if'?"

Opinions

Please, May I Have Some Soap?



Sam Kim/The Spectator

By JACK CAHN

Desks are covered with distracting obscenities, vulgarity, and graffiti. Computer science labs have malfunctioning computers that lie in disrepair. Classrooms don't even have enough desks, and if they do, many are broken, lacking wheels. Escalators are broken for days at a time. Most disturbingly, disgustingly, and sickeningly of all, half the bathrooms in the school have broken soap dispensers, and nearly all the bathrooms lack paper towels. The result is students walking around with filthy hands, spreading infections and disease. In many ways, the flagship school of the city represents its school sys-

tem: it's falling apart and nobody is even blinking.

Researchers at the University of Bradford have found that "the degree of wetness of hands appears to greatly influence bacterial transfer and dissemination to surfaces and items touched." Drying hands is as important as washing them, and yet Stuyvesant students often can do neither due to neglect by the administration, making our school an incubator for bacterial infection. And yet no one has even addressed this issue once during three years that I've been at Stuyvesant. According to LiveScience, signs of disorder such as those listed above can open the door to individuals breaking other social norms and rules. In fact, "the mere presence of graffiti" doubles the amount of rule-breaking. If we clean up our community, we'll see massive benefits to the Stuyvesant community and school environment.

And yet, the administration hasn't addressed the issue of graffiti for decades, leaving obscenities from decades past. Nor as the administration bothered to fix the escalators, computers, chairs, or desks. The issue isn't the individual problems. The issue is that the administration's neglect of basic needs contributes to a general sense of disregard for the quality of life at Stuyvesant,

which is only exacerbated by the school's tough-to-navigate

In many ways, the flagship school of the city represents its school system: it's falling apart and nobody is even blinking.

bureaucracy. Our parents tell us to clean up our rooms because it's easier to work when we're neat and organized. On behalf of the student body, I ask the administration to start cleaning its room, not tomorrow, but today.

Stuyvesant recently spent large sums of money on renovating the library and buying new laptops for science research classes with spillover funds. The administration has demonstrated that it does have available funds to fix these small problems. And they're so easy to fix! How much does it cost to buy soap or paper towels? And isn't it worth it?

These are the issues of the moment. But how can the Stuyvesant administration know what needs to be fixed in the future? There is no way to make complaints to the administration. At present, writing this article is my only way of vocalizing some of mine. There ought to be a better way. Since my first article, I've been a strong advocate for increased involvement by the Student Union (SU) as a middleman between the students and the administration. But beyond that, there's an easily-implemented, simple way of finding out what students want: Just ask them!

Stuyvesant provides us with forms to fill out during homeroom all the time. Why not distribute a survey designed by a committee made up of student leaders from The Spectator, SU, and Big Sibs, along with teachers and administrators? Surveys could be distributed to the entire student body during homeroom, to the entire faculty during department meetings, and be available online. The results could be analyzed and used to implement new programs at Stuyvesant that would make positive improvements.

Right now, students often feel bullied by the administration. New policies are announced and decided without our consent. We're not even

part of the decision-making. We can't even wash our hands in the bathroom on a regu-

Drying hands is as important as washing them, and yet Stuyvesant students often can do neither due to neglect by the administration, making our school an incubator for bacterial infection.

lar basis unless we bring our own Purell. In many cases, we just don't feel respected. Let's change the environment here. Let's respect the voice of the student body and enact changes to improve its experiences. We all want to make this school a better place; let's make it happen.

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An Emergence of Voices: Excerpts from Stuyvesant's Award-Winning Pieces

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards just celebrated their 90th anniversary of fostering creativity and personal voice amongst America's youth. In this fostering and elevating of literary and artistic talent, the Awards have nationally recognized eight Stuyvesant students this year for their writing: seniors Saru Nanda, Nadra Rahman, and Adam Schorin, juniors Jane Argodale, Lindsay Bu, Shannon Daniels, and Alexa Suarez, and sophomore Lucy Wainger. To acknowledge their great work, The Spectator presents excerpts of their award-winning pieces below.

The F Train

Saru Nanda

I think that to die is a glorious matter.

I know, I know, that sounds absolutely horrid and morbid, but I swear I have a point. To be able to die means that you have had the chance to live, to breathe, to experience.

I was going home one day with my best friend when a family of three got on the train. We were at Rockefeller Center. They sat across from us: the father and daughter together, the mother a little further down. If it wasn't for the fact that the girl, who wasn't more than twelve years old, was wearing a bandana around her head, had no eyebrows, and was insanely thin, I don't think I'd look twice at them.

She was sick, that much was obvious. I didn't know how sick until I overheard her conversation with her father.

"Today was a good day, wasn't it?" he had said, smiling.

"Yeah, it was," she sighed, "Though I wish I'll be here to see the tree during Christmas-time."

She took a book out of her bag- *To Kill a Mockingbird*- and started reading. It was as if she didn't understand her own words. It was as if she didn't mind her own fate.

Her father did though. He just sat there, frozen, except for his smile, which slowly turned downwards, staring at her while she read, and I swear to you, he had tears in his eyes.

The mother's facial expression didn't change, but I think it's because she just couldn't hear her daughter. She was looking at them though. She stared at her family the entire time she was on the train. It was as if she felt they would disappear if she looked away. When the girl put the book away, the mother finally spoke up.

"So where to tomorrow?" she had asked.

"Six Flags. Or Coney Island. Or Adventureland. I just want to ride a rollercoaster one last time."

One last time. I couldn't wrap my head around that: someone so young having a last anything. A last rollercoaster ride, a last birthday, a last train ride. I couldn't fathom that a twelve year old has a bucket list- *an actual bucket list*. I felt bad, so incredibly bad, because she wouldn't get to experience high school, or another summer day.

I thought of all the experiences I have yet to have-getting into college, graduating high school, getting married, and realized that she'll never have *any* of that. She'll never live life to the fullest. I thought it was unfair that I was chosen to continue my life for years to come, while she only had a few months more.

But then she laughed. She smiled and laughed, and I didn't feel so bad anymore, because she was happy. Yes, she won't see another summer day, she won't see another Christmas tree light up, and she won't graduate high school, but that does not mean that she hasn't lived life to the fullest. Even though she won't experience more life moments, she will leave this earth having experienced enough for her to be happy. And to die happy, to die knowing you've lived your own life to the fullest it can be, isn't something to weep over-it's something to be cheerful about. To die knowing that you experienced what you could have one last time is a glorious matter.

"We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones."

-Richard Dawkins

Mom's Perfect Kitchen

Jane Argodale

My mother grew up with her brother's hand-me-downs, the phrase "show me your parents," and mandatory Marxism-Leninism classes from kindergarten to med school. Though she recalls these memories with bitterness, I'm not always sure she's happy that my childhood hasn't been similar. The virtues of obedience, frugality, and orderliness thrived best behind the Iron Curtain, and Mom's reward for survival was an American daughter who rolls her eyes and eats Nutella out of the jar. I'm the reason she bites her nails down to the ragged quick.

"I would never yell at my mother, or disrespect her, even when she was wrong." When Mom says this, she always looks right at me.

"If she was wrong, weren't you just being unfair to yourself?" I ask.

"It doesn't matter."

Eden

Lindsay Bu

When all the chores were done she would go outside. Dressed in her oversized pink T-shirt, her faded blue jeans, and those dirty black sneakers that she bought for only ten dollars, she would enter her haven: the garden. She couldn't pronounce some of the more difficult names in her lush Eden—her tongue could never figure out the double l in tomatillo or the -tro in cilantro—but it didn't matter. Just by placing her pinky in the dirt she knew precisely how much water her precious plants needed, she knew by the smell of her mint whether it needed more shade, and she knew just by the color of her baby cucumbers whether or not they would grow to be small or large. She sang to them the Korean lullabies that her own mother had sung to her, and she was sure that the singing helped her plants grow. If she were gone, who would sing to them?

Floodwaters

Lucy Wainger

Girls whose hair makes a choppy, curled C around the nape of the neck
Bare shoulder blades with dark swaths of ink between
The strained look of a neckline pulled too high—skin struggling to be seen
[Expletive] looking into eyes—look into mouths, see the holes gnawed by nervous teeth,
Gnashing cheeks, the myrtle tiredness she keeps tucked under her tongue—almost
Said (almost)
Knowing: that is who she is.
Knowing: this is what you are.
Knowing: this is what you have to be.

Shortest Short Story in the History of Short Stories of All Time Ever

Adam Schorin

I have fallen in love with seven girls this month, listed here in order of incidence: Haley James, who sits behind me in Linear Algebra and presses her flip-flopped toes against the back of my chair; the blonde cashier at Fannie's Market with neon bangles on her wrist; the bandy-legged brunette on the A train in a men's dress shirt and tight black leggings who winked at me; the tall girl in boots and a Princeton cardigan reading Julian Barnes in Riverside Park; Renata James, Haley's older, rehab-bound sister, a toxic train-wreck of beautiful hot mess; the brunette on the 7 train in a tight Beatles tee and silvery earrings who didn't merely wink at me but nodded and smiled when she caught me staring at her; and Layla Clark Howland, the freshman in Twain who laughs out loud at the word penis, but can solve complex multivariate calculus equations in thirty seconds flat.

Scale

Shannon Daniels

whole.

The only thing I can trace back is death. That, and warped piano lids. The ivory keys are like teeth before dentures. I ask Grandma when she'll have it tuned.

She gives a closed-mouth chuckle.

half.

It belonged to the grandfather I never knew.

He had perfect pitch because he didn't see the music, Daddy says, he felt it.

I scrunch my eyebrows and guess that it's one of those things that will rebound and click like a metronome.

We go to Grandma's backyard and my pointer finger picks out the moon, like the ivory peeking from an ebony lid. He sees it, too. For a while we say nothing.

"Daddy, didn't you want to be an astronomer once?" He winces.

"Yes, I did."

And somehow I know he's not just squinting for stars.

quarter.

Grandma's mother was a firm believer in tea leaves and tarot cards.

I imagine Grandma, mid-twenties with a cigarette in hand, blonde hair fingered and combed til static caught on, looking over the cards her husband was dealt.

Squeezing the cross hanging around her neck.

I imagine the car, the sweaty press of rush hour, the hospital.

I found the cards in her basement one night, ripped right down the middle.

eighth.

She called her move to Florida a change of scenery. New state, newborns, new life. She kept the radio off for much of the ride.

They had had enough music.

rest.

Grandmother buys us a telescope. It blends in with the leathery darkness. My cousin turns the dial and calls me over.

The shadow of my eyelashes fracture the view like a kaleidoscope until I force my eye open. Until it hurts.

Grandmother is reclined in a chair, lifts her wine glass to the stars.

I see her breath before I hear it.

"Aim for the moon!"

But I know we're really looking for God.

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Music

BY EMMA MCINTOSH

Although the final "Harry Potter" film was released in 2011, a student-founded company called Starkid had just gotten started making musicals parodying the "Harry Potter" books. Starkid, founded at the University of Michigan in 2009, became an internet sensation after their release of "A Very Potter Musical," the first of three parodies to come, on YouTube. They have launched a considerable number of shows since then. This production features Darren Criss (known to many as Blaine Anderson on "Glee") as Harry Potter, Joey Richter as Ron Weasley, Bonnie Gruisen (or Meredith Stepien in the third musical) as Hermione Granger, and Joe Walker as Lord Voldemort. Although hardly accurate or chronological when compared to J.K. Rowling's canon, the AVPM trilogy is a hilarious rendition of Harry Potter's most memorable teachers, villains, and adventures during his years at Hogwarts.

The first two shows were extremely fun to watch, especially for die-hard "Harry Potter" fans who understood every subtle reference to the books or movies thrown at them. The songs were clever and catchy, the actors enthusiastic and charismatic. Tracks such as "Harry Freakin' Potter," "Granger Danger," and "Back to Hogwarts" have become iconic elements of the AVPM shows and are some of the most well-written songs in the trilogy. In the first two performances, it was evident that the actors were having just

as much fun as—if not more than—the audience. With jokes to bring an entire theater to its feet, AVPM and "A Very Potter Sequel" (AVPS) took viewers by storm.

"Not only was the show far too long, but there was also an unshakeable sense of haste; hardly any of the actors had even memorized their lines."

The third and final installment, "A Very Potter Senior Year" was first performed at LeakyCon (a gathering of "Potterheads" in Chicago, Illinois) in August of 2012, but was only

released on YouTube on March 15, 2013. An enormous audience welcomed the Starkid actors and Evanna Lynch, who played Luna Lovegood in the "Harry Potter" films and was also cast as Luna in AVPSY. The millions who enjoyed AVPM and AVPS were more than excited for the third addition to the series, but it was unquestionably not as well-received as the first two. A whopping five hours in length, the original live performance went on far too long and many scenes were boring or even unbearable to watch. Sadly, only some of these scenes were shortened to make the four-hour final cut that was released on YouTube.

Not only was the show far too long, but there was also an unshakeable sense of haste; hardly any of the actors had even memorized their lines. They brought their scripts onstage and, disappointingly enough, Darren hadn't even memorized a song he wrote himself—the classic AVPM theme. In fact, there seemed to be a general lack of enthusiasm on the part of the performers, something that hadn't been a problem in past Starkid shows. The spirit of their productions is always playful and passionate, yet this performance seemed meant only to please the fans, due perhaps to the fact that the actors wanted to focus their time on different productions. There is no doubt that the constant repetition of "this is the last time" in the main theme was a not-so-subliminal message to the fans emphasizing that Starkid is done with AVPM and its ilk.



Irene Elias / The Spectator

Despite its title, the plot of the last AVPM installment was primarily based on "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" and "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince." However, Starkid, as usual, added new subplots not addressed in either the "Harry Potter" books or movies, such as the battle between Harry and Draco Malfoy (Lauren Lopez) to become Head Boy at Hogwarts. The show is still a delight to experience, particularly if the viewer is a fan of Starkid and AVPM, but it nonetheless does not reach the high expectations set by the first two productions and the promise of Evanna Lynch.

The audience was grudgingly pulled further into the overly long story by one silly musi-

cal number after another, yet many (along with several of the actors onstage) still burst into tears during the final scene. This final performance was evidently put on solely to appease the fans dying for a third installment in the AVPM series, although many of them were probably disappointed with the actors' half-hearted performances. Perhaps with more rehearsal time and motivation, AVPSY could have been a huge success, but as they lay waste to their partnership with LeakyCon and Evanna Lynch, Starkid failed to create another musical parody that would captivate audiences the way the first two did.

Suspense to a Fault: Sigur Rós's MSG Flop

He hides with the rest of the crew behind a screen, waiting at least five minutes before finally revealing his face. Suspense, you say? Perhaps this is what he intended, but too much anxiety leads to a loss of interest—interest that may never be recovered later in the performance. Suspense is an art, and is unfortunately one that Sigur Rós did not master in their Madison Square Garden performance.

An Icelandic ambient/post-rock band from Reykjavík, Sigur Rós, which literally translates to "Victory Rose," is entering its 19th year of existence and has been active since 1994. The band's international debut came with their 1999 album Ágætis byrjun ("An All Right Start"). They would have remained in obscurity if it weren't for their loyal fans sharing their music by word of mouth. Critics worldwide quickly hailed it as one of the greatest albums of its time, and the band began playing support to established acts such as Radiohead. Post-rock, developed from 1980s and early 1990s indie/underground rock, uses rhythms and guitars in ways not traditionally found in rock. The strong, sharp riffs with rapid beats are replaced with mellow, relaxed strums and slow rhythms. Though post-rock bands are often without vocals, Sigur Rós is an exception. The band incorporates classical and minimalist aesthetic elements in its music

and flow. The buildup within songs was incredibly slow; by the time the bass stepped up and the symphony music intensified, the crowd was snoring. Not even the strong falsetto vocals, which shone above the instrumentation, could excite the crowd.

Despite slow starts, the climaxes (whenever the band got to them) proved to have a cathartic effect. The lighting also effectively created an atmosphere of turmoil between forces of nature. The set often resembled jungles, volcanoes, oceans, and even outer space. The backdrops were well coordinated with the music, morphing with the tunes. It certainly paid homage to the Sigur Rós's unearthly style, adding another element to the metaphysical journey its music invokes. The light show accompanying the climaxes, featuring startling neon lights and blinding multi-colored ones, deserves special commendation. Sadly, these effects could not make up for the lack of excitement within the music itself.

It proved difficult for Sigur Rós to recapture the audience's attention; feelings never quite peaked, and never addressing the crowd did not help. It was no surprise that the band didn't receive any standing ovations. The concert was not a complete failure, but for most of the audience, the music just didn't quite hit home.



By NICOLE SANCHEZ

A soft whine sounds from the stage. Surrounding bright green lights begin to fluctuate in intensity, their hum creating a pulsing effect. A lone voice, a startling falsetto, warbles from the stage. The volume esca-

lates as other ethereal sounds stack up against a clouded monochrome foreground until—finally—the first drumbeat resounds through the stage, a blinding white light flashes, cymbals crash, and our first Sigur Rós musician appears.

At least, his shadow does.

Arts and Entertainment

Film

I Can't Explain That For You, Dave

continued from page 1

What these people seem to forget along the way is that there is such a thing as a continuity error; as they say, people make mistakes, but not Stanley Kubrick. There is no line to be drawn: Kubrick is a god who controls every aspect of the film. One enthusiast goes far enough to suggest that Kubrick's face is hidden in a passing cloud during the opening credits, as if he could control nature.

For the most part, Rodney Ascher takes the back seat during the documentary, allowing his subjects to unfurl the narrative. Ascher is almost invisible as the five obsessed fans (we never see them) talk on, and there is almost nothing to indicate that one inter-

pretation may be more valid than any other. Ascher lets us decide for ourselves, and it's a good thing too. When there are so many exhausting voices babbling continuously about the importance of everything, we as an audience need the breathing room that Ascher grants us to sit back and think only about what these five people are saying.

The film gets to the heart of what has so many people in America claiming that the C.I.A. shot J.F.K. and the evidence is on the back of the one-dollar bill. We live in a culture of paranoia and conspiracy theories, perfect for a movie like "Room 237," giving its commentary a distinctly postmodern feel. Yet the logical paradox inherent in the film comes in trying to summarize it: to say that "Room 237" is about the way we impose our own mean-

ings onto the world is to impose meaning onto "Room 237." By suggesting that this documentary has a specific, intended interpretation, we begin to lose the whole point of the film: there is no one interpretation. Art is a Rorschach of the soul.

In the end the film serves as a great primer in post-modernism and deconstructionism. Ascher shows us what deconstructionist philosopher Jacque Derrida always tried to explain: there is no one meaning to a piece of art, and there are so many meanings that no meaning really matters. The only meaning to "The Shining" is whatever you want it to mean; you can spend your whole life trying to figure out what it's about, or you can follow Dick Halloran's advice to little Danny Torrance in Kubrick's movie, and "Stay out."

Music

Infinite's Failed Challenge



By AMY ZHEN

Following a 10-month-long hiatus, Infinite made their comeback amid much hype with their fourth album "New Challenge." Last year, Infinite stunned the K-pop world after releasing "The Chaser," the title track of the group's third album "Infinitize," in which the restrained, subtly fierce voices of L, Sungyeol, and Sungjong offset Woohyun's and Sunggyu's belting notes. The singing transitions effortlessly into Dongwoo's and Hoya's intense raps, which anchor the piece. The vocals are supported with a beat defined by strong synths and fast-paced electric guitar riffs that create a sense of bitter tension, suitable for a song about a man chasing after his lost love.

"The Chaser" captures each member's individual strengths and seamlessly intertwines their voices into a mind-blowing chorus that demonstrates their flawless harmonization. In the chorus, Infinite, as one voice, begins with three shorter, sharper syllables, building up suspense until reaching the climax, which contains a single dramatic, drawn-out note. This rise-and-fall pattern evokes a racing, heart-pounding catharsis.

After having set the bar so high, the group was left with the Herculean task of surpassing their career-defining work. In their latest album "New Challenge," however, the task appears to have been pushed off for their next album.

Remember the sheer strength of "The Chaser." Now compare that to "Welcome to Our Dream," the entirely instrumental introduction to "New Challenge" that befits a tea cup ride in Disney World, complete with a marching band rhythm and ballroom violins. Immediately, the problem with Infinite's fourth album becomes painfully clear: the gusto and bravado that pervaded "Infinitize" are but a distant memory.

What sets "Infinitize" apart from "New Challenge" is Infinite's controlled execution as they take advantage of volume and carefully balance between the themes of happiness and heartbreak. There is a greater variation in their instrumental accompaniments, and they don't abuse their distinctive synth-filled 1980s sound as tragically as they do in "New Challenge." Each "Infinitize" track would transport you to an unexpected destination with its deep lyrics and hypnotizing melodies. Unfortunately, "New Challenge" makes you run in circles with its dizzyingly monotonous verses. The newest album is clearly a feel-good work, but it's fun, safe atmosphere is ephemeral and quickly deteriorates into simple and repetitive sounds.

Take for example, "Man in Love," the title song, which is wildly addictive but lacks substance. Opening with a funky mixture of synth and drums, the song quickly transitions to vocals littered with generic lyrics about puppy love and sweet verses that blend indiscriminately into each other. It's fun

and catchy in the same way "Call Me Maybe" is; we definitely don't need another one of those songs. By retrograding into that cheesy, cheerful style, this album loses the emotional gravity that has typically accompanied an Infinite piece.

Moreover, the song "60 Seconds" proves to be a surprising disaster as both Infinite's brilliant harmonization and natural blending of rap and singing fall through. The chorus is jarring with a phenomenal rock band accompaniment overwhelmed by the heavy vocals of all seven members. The instrumental background and even the members of Infinite itself violently vie for the listener's attention instead of complementing one another. Then the rap jumps in disjointedly (clearly for filler) and works against both the song and the rappers' styles.

Infinite is a group worthy of much respect and hype, but "New Challenge" does not live up to expectations. Limiting themselves to a genre from their rookie days is detrimental to their continued success in the K-pop world. Their leader, Sunggyu, has successfully tried rock, while Infinite H, composed of the group's two rappers, has proved to be talented with hip hop. It would be worthwhile to see Infinite step outside their comfort zone of 1980s dance hits. "New Challenge" plays so carefully into their established strengths that its resulting predictability makes its title a gross overstatement.

Music

The Beginning of the Monster Rookie

By AMY ZHEN

In a genre where artists fade in and out of the spotlight quickly, Lee Hi remains relevant after her debut success with the first half of her latest album "First Love: Part One." With confidence backed by talent and effort, Lee Hi tops her previous pieces with this striking compilation. These songs reflect on common themes of heartbreak and loneliness, but instead of using overdone angst, she shows how these experiences can make us stronger.

It's hard to imagine that the soulful voice behind this album belongs to a 16-year-old rookie. Even as one of K-pop's youngest stars, she shines with maturity and vibrancy. To understand why Lee Hi is such a rarity in the world of K-pop, it's important to know her story. In an industry where many celebrities are "created," she found fame through a reality T.V. show called "Survival K-Pop Star." She debuted the following year with the hit "1.2.3.4," which ranked first on all the major Korean music charts and earned her the nickname "Monster Rookie." By skipping the trainee route, Lee Hi had little opportunity to expand her meager experience with dancing (a growing must-have in her profession). As a result, she must rely entirely on her voice to stand out. Lee Hi easily holds her own as a young, female soloist in a genre dominated by male pop groups.

Despite having such a short career behind her, Lee Hi has already created a distinct style of retro-soulfulness that her album highlights flawlessly. It begins with "Turn It Up (Intro)," a track that combines strong R&B vocals with a bold musical accompaniment.

The unusual yet beautiful pairing of trumpets and violins, which quickly increases in volume before being joined by booming drums, is nothing short of an opera-worthy production. This blend ebbs into a lower drum beat, over which she belts in Korean and English, "I shed so much sweat and tears... And now it's time to shine!"

The title song, "It's Over," is similar to her debut single but has even brighter rhythms and more playful singing. The

music video, starring dancing ice cream cones and an ex-boyfriend represented by a teddy bear, is unique in that we finally see Lee Hi's inner child. Throughout the chorus, she cheerily declares, "It's over... So baby, goodbye!" with just the right amount of cheekiness for a boost of self-esteem. The lilting piano notes and cymbals create a modern jazz feel that accentuates her bluesy tone. The piano trills are used impeccably to add drama to her steady singing, and the fixed brass beat, along with clapping, help punctuate her syllables. "It's Over" merges Lee Hi's mature vocals with her youthful perkiness.

However, the undisputed gem of the album is "Special," which features label-mate Jennie Kim. Accompanied by Lee Hi's haunting "ooohs," Kim's monotone "heartbeat-beat-beat" creates a hollow feeling that perfectly aligns with the theme of life after heartbreak. The emotionless lead gives way to Lee Hi's sorrowful notes, and the listener immediately feels her anguished longing. This song could have forgone its R&B drumbeat and poignant piano melody and still have been a brilliant a cappella. Kim's rap is initially jarring, but serves to offset the slower pace of Lee Hi's singing. This tragic work displays Lee Hi's maturity with a deep, resonating message. Throughout the song, she thanks her past love for her pain and scars, singing, "I'm not afraid of loving again and being hurt again because no one could hurt me as much as you did." "Special" is bitterly beautiful in the same way that flower petals made of glass shards might be.

Lee Hi's album cements her musical style by revealing different sides of the multifaceted teenager. Had she tried to branch out into other genres this early in her career, she would have lost what makes her so inimitable. "First Love" isn't revolutionary when compared to her past work, but it's exactly what Lee Hi, as a quickly soaring rookie, needs—a platform to build her future on. She has yet to develop her music even further, but it's clear that she's already living up to her title of "Monster Rookie."



Arts and Entertainment

Calendar

Looking Forward

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
14 Museum exhibition “...as apple pie” Curator: David Kiehl Whitney Museum of American Art •This exhibit explores how images can stimulate an emotional response to a country, its people, its political or social objectives, and its self-image.	15 Concert Muse Madison Square Garden 7th Ave. and 32nd St Doors open at 8 p.m. Tickets starting at \$32	16 Album release Iron and Wine’s “Ghost on Ghost” Genre: Singer/songwriter, alternative Label: Nonesuch Records Inc.	17 The Tribeca Film Festival begins! Tribeca, Lower Manhattan Available through April 28 •Features new and independent films. Opening feature is a documentary of rock band The National in “Mistaken for Strangers	18 Food Festival, Culture Festival 3:30 - 7:00 PM Admission: \$5 Stuyvesant Cafeteria, Theater •The Food Festival consists of a buffet-style array of foods from around the world from French to Chinese to Indian cuisine. Starting at 5 p.m., students may go to the theater for the annual Culture Festival. Shows ranging from cultural dance crews to songs sung in native languages showcase the diversity of the Stuyvesant community.	19 Movie release “Oblivion” Director: Joseph Kosinski Cast: Tom Cruise, Morgan Freeman, Andrea Riseborough Genre: Action, adventure, sci-fi	20 Concert The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus Doors open at 5 pm Live Nation and Santos Party House 96 Lafayette St Tickets: \$15 16 years and over
21 Museum exhibition “Edvard Munch: The Scream” MoMA Available through April 29, 2013	22 Concert Featuring Nathan Gunn, Julie Gunn, and the Pacifica Quartet 7:30 pm Carnegie Hall, Zankel Hall	23 Album release Laura Stevenson’s “Wheel” Genre: Indie rock, folk Label: Don Giovanni Records Album release Kid Cudi’s “Indicud” Genre: Alternative hip hop, rap Label: Universal Republic Records, GOOD Music	24 Photo exhibition “Determining Creativity” Featuring the work of Carl Heilman The Metropolitan Opera Guild Learning Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza Doors open at 6 p.m. Suggested donation: \$6	25 Concert 2013 New York Music Competition Winners Concert and Ceremony 8 p.m. Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall	26 Movie release “At Any Price” Director: Ramin Bahrami Cast: Dennis Quaid, Zac Efron, Kim Dickens, Maika Monroe Genre: Adventure, drama Movie release “Mud” Director: Jeff Nichols Cast: Matthew McConaughey, Tye Sheridan, Jacob Lofland Genre: Drama	

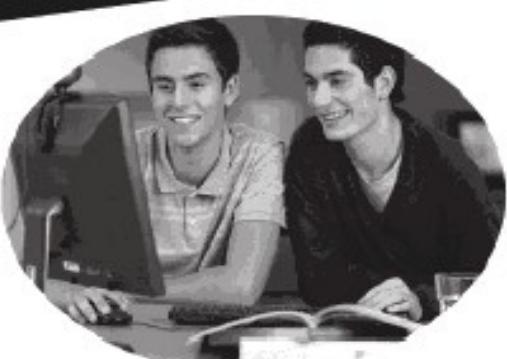
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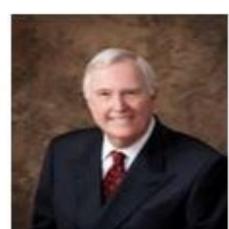
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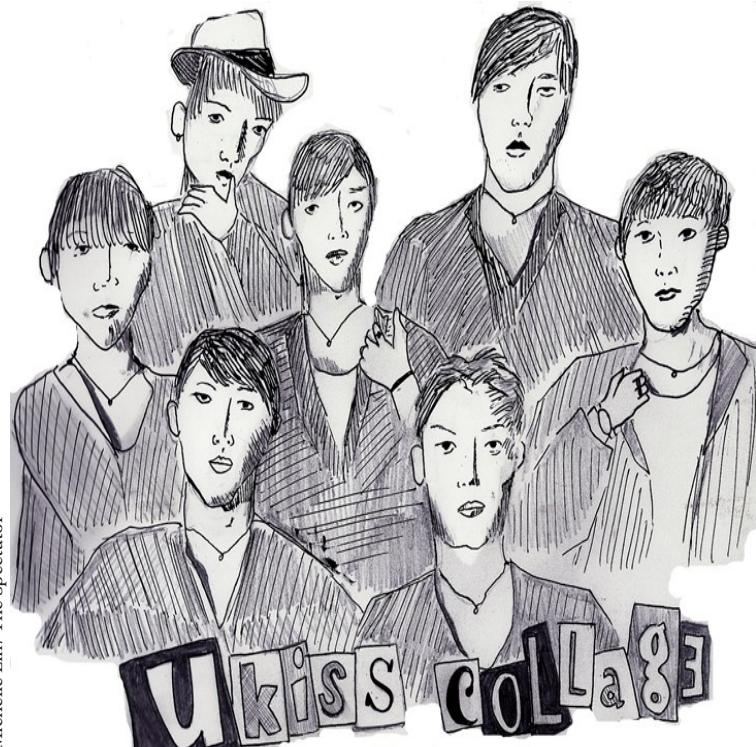
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Arts and Entertainment

Music

Don't Look, Just Listen



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

BY WONYOUNG SEO

After losing one member to college in the August of 2011 and wrapping up 2012 with a full-length album, four EPs, five digital singles, nine music videos, a DVD, and tour around Japan, Korean idol group U-KISS made a comeback on March 7, 2013 with their new Korean album "Collage." Featuring 10 songs and two instrumental tracks, "Collage" highlights the members' talents with strong beats and melodies that have yet to be heard from another group in the Korean music industry. This is not to say that the unique sounds are unexpected; U-KISS has become famous throughout the K-pop field for their strong vocal and dancing skills and their ability to bring something new to the field every year.

Singers Soohyun Shin, Kevin Woo, and Kibum Kim and rappers Elison "Eli" Kim, Dongho Shin, and Alexander "Xander" Lee Eusebio debuted in 2008 through NH Media with a fresh, bubblegum pop EP titled "New Generation." However, U-KISS didn't gain momentum until 2009, when they switched to a darker, auto-tune-heavy style and their seventh member, Kiseop Kim, was added with the release of their single "ContiUKiss." The heavy bass tracks and catchy choruses boosted U-KISS's popularity, landing them regular spots in various dramas, radio programs, and variety shows, three of which were centered around them.

In 2011, Xander and Kibum's contracts ended, and they were replaced with rapper AJ and vocalist Hoonmin "Hoon" Yeo. The group released the mini-album "Bran New Kiss" in March, in which they finally abandoned auto-tune and featured a ballad as the title track, a risky but brilliant move. While the many of the songs lacked the catchy beats and dances that are staples of K-pop, the mini-album showcased their singing and rapping skills in their purest forms and presented their ability to harmonize beautifully, which helped establish U-KISS as one of the most talented idol groups in Korea. Their 2011 album "Neverland" reverted back to a darker image, but usage of auto-tune was significantly reduced, if not completely avoided. The title track "Neverland" displayed their dance skills to the fullest and the track "Someday" had the three

rappers singing for the first time since the group's debut.

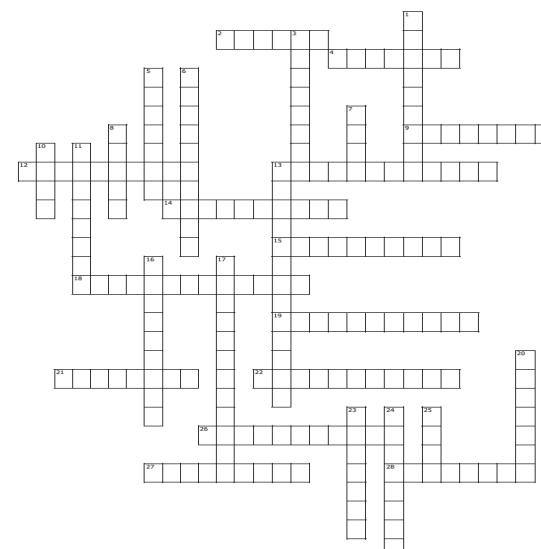
In early 2012, U-KISS began to concentrate on the Japanese music industry while simultaneously releasing new material in Korea. By August 2012, they had released one Japanese album, a Japanese single, and two Korean mini-albums. Rapper AJ went on a short hiatus to attend Columbia University for a year, during which the others released the mini-album "Stop Girl" and countless singles, before returning in time for their 2013 comeback.

The title track of "Collage," "Standing Still," features a consistent bass rhythm and an acoustic guitar background in the beginning, which is slowly taken over by electronic music as the song progresses. While the song is one of U-KISS's darker ones, the music does not overwhelm their voices, but rather enhances and emphasizes the clarity and purity of their singing. The dance, though not as powerful as previous ones, mixes fluidity with crisp, sharp movements that go well with the song. Although it's not quite a dance song, it's not exactly a ballad either, and though other groups may have struggled to pull this combination off, U-KISS does it effortlessly. The music video is an entirely different story: flashes of headlights and constant changing of dark images only serve to give viewers headaches. The flames in the background were one of the video's few redeeming qualities.

Luckily, the rest of "Collage" is just as good as "Standing Still," if a bit ballad-heavy. AJ and Eli's duet, "Party All the Time," is one of the only two songs in the album that can definitively be considered dance songs. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Kevin's solo song, "My Reason," and Hoon and Soohyun's duet, "More Painful than Pain," are both solid reminders of U-KISS's amazing vocal talent, while "Bad Person" utilizes their harmonization skills to create a haunting chorus.

Overall, U-KISS delivered yet another spectacular album that follows their unique style. Rather than overwhelming listeners, they draw in and captivate them, as long as the music video doesn't deter people from giving them a chance. It would be better to watch their live performances instead; then, all that might turn people off is their hair, but hair will change. Music, like that of "Collage," will last forever.

Crossword Puzzle

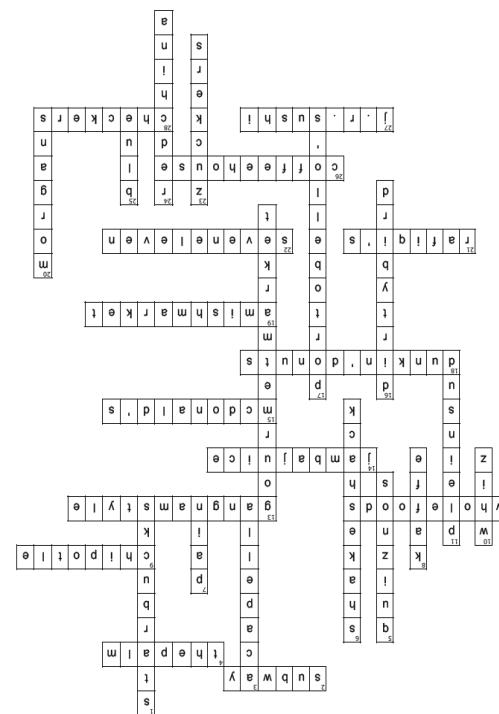


Across

- 2. Twelve inches of bread that cost five dollars
- 4. Picture coconuts and trees in Hawaii
- 5. Pay extra for guacamole
- 12. Pseudo-hipster wallet buster
- 13. Pay's cart
- 14. Smoothie and juice land
- 15. Golden Arches
- 16. Stop sign on it, even though America might.
- 19. Hangout place for the Amish
- 21. Logo has an ambiguous smirky face
- 22. Indecently large, icy drinks
- 26. Imperial
- 27. A Junior with a craving for rice?
- 28. Alternately colored squares
- 29. _____ Spoon, coffee place

Down

- 1. Astronomical money.
- 3. Not the club that sings.
- 5. A toaster sub
- 6. No more free fries here.
- 7. Le _____ Quotidien
- 8. Home to many sheep: 1668
- 10. Glass
- 11. French cuisine, tall glass windows.
- 13. Not Terry's
- 16. Good chicken, unappealing name
- 17. Not Donobello's
- 20. Deli across King's Pharmacy
- 23. Bagel Heaven
- 24. Phonetic front for communism.
- 25. _____ Spoon, coffee place



All Silver Lining, No Cloud

By JAMES BESSOIR

From the beginning—the peaceful, sunlit streets of Columbia—it was clear that "BioShock Infinite" wasn't an ordinary first-person-shooter (FPS) game. Where was the violence? The wanton destruction? The faceless enemy to oppose me? All absent for the first 30 minutes, at least on the surface. In their place were cheery pedestrians strolling about and discussing current events, a cappella groups singing their latest songs, buildings floating buoyantly among the clouds, and an interracial couple almost stoned to death. Wait—what?

"Infinite," the latest game in the "BioShock" franchise, developed by Irrational Games and published by 2K, is something of a prequel to 2007's "BioShock" and 2009's "BioShock 2." The year is 1912, and the protagonist is Booker DeWitt, an unscrupulous bounty hunter with gambling debts, tasked with retrieving a magical girl named Elizabeth from Columbia, a floating city in the clouds. Though Columbia was, upon construction, heralded as the ideal example of late 19th century Americanism, conflicts between its leader, Zachary Comstock, and the U.S. government led Columbia to secede from the Union and disappear into the sky.

By the time Booker reaches Columbia, it has taken a turn for the worse. Many of the citizens, referred to as Founders, revere Comstock with blind fervor and see the Founding Fathers (Jefferson, Washington, and Franklin) as deities. American jingoism and racism have been allowed to run rampant: African and Irish Americans are subjugated and enslaved while whites live in luxury. In the background, a radical pro-equality resistance movement, the "Vox Populi," is gaining support. This ticking time bomb of a city is set off soon after Booker's arrival, and his quest to rescue and protect Elizabeth pits him against the Founders and Comstock. The story soon goes much deeper than a stereotypical 'rescue the princess' plot with a backdrop of class rivalry: Elizabeth's mysterious powers lead to some surprising twists and turns.

The "BioShock" series has always been story- and philosophy-heavy, and "Infinite" is clearly no exception. Thankfully, it's a great FPS too. The graphics on all platforms are beautiful, though the Xbox 360 and PS3 versions show

their consoles' ages a bit with some bad object textures. Pacing is perfect, and as you progress through the story, intense shootouts are balanced by a fair amount of intriguing exploration and narrative development. There's no combat for the first half hour of the game, and you're encouraged to roam the streets of Columbia, marveling at its beauty as you gradually learn about the setting. When you're in combat, though, gameplay is very, very smooth: the guns feel strong and are fun to use, and the game's eight 'vigors' (magical powers similar to the 'plasmids' in previous 'BioShock' games) are unique and act as powerful alternative weapons. Early in the game, Booker acquires a sky-hook, allowing him to use Columbia's cable car system as a network of ziplines. This mechanic is fresh and fun: coasting around buildings and gliding over streets while blasting enemies never gets old. Unfortunately, the environments aren't always big enough to have these sky-lines, and much of the gameplay takes place in close quarters. Still more disappointing is the lack of variety among enemies—apart from the basic soldier, there are only four types of common 'heavy hitters,' or advanced enemies.

But from a gameplay standpoint, what really sets "BioShock Infinite" apart from other shooters is Elizabeth. Once freed, she follows you around for most of the

game. In most traditional shooters, this would be annoying; no matter their degree of character development, artificial intelligence (A.I.) companions are often scripted automatons who get caught in doors, or, even worse, killed, forcing you to replay a sequence. Elizabeth doesn't get in the way in combat, and she can't die. When things heat up, you don't have to constantly worry about protecting her. If you're low on health, money, or ammunition, she'll scavenge for them on the battlefield and toss you whatever you need. When you're exploring an area, she'll lean back against a wall and wait for you to move on. She'll even interact with items in the environment organically, opening drawers and peering through telescopes. This lifelike A.I. makes players very attached to Elizabeth and enhances the story of "BioShock Infinite."

Plenty of modern shooters have fun combat, better-than-decent A.I., or an interesting setting, but "Infinite" has all of these elements in spades, tied together by a compelling and ultimately mind-blowing narrative. "BioShock Infinite" is the best game of 2013 so far, and its first half-hour will go down in history as one of the best non-action sequences ever to appear in an action game. The city it depicts may reside atop a dark cloud of racism, but "BioShock Infinite" is all silver lining.



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

Humor

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

Newsbeat

- English teacher Hugh Francis was forced to leave Stuyvesant to attend to his papal duties on Wednesday, March 13.
- Kim Jong Un has decided to employ the Stuyvesant Robotics Team to aid him on his new nuclear missile project.
- First Lady Carolyn Kang accepted SU President Adam Lieber's elaborate prom proposal, shocking the large crowd that had gathered on the second floor.
- According to the Federal Bureau of Construction, the Chambers Street Reconstruction project could be completed as soon as 2060.

Stuyvesant Holds Disastrous Open House

By SHINDY KOO and WINSTON YEE

On Tuesday, March 19, Stuyvesant held its annual open house for incoming freshmen. The open house is intended to show excited, fresh-minded, innocent, and gullible new students the ins and outs of their future high school. However, due to a few unprecedented mishaps, the open house was less effective than hoped.

"Normally we help out by writing five-page essays on the quality of every teacher in Stuy in the Facebook groups," junior and Big Sib Rosalie Campbell said. "This time, the administration was afraid we'd tell them the truth about Stuy's workload, so they banned us from speak-

ing to the incoming freshmen. I'm pretty sure we came off as mutes when we resorted to hand gestures."

Due to a lack of adequate tours, many incoming freshmen found themselves lost in the school.

"I'm still trying to find my way out," incoming freshman Rakim Mayers said. "When I asked a Big Sib for directions, she just blubbered hysterically that she didn't know anything about the cheating scandal and to never go into the Hudson Staircase."

The open house left many incoming freshmen wondering if they should choose to attend Brooklyn Tech instead.

continued on page 7012

North Korea Declares War on South Korean Puppets



By TIMMY LEVIN

Last week, in a shocking turn of events, Kim Jong-Un, beloved leader of North Korea, ended the armistice with South Korea and declared a state of war. The full war declaration from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea condemned and threatened "U.S. imperialists and South Korean puppets."

South Korean puppets immediately began gearing up for war. Commodore Finger Puppet was promoted to Admiral of the fleet, while Brigadier Sweaty Sock Puppet was expected to head the army.

North Korea has made threats before, but never so forcefully towards the puppets of South Korea. In light of recent unsuccessful nuclear tests, pundits are confident

that the U.S. could easily fend off a North Korean attack. "Kim Jong-Un doesn't have the [resources] to attack us. President Obama has bigger [resources] than his whole country combined," CNN political correspondent Charles Tien said. "If I ever saw him I would probably kick him straight in the [resource] sack."

However, experts are concerned for puppets in South Korea. Statistics show that the South Korean Puppet's army cannot sustain a war for more than a few weeks. With a limp force of just 3,400 marionettes and 4,000 hand puppets, South Korea will need considerable help from its allies.

President Barack Obama has decided to send aid to South Korea with a special team of thousands of trained American puppets. The elite members of

Sesame Street and the Muppets have decided to put aside their differences to help their allies in South Korea. "After a long career in entertainment, I have decided it is the right life choice to go into the U.S. Army Puppet Division," team captain Elmo said.

In addition, South Korea's president Park Geun-hye has ordered a draft of all puppets

With a limp force of just 3,400 marionettes and 4,000 hand puppets, South Korea would need considerable help from its allies.

between the ages of 18 and 25. Puppets and puppeteers alike are distraught at the prospect of a full-scale war. "He's just a boy! I can't let him go off to war! He won't last a day!" puppeteer Mister Geppetto said of his son. "No, actually. He literally can't do anything without me. He's made of wood."

Yesterday, the North Korean government released a follow up statement that revealed its true reasons for declaring war on South Korea. The North Korean people are deeply angered that Psy's new hit single "Gentlemen," is topping the charts while Kim Jong-Un's rap career just cannot seem to get off the ground.

AP Prices Rise Drastically

By WENHAO DU and SHANE LORENZEN

For the last two decades the price of college tuition has been increasing at a rate that has severely outpaced the growth in average household income. As a result, more and more students graduate from college with a frighteningly large debt, having nothing but their degree in Women's Studies to pay it off.

This phenomenon has caused many leading high school educators to voice their

tensive research has shown that AP credits help poor and middle-class students attain scholarships and attend traditionally upper class universities with manageable amounts of debt. Here at the College Board, we think that is an abhorrent waste of capital and are dedicated to taking all that money out of the students' pockets and putting it right in our own wallets."

Many are very critical of the College Board's new policy. "This undermines the very essence of public education," freshman Zoe Leaf said, with a \$14 check for the rights to use locker 9-402 in hand.

This new policy will likely hit Stuyvesant students especially hard, as they have been known to take 4 AP's a year. "Four times 9,000 is almost 20,000 dollars! How can I afford to take my BC Calculus exam?" senior Muki Barkan said.

Some of the more ambitious Stuyvesant students have begun major fundraising efforts in the hopes that they will still be able to afford to take these long, tedious examinations. According to rumors, the famous SU clothing sales will be expanded to include a new underwear line. These newly designed briefs, which include an "ST" on the left buttock and a "UY" on the right buttock, are expected to raise a ton of money for the students. "One pic' of me in these tight little things and, trust me, they'll sell," SU President Adam Lieber said.

Over at the College Board Headquarters in Guam, where strippers and fondue have become as common as suits and ties, SAT test writers are having the times of their lives. "It's been unreal," Coleman said, wearing Kanye West glasses. "I haven't had this much fun since my Bar Mitzvah." The College Board, a not-for-profit organization, has listed the festivities as a business expense.

Scalia and Alito Get Married

By JEREMY KARSON

Supreme Court Justices Antonin and Samuel Scalia were married in a small civil ceremony last week. The proceedings took place in an old Byzantine chapel off the coast of Maine. Although they will not receive full marital rights due to the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), they are both greatly excited about their new lives together.

According to Samuel Scalia (formerly Alito), their relationship turned "more than professional" sometime in 2010. "There were some long lonely nights working on the majority decision for Citizens United," Samuel Scalia said. "One gaze into Tony's eyes, and I knew that we were more than just friends."

The other justices who attended the wedding were John Roberts and Clarence Thomas. Justice Anthony Kennedy was supposedly "on the fence," and considered attending until he

suffered a nervous breakdown due to an identity crisis.

Friends and family in attendance called the marriage "blissful" and "divine." Many attendees said that the couple, who plan to honeymoon in Bora Bora, seem to epitomize true love. "I haven't seen Antony this happy since he upheld gun rights in D.C. v. Heller," his father Salvatore Scalia said, a tear rolling down his cheek. "I'm so proud of my boy."

According to sources close to the Scalias, the two men like to take long walks down the beach, go out to pleasant and cozy dinners, and watch romantic comedies together.

Gay conservatives around the nation have rejoiced, thrilled that the Supreme Court has finally taken action to protect their rights and liberties. As butch tea partiers everywhere continue to come out of the closet, it is clear that the Judicial Branch has once again carried the day.

Humor

Class of 2017 Most Diverse One Ever

James Reina / The Spectator



By DENNIS NENOV
and EAMON WOODS

The incoming class of 2017 has been hailed as one of the most diverse in the history of Stuyvesant, with students hailing from every single province of China and Korea. The administration credits the enactment of several policies—such as having Assistant Principal of Student Affairs & Parent Engagement Brian Moran scratch the belly of a cat statue in local restaurant China Red on a daily basis for good luck—for increas-

The National Association for the Advancement of Chinese People (NAACP) has complained about the lack of a calculus section on the SHSAT.

ing the enrollment of minority students like the Guangdong Chinese. However, despite recent statistics, members of the National Association for the Advancement of Chinese People (NAACP) have lodged complaints with city officials about the SHSAT regarding its lack of a multivariate calculus section.

"How can this school expect to produce our future leaders if they don't even test the applicants on the most important language?" Supreme Leader, First Chairman, Beloved Father, and Chief Dentist of the NAACP

General Tso said. A "state of war" between the NAACP and the state of New York has been declared, and the NAACP has also established a quota on fried rice for as long as city and state officials refuse to comply with its requests.

The class of 2017 also includes many budding musical prodigies, including one who has been referred to by critics as the "Korean Chief Keef." With songs like "Don't Like (Homework)" and "Laughing to the (Library)," this brilliant poet captures the rebellious side of Stuyvesant students. His debut album "Flushing Style" is highly anticipated, with countless Koreans waiting by the wall every day after school for the album.

Balancing this diverse onslaught of musical prodigies comes an influx of melancholy, disappointed snobs from the Upper East Side. Rejected from the city's elite private schools with only their tutors and servants to blame, these applicants who have turned to public school, or the "realm of filth." However, they have found that admission into a good public school like Stuyvesant is no cakewalk. "After hiring twelve tutors to help me get ready for the SHSAT but still not knowing enough, I had no choice but to have Jing take the test in my

place, but he screwed it up for me big time," incoming Bronx Science freshman Jacob Weston said whilst joyfully shredding his gold bars.

The administration has made it clear that it wants to fix its current relationship with the NAACP. "Helping more Chinese people enroll at Stuyvesant is a top priority for the 2013-2014

The incoming class of 2017 has been hailed as one of the most diverse in the history of Stuyvesant, with students hailing from every single province of China and Korea.

school year," Assistant Principal of Organization Randi Damesek said.

Twin Day!



By the Photo Dept.

Sports

Boys' Baseball

Hitmen Looking Shaky in Their First Few Games

continued from page 28

Kramer said. Kramer was able to work six solid innings, giving up only three hits.

Moreover, Coach John Carlesci was also very pleased with Kramer's pitching. "[Kramer] did what he said he would do: throw strikes." Kramer also had much improved fielding behind him. After committing eight errors against HS of Graphic Communicational Arts during their previous game, the Hitmen's defense gave up only two against Murry Bergtraum.

Along with their terrific defensive performance, the Hitmen's offense was able to produce just enough runs for the win. Michael Sheldon crushed a triple, driving in two runs. "We got the big hits when we needed to," Carlesci said. Although these "big hits" only amounted to two, they were able to capitalize effectively on Murry Bergtraum's careless defense, scoring their other three runs on errors.

During the seventh and final inning, the ball was handed to senior and co-captain Noah Hellerman, who closed out the game.

The Hitmen, who have dug themselves in a hole early in the season with two losses in their first three games, will need to make certain improvements to be a top seed in their division. "We have to be able to do better situational hitting to move runners over," Carlesci said. Although certain offensive improvements are needed, this game could be the trigger to propel them through a very difficult schedule; which includes two games

against George Washington, and one game against Beacon. If the Hitmen continue their great defense, they will certainly stand a chance against the challenging teams to come.

Graphic Communication Arts Devils 14, Stuyvesant Hitmen 13

The Hitmen's season has not started out the way they expected. After having to finish the game at a later date than it was started, the Hitmen lost a high scoring thriller to the High School for Graphic Communication Arts Devils, giving them a record of 0-2. The pause in the game was due to time restraints, and affected the play of both teams significantly. The first three innings, and part of the fourth inning, were played on Wednesday, April 3, and the game was resumed on Sunday, April 7.

Losing their momentum on Sunday, the Hitmen were unable to rally enough points to win. When the game was suspended, the Hitmen were up to bat with bases loaded and one out, and in the midst of coming back from a four run deficit, only behind by a score of 10-9. When play resumed four days later, two strikeouts ended the inning, without the team taking advantage of their runners on base. "[The team] didn't come in right away [on Sunday] with a lot of fire, which they needed to do," coach John Carlesci said.

The Hitmen were not their normal selves after the game had been resumed. "On Wednesday we swung the bat really well with runners in scoring position. We

didn't capitalize as well on Sunday, so that's something we need to focus on," senior catcher and co-captain Kevin Moy said. Junior outfielder Timothy Diep was the exception, as he went three for four with two stolen bases.

Hitting was not the only problem for the Hitmen in the game. "We also have to make the simple plays. If we can make those plays and cut down on errors, we should be in good shape," Moy said. The team committed eight errors during the game.

Carlesci thinks that there is plenty that the team needs to work on, and their pitching is of utmost importance. "Our pitchers just need to throw more strikes. That's been our downfall right now. You can't win when you walk five or more guys a game," Carlesci said. Walking opponents was the major problem for the Hitmen in the game, because even though the Hitmen had more hits, the Devils were able to win due to a very high team on-base percentage. With the loss, the Hitmen have dropped their first two games, and need to get it together if they want to meet their high expectations for the season.

Graphic Communication Arts Devils 14, Stuyvesant Hitmen 4

Pitching and solid defense were points of emphasis for the Hitmen during spring training and preseason games. So when they lost to the Graphic Communication Arts Devils 14-4 on Thursday, April 4, it came as a disappointment. Considering that they allowed more than 10 runs only once all of last season,

something went very wrong for Stuyvesant in their second game

factor in the game was the pitchers not throwing strikes. I hope this doesn't continue. The boys worked really hard the off-season and threw great bullpens," coach John Carlesci said. Last year was a different story, as Stuyvesant beat the High School of Graphic Arts twice, only allowing them to score a combined one run in the two games.

The Hitmen's starting pitcher, Timothy Diep, lasted only one inning, giving up three runs, while walking four. The rest of the pitchers didn't fare any better, and in addition to the poor pitching, Stuyvesant was plagued by overall sloppy play and miscues, committing three errors in the game. "The adjustments we need to make are mental. We can play incredibly, infinitely better than this," senior and co-captain Noah Hellerman said.

The hitting of the Hitmen didn't help, either, as they only mustered 2 hits and stranded 11 runners during the game. "We [are] a good hitting team. We just didn't come through today," said Moy.

Although the pitching wasn't up to par and the season didn't start off as expected, the Hitmen are still confident in their starting pitchers, Hellerman in particular. However, for a team that made the playoffs last year and had high expectations entering this season, starting off the season with a loss left the team dissatisfied. But, as the saying goes, athletes need to have short memories. "We will come out of this funk. I know my guys this year are up to the challenge to prove they are as good [as] last year's team," Carlesci said.

**"[The team]
didn't come in
right away
[on Sunday] with
a lot of fire,
which they
needed to do."
— John Carlesci,
coach**

Boys' Volleyball

Beasts Have Room for Improvement Despite Winning Record

continued from page 28

ers returning from suspensions in time for the third game of the season, senior and captain Calvin He and junior Connor Pfister, would help alleviate some of the team's problems on Wednesday, April 3.

While winning in two sets, with scores of 25-12 and 25-10, the team did not improve on the problems they had in their previous two games. "We did not show any improvement in passing or communication, which is important for our plays," senior William Huang said.

The first set started off slowly with both teams hitting shots out back. Passing and hitting were both off for the Beasts, and it wasn't until the middle of the set that their playing peaked. The setter, He, timed numerous quick sets for the middle hitter, Pfister. In the quick set, the setter places the ball right in front of the middle hitter, who is already in the air and thus can immediately spike the ball down to the opposing court. This set and spike combination proved to be very effective, as He recorded 12 assists and Pfister, four kills.

In the second set, the Falcons failed to return many of Stuyvesant's serves. Pfister alone had nine aces – five of them in a row. Unfortunately, junior Mingyung Jiang, one of their starters, had to be taken out due to an ankle injury. This didn't stop the rest

of the starters from gaining a big lead, though, giving players

**"This game is
actually our first
time actually
working for the
ball and talking
to each other and
I'm really proud
of that."
—Calvin He,
senior and
captain**

on the bench the opportunity to play towards the end of the second set. Freshman Riccardo Melucci, for example, blocked one of the Falcons' hits. "[Melucci]

has been working on this block for a long time and has been continuously missing it so this was a good moment for him," coach Vasken Choubaralian said.

As in their previous games, the team has to work on communication and passing. "This game was no different than our first two league games. The team was, yet again, too quiet," He said. "If we don't improve on communication, all our league games will end up being the same."

Stuyvesant Beasts 2, Bayard Rustin Golden Knights 0

Through the combination of a 14-1 advantage in service aces and a 9-0 advantage in kills, the Beasts took down the Bayard Rustin Golden Knights in two quick and dominant sets, winning 25-10 and 25-8 on Friday, March 22.

The Beasts controlled the flow of the game in both sets, relying on smooth rotations of players on court and quick execution of moves. "[The Knights] couldn't give good passes to the setter so they kept giving us free balls, giving us chances to play more offensive plays rather than defensive ones," junior Sam Kim said.

The Beasts' success can also be traced to communication, a vital component of the game because players must pass the ball to setters to prepare for the ideal

spike. "A play is always initiated with a pass, but if the bump is bad then it'll be a lot harder to win the point," senior and captain Calvin He said.

As the Beasts savor their victory, they are preparing to take the next step as a team. "We need to work on being aggressive on court and being confident in ourselves," He said.

Other members of the team share that mindset. "We are capable of beating the other teams, but we have to make sure to stay on our toes," Kim said.

Stuyvesant Beasts 2, School of the Future Bulldogs 0

The Beasts started their first game of the season with a different lineup than planned. Two players, including senior and captain Calvin He, had been suspended in time for the Tuesday, March 19 game, so the Beasts did not expect a win to come easy.

"We didn't expect a win because you never know what's going to happen. If you expect a win, you won't play as hard and that's probably what happened today," coach Vasken Choubaralian said.

In the first set, the team couldn't pass easy free balls. Except for the first five minutes of the set, the team lacked any on-court drive and failed to communicate with one another. "There was not much chemistry on the

court and we only started practice two weeks ago, compared to the other schools that started in February. Since we didn't have the normal lineup, everyone was really awkward and not used to playing with one another," freshman Dimitar Novakov said. The team ended the first set with a score of 25-17.

The mistakes continued into the second set, as many players continued the lack of communication and missed several hits. Choubaralian called two timeouts in the set to try to correct the team's errors, which included their passing and serving. "The team was playing down and when the opposing team kept playing

short serves, the team did not adjust," Choubaralian said. "I try to incorporate talking in warm-ups and practices as much as possible, but it is clear that the team needs more practice." The game ended with a score of 25-14.

Aside from communication, the team also needs to work on serving, service reception, and more accurate passing to the setter. Despite the victory, the Beasts will have to sharpen up many skills for the next game. "This first game showed us we have a lot to work on and that we have to focus more. If we continue playing the way we did today, we will not reach our goal, passing the first round in the playoffs," senior William Huang said.

Girls' Tennis

Lady Peglegs Dominate with the Help of Winter Weather

By DAVID ROTHBLATT

The forecast was concerning: cloudy with the temperature in the mid-thirties. Though a cold, bitter, and windy environment may not seem like the ideal condition for a tennis match, Stuyvesant's Lady Peglegs found a way to use the uncomfortable winter weather to their advantage against Eleanor Roosevelt High School on Thursday, March 23.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Huskies team was not ready for the conditions it faced during the match, while the Lady Peglegs came well-prepared and seemed immune to the cold. Many of the Eleanor Roosevelt players arrived in shorts or mini-skirts, and did not have gloves or hats to wear while waiting on the sidelines. As a result, the freezing weather negatively impacted the opposing team's performance.

Coach Jeffrey Menaker believes the difference in performance was due to the fact that the team practices at the courts daily. "By practicing here, the team has adapted to the environment and it no longer affects our play," Menaker said. "This gives us a huge advantage over our opponents because other teams are not used to these rough conditions."

Coming into the match, Stuyvesant expected to finish the day with sizable wins since Eleanor Roosevelt had just moved up this season into League A3 from a lower division. In first singles, sophomore Julia Gokhberg maintained a

positive and confident mindset to win 10-0. "[My opponent] wasn't very consistent, so all I did was wait for her to make a mistake," Gokhberg said.

All of Stuyvesant's opponents made many unforced errors, often hitting a forehand or volley into the net and double faulting on serve. Some of the Lady Peglegs, including Gokhberg, were thus more defensive and focused on consistency rather than aggression or power play. "I wasn't playing my full game because I really didn't have to. I was able to find success playing back in a more defensive style," Gokhberg said.

The entire team waited for Eleanor Roosevelt's players to make unforced errors, an approach that turned out to be effective as the team won four of five matches, losing only first doubles in a tiebreaker (11-10). In second singles, senior and co-captain Dina Levy Lambert's five aces contributed to her 10-1 victory, while junior Victoria Chung won her match 10-2 in third singles.

Having also breezed past Bronx Science 5-0 the previous Tuesday, the Lady Peglegs have now won a total of nine out of their first 10 matches. Though they are off to a strong start and look to continue this dominance throughout the rest of the season, the winter conditions the team has thrived in are disappearing; with spring here, the team must now rely on their skill to put them over their opponents, without the extra advantage of the weather.

Boys' Tennis

Hitmen Hit the Net after Sweeping Opener

By DARYL CHIN
and JING LIN**Stuyvesant Hitmen 0, Beacon High School Blue Demons 5**

After clinching second place in the PSAL last year, Stuyvesant's boys' tennis team, the Hitmen, embraced the attention and dominance they received. However, with key veteran players having departed, the Hitmen hold a shadow of their former confidence. In a series of matches against Beacon High School on Tuesday, April 9 at the Hudson River Courts, the Hitmen lost every contest: first singles, second singles, third singles, first doubles, and second doubles. Playing to eight sets, the Hitmen lost the first four games, winning fewer than four sets and the second doubles in a hard-fought 7-2 tiebreaker.

The Hitmen watched in silence from beyond the fence of the Hudson River Courts as their teammates were rapidly, even mechanically, defeated by the Blue Demons. The players made mistakes that further compounded and quickened the defeats.

Furthermore, the team went into the matches with low morale. "We came into the match thinking we were going to lose," junior and second doubles player Evan Tao said. The Hitmen didn't carry the confidence and drive present in former years, and it was the players, rather than the Blue Demons, who demoralized themselves.

In light of the overwhelming odds, Coach Fisher prepped the team differently. "Coach Fisher said this would be a good way to measure our level of play and to figure out our weaknesses," Tao said. The Hitmen played Beacon more as a means of discovering weaknesses in their game than to

win.

"We wouldn't be getting away with the mistakes we usually get away with," coach Philip Fisher said. The Hitmen had trouble serving and constantly faulted through the sets. Most of all, they were unable to return their opponents' hits, even when within reach.

"We gave up too easily," Fisher said.

The players didn't focus and put intensity into the games. According to Fisher, they will need to focus on fundamentals, such as returning balls within reach, improving stamina, and mastering their serves, in order to take down other teams. The Hitmen have an uphill to climb, but with the backlash of a bitter defeat against Beacon, they are strongly motivated to continue improving their abilities.

Stuyvesant Hitmen 5, Bard High School Early College 0

The boys' tennis team easily dispatched the Bard High School Early College Raptors with a score of 5-0 after approaching the entire match in a meticulous and powerful fashion. With their original season opener against Eleanor Roosevelt High School postponed due to snow, the Hitmen picked up their first win of the season despite the continued lack of ideal conditions. "It was really windy out there today," co-captain and senior first singles player Peter Becht said. "I was able to adjust to [my opponent's] mistakes and just had to keep the ball in play."

This year is Coach Philip Fisher's first as head coach of the Hitmen. Fisher previously played competitively in college, and his knowledge of the game has allowed him to begin working with his new players right away.

"I think the kids have responded very nicely to me," Fisher said. "They know I have a background of playing tennis collegiately, so they've been very receptive."

Becht won his first singles game 10-5. Despite starting off down 1-2, he rallied by winning the next six games. Sophomore Leonard Margolis also fared well in his second singles game, winning 10-0, while senior and third singles player Ryan Elnaggar prevailed 10-3.

"We have a new team this year, all new singles players," Fisher said. "So for the first time out it's nicer that we play a team that's new to the division." As both the first and second singles starters from last year have graduated and the team's third singles starter will not return for this season, Fisher began looking for new starters and opening up other members to these opportunities.

First doubles players, senior Hayden Karp-Hecker and sophomore Genji Noguchi, won their match 10-1. Throughout the match, good chemistry defined their partnership, with the two players often exchanging fist bumps and communicating with each other during rallies. Second doubles players, junior Alexander Irikura and junior substitute Evan Tao, also won their game 10-7.

"They did a good job considering it's their first match together," Fisher said. "That game was the highlight for me."

Overall, Fisher enjoyed the victory but felt there was much to improve on. "There are always things to work on," Fisher said. "Stroke consistency, knowing how to play doubles correctly, working on our strategy along with others are things we have to work on as the season goes on."

Boys' Handball

Dragons Start Season On Fire



Stuyvesant Boys' Varsity Handball Team, the Dragons, beat the High School of Environmental Science Eagles 5-0.

By JASON LEE

After a perfect 12-0 season last year, the Stuyvesant boys' handball team picked up from where they left off and started this season with a three-game winning streak. The Dragons won their first game against

the West 50th Street Campus Seahawks through an early forfeit. The next game, against Frederick Douglass Academy on Wednesday, March 20, was a blowout, with the Dragons winning every match played by at least 15 points.

In their third and more chal-

lenging match, the Dragons faced the High School of Economics and Finance Panthers on Friday, March 22. The Panthers have been a big rival of the Stuyvesant team in the past, coming in second in the league for the past three years.

In the first singles match,

senior and co-captain Cody Tong started off strong, taking a 7-0 lead and causing the Panthers to call a timeout. Panthers junior Kody Yan rallied from the break and tied the game up at 17-17. Ultimately, Yan finished on top, closing the game out 21-19.

In the second singles match, senior and co-captain Alexander Bu beat the Panthers' Zhen Hui Gao by a score of 21-4, recording five aces in the game. In the third match, Sophomore Young Kim defeated the Panthers' Mason Chan by a score of 21-12. Sophomore Marco Liu and junior Wilson Li continued the dominant performance, defeating their opponents by 10 points in first doubles. In second doubles, juniors Long Yip and Michael Chiu defeated their opponents 21-7 to close the match against the Panthers.

Coming into the season, the Dragons have made many changes, especially in regard to having many new sophomores and freshmen on the team. Though they only have three returning starters, they are still confident in their abilities.

"Our team is solid and strong, but the fact that we only

have three returning starters as opposed to the top schools' all returning starters [puts us] at a disadvantage in terms of experience," Kim said. "But we can make up for our lack in experience through team support, determination, and pure, raw skills." As shown by their early victories as first-year starters, Li, Liu, and Kim seem to be transitioning into their larger roles well.

The team is off to an auspicious start and looks to extend their winning streak in their next game against Chelsea Career and Technical Education, a team that Stuyvesant has never lost to in the past four years. Though the Dragons are still becoming acquainted with their new teammates, they plan to play with the same intensity and skill as last year.

"Most importantly, though, we had fun and that's how we are supposed to play, with fun and with courage," Kim said.

Coach Robert Sandler agrees, telling the team that "this is why we play handball: not to play some [strangers], but to actually play good people and to have fun."

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Baseball

Hitmen Looking Shaky in Their First Few Games



Vivian Huang / The Spectator

Junior Mike Mazzeo got a hit against Murry Bergtraum High School on Wednesday, April 10.

**By ARI HATZIMEMOS,
ERIC MORGESTERN,
and LOUIS SUSER**

**Stuyvesant Hitmen 5,
Murry Bergtraum
Blazers 2**

Coming back from a major loss to the High School of

Graphic Communication Arts in which the Hitmen gave up 14 runs, the Hitmen won their second game of the season against Murry Bergtraum, 5-2, on Wednesday, April 10. Led by Charlie Kramer's strong pitching, the Hitmen illustrated what Coach Carlesi has always taken pride in: defense.

Kramer struck out the side in the first inning, thus gaining back their previously lost defensive momentum. "I felt comfortable all game. My arm felt good, [my] body felt good, [and my] mind felt good," senior

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What Could Have Been

By RAYYAN JOKHAI

The Los Angeles Lakers are undoubtedly one of the most successful franchises in all of sports. Ranking fourth in the number of championships won by any sports team, the Lakers have won a total of 16 NBA championships. They are ranked second in the NBA in all-time Championship Titles, behind the Boston Celtics by only a single title.

The Lakers' star-studded roster is one of the primary reasons for their success, rightfully earning them the nickname the "Yankees of basketball." From George Mikan to Elgin Baylor, from Jerry West to Wilt Chamberlain, from Earvin "Magic" Johnson to Kareem Abdul Jabaar, some of the greatest players to ever play the game were Lakers. Two of the most memorable famous Lakers are Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant. Unfortunately, as famous as their partnership may have been, their infamous feud, which proved beneficial Bryant, ultimately hindered O'Neal and the Lakers.

Wherever you may rank them, O'Neal and Bryant have proven to be one of the top five duos in basketball history, right up with Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen, John Stockton and Karl Malone, and Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul Jabaar. From 2000 to 2002, O'Neal and Bryant brought three straight trophies to the Staples Center, the home of the Lakers during their nine-year partnership.

During the first championship in 2000, the Lakers had troubles in the first round of playoffs but made easy work of the Western teams on their way to face Reggie Miller and the Indiana Pacers. In the final series between the two teams, in which the Lakers won in six

games, O'Neal put up unbelievable stats, averaging 38.0 points per game, coupled with 16.7 rebounds. Bryant, in comparison, scored 15.6 points per game with about 4 assists and 5 rebounds per game.

They dominated even more in the 2001 championship, in which the Lakers won 15 out of 18 total postseason games, defeating the Philadelphia 76ers 4-1 in the Finals. In that championship series, Shaq averaged 33.0 points per game with around 16 rebounds and 5 assists. Kobe put up 24.6 points per game with about 6 assists and 8 rebounds.

In the final year of the impressive three-peat, the Lakers, as dominant as ever won 15 of their 19 postseason games and swept the New Jersey Nets in the finals to bring home the last Larry O'Brien trophy for 7 years. During the finals of that year, O'Neal averaged 36.3 points per game with 12 rebounds, while Bryant had 26.8 points per game with about 5 rebounds and 6 assists. It doesn't take much sports analysis to realize that O'Neal was the main man in Los Angeles.

Despite the duo's success, things were not as wonderful as they should have been in the Lakers locker room during this glorious era. The infamous "Shaq and Kobe feud" ignited behind the scenes was hidden from the cameras and general public by success, glory, and championships. Inevitably, the feud ended when the duo was separated. Many fingers have been pointed in countless directions. Some say Bryant pushed O'Neal out in an effort to be the sole star player on the team. Others say O'Neal's lack of work ethic forced the Lakers to trade him to Miami, and yet others say he was demanding too much

money from the organization. Whoever or whatever caused the breakup in the locker room simultaneously caused an early curtain call for one of the greatest possible sports eras in the history of the game.

Ever since the split, Bryant has received one MVP nod, three All-Star MVPs, two championships, and two Finals' MVP awards. On the other hand, O'Neal has only won one All-Star MVP and one championship, with Dwyane Wade and the Miami Heat in 2006. Clearly, O'Neal's career after leaving the Lakers took a turn for the worse.

Without O'Neal's leave, the media would have never been able to make the "Jordan-Bryant" analogy, because Bryant would have continued to play the sidekick role in the O'Neal-Bryant partnership. To the average sports fan, this means that Bryant would not be viewed as favorably as he is today, because he wouldn't even be the best player on his team. Even today, many critics don't believe the first three of his championships were truly "his," because he only played a secondary role.

As for the Lakers as a whole, they may have been robbed of the number-one spot on the list of teams that own the most NBA championships. It is quite possible that, had the feud not happened, the Lakers would have won more than the two championships attributed to Bryant's star role and, as such, would be considered the best team in the NBA. The support structure, the Hall of Fame coach, the fans—it was all there. One can only wonder how much better the Lakers would have been if the greatest one-two punch in basketball history had not suffered its unfortunate feud.

Sports Wrap-Up

The **Hitmen**, Stuyvesant's boys' baseball team, rebounded from two consecutive losses to open the season with back-to-back wins, but lost to Manhattan Center on Tuesday, April 16 to drop to a disappointing 2-3 on the year.

The **Peglegs**, Stuyvesant's boys' lacrosse team, has struggled to find consistency so far, but have won three of their last five games to improve to 4-4 on the season.

The **Beasts**, Stuyvesant's boys' volleyball team, suffered one loss to Laguardia, but have not dropped a single set in any other of their other six games.

The **Hitmen**, Stuyvesant's boys' tennis team, lost to rivals Beacon and Eleanor Roosevelt, but won each of their four other games and rank in the top half of their division.

The **Dragons**, Stuyvesant's boys' handball team, is an undefeated 8-0, having only lost one set so far this season.

The **Renegades**, Stuyvesant's girls' softball team, has won three consecutive games, and five of six overall, with all wins coming by at least four runs.

The **Furies**, Stuyvesant's girls' handball team, currently has a 5-1 record, with the only loss coming via forfeit.

The **Lady Peglegs**, Stuyvesant's girls' tennis team, is cruising through the season with a 6-0 record.

The **Vipers**, Stuyvesant's girls' fencing team, has won two straight matches to improve their record to 2-1.

Having lost their first six games of the season, the **Huskies**, Stuyvesant's girls' lacrosse team, will look to gain momentum after nearly beating against James Madison in their most recent game.

Boys' Volleyball

Beasts Have Room for Improvement Despite Winning Record

**By CHRIS KIM,
SAMANTHA LAU,
and JING LIN**

**Stuyvesant Beasts 2,
West 50th Street Campus
Seahawks 0**

The Beasts continue to demonstrate their superior skill and teamwork in the Manhattan division, defeating the West 50th Street Campus Seahawks 2-0 on Friday, April 5. With this win, the Stuyvesant boys' volleyball team improves to a solid record of 4-0.

The Beasts controlled the tempo of the first set with a combination of great passing and excellent communication. While Stuyvesant was able to swiftly react to each situation, the Seahawks found themselves watching the ball land on their side of the court.

The Seahawks' inability to respond to strong serves quickly gave the Beasts an advantage. Junior Sam Kim led the team on a 6-0 run, during which he scored three service points. Junior Connor Pfister also had a sensational block during the run, further increasing the frustration of the opposing team.

The discouraged Seahawks were unable to close the large gap, and the Beasts cruised through the first set with a score of 25-5, their biggest blowout yet of the season.

Stuyvesant carried their solid teamwork from the first set into the second, which they started with some great blocks from sophomore Eric Lee and great serves from the entire team. The Beasts were able to

grab a quick 9-2 lead. However, slight miscommunication from the team gave the Seahawks a minor 3-0 run, cutting the lead to four points. After a time-out from Stuyvesant, coach Vasken Choubaralian regrouped his team, and confidently sent them back on the open court.

The Beasts were again able to expose the Seahawks' lack of communication and close out the game on a 7-0 run, finishing with a final score of 25-11.

Despite a few bad passes and

some cases of miscommunication on the court, Choubaralian

was pleased with Stuyvesant's improved performance against the Seahawks. "The passing was much better - that's what we were working on yesterday," he said. "They also did a great job setting the ball."

Having fixed several issues that had afflicted previous games, it was a satisfying victory for the team. "We got a lot better in terms of communication and chemistry," senior and captain Calvin He said. "This game is actually our first time actually working for the ball and talking to each other and I'm really proud of that."

**Stuyvesant Beasts 2,
HS Fashion Industries
Falcons 0**

The Beasts, having won their first two games of the season, knew that they still had a lot of room for improvement. They hoped that the two start-

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